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SPORT | Page 1

Al-Buenain elected as president of the Qatar Football Association

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Minister conveys Amir's congratulations to Jordanian king

On behalf of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, HE the Minister of Interior Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani extended congratulations to King Abdullah II Ibn al-Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, on the wedding of his son, Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II, at Al Husseiniya Palace yesterday. He also extended congratulations to a number of Their Highnesses members of the royal family, during the ceremony that was held in the capital Amman.

Qatar to host Volleyball Challengers Cup in Mideast first

The International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) has granted Qatar the rights to host the Volleyball Challenger Cup 2023, which will be held in July, for the first time in the Middle East. FIVB announced its decision after examining bids from several countries. Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Qatar Volleyball Association (QVA) Ali Ghanem al-Kuwari said in a statement: "Qatar's tremendous credit in hosting major sports tournament has made QVA attain great importance to the development of volleyball at the international level, in light of the readiness of the international sports facilities on which the tournament will be held." **Sport Page 1**

Biden trips, falls at grad ceremony

US President Joe Biden tripped and fell after handing out the last diploma at a graduation ceremony at the US Air Force Academy yesterday, but got up quickly and walked back to his seat. The 80-year-old president fell forward, caught himself with his hands, then got up on one knee helped by three people. He walked back to his seat unassisted. After Biden was helped up, he pointed behind him, seeming to indicate what he tripped over. He mingled with other officials afterward, smiling and giving a "thumbs up" sign. **Page 9**

COMMUNITY

See Pages 5 & 6

Sheikha Moza attends Jordan wedding



Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser attended the royal wedding ceremony of Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to Princess Rajwa al-Hussein. The nuptials took place yesterday in the Jordanian capital Amman. Her Highness extended her sincere congratulations to King Abdullah II and Queen Rania al-Abdullah on the marriage of their son and wished them a prosperous marriage and lasting happiness. **(QNA) Page 7**

Qatar's IMO launches website

Qatar's International Media Office (IMO) has officially launched its website (<https://imo.gov.qa/>), which allows visitors to learn more about the mission and vision of the office and the priorities of the country at the international level.

The website launch was announced by a tweet yesterday on Qatar's IMO handle @IMO_Qatar. Sheikh Thamer bin Hamad al-Thani was appointed director of the IMO in March 2023.

The website includes a section, Q Life, a platform that showcases the people and ideas powering Qatar's development.

From uncovering the pio-



Sheikh Thamer bin Hamad al-Thani, director, Qatar's IMO.

neering spirit of the Qatari people to learning more about Qatar's advances in sports, the arts, business and culture, Q Life's aim is to educate a



global audience about Qatar.

The IMO based in Qatar has offices across the globe with a media attache each to cement relations with media and other stakeholders to communicate the priorities of Qatar.

The IMO was established under Amiri Decree No. 12 of 2023 to communicate Qatar's achievements, priorities and initiatives across a variety of areas. The IMO is responsible for promoting relations with all regional and international media outlets and provides media support to Qatari government entities.

The IMO is also responsible for issuing press releases regarding the country's foreign affairs and responding to inquiries from international media. It aims to present an accurate image of Qatar by clarifying facts in a timely manner.

The IMO is a key contact point for all regional and international media, NGOs and think tanks, while also providing logistical support to international media by issuing licenses and work permits.

QatarEnergy signs 15-year Bangladesh LNG supply deal

QatarEnergy will supply up to 1.8MTPY LNG to Petrobangla starting 2026

By Pratap John
Business Editor

QatarEnergy's LNG trading arm, QatarEnergy Trading, has entered into a long-term LNG Sale and Purchase Agreement (SPA) with Bangladesh Oil, Gas and Mineral Corporation (Petrobangla) to supply up to 1.8mn tonnes per year (MTPY) of LNG to Bangladesh for 15 years, starting in 2026.

The SPA signing at QatarEnergy's headquarters in Doha was witnessed by HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs, Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi, also the President and CEO of QatarEnergy, and Nasrul Hamid, Bangladesh's State Minister for Power, Energy, and Mineral Resources yesterday.

The gas would come from the ongoing North Field expansion, which seeks to enhance the country's liquefied natural gas (LNG) production capacity from 77mn tonnes per year to 126Mtpy by 2026 or 2027.

North Field expansion comprises the North Field East (NFE) and the North Field South (NFS) expansion projects and is the industry's largest ever LNG project.

The project is unique in that it is characterised by the highest health, safety, and environmental standards, including carbon capture and sequestration, to reduce the project's overall carbon footprint to the lowest levels possible.

North Field expansion is a "strategic" step in cementing Qatar's position as the leading LNG producer and it will play a major role in meeting the increasing global demand for LNG. It is also in line with Qatar's long-term vision to develop the country's natural resources.

In his remarks during the signing ceremony, al-Kaabi said, "Today, we are proud to be the largest LNG supplier to Bangladesh and Petrobangla by a large margin, delivering more than 3.5mn tonnes per year from Qatar to Bangladesh. These supply arrangements reinforce our unwavering dedication to safeguarding the energy security of valued customers like Bangladesh and delivering the reliable energy they require for socio-economic development and prosperity."

Concluding his remarks, al-Kaabi thanked the working teams from both sides for their dedicated work to reach this agreement, adding: "I would also like to express our gratitude to His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani for



The SPA signing at QatarEnergy's headquarters in Doha was witnessed by HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs, Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi, also the President and CEO of QatarEnergy, and Nasrul Hamid, Bangladesh's State Minister for Power, Energy, and Mineral Resources yesterday. **PICTURE:** Shaji Kayamkalam

his wise leadership and continued guidance to and support of the energy sector."

Al-Kaabi told *Gulf Times* that "a majority of supplies from NFE and NFS would go to Asia and with the rest likely to go to European customers. We are in advanced discussions with some customers. We will be more than sold out as far as NFE and NFS are concerned."

Hamid said Bangladesh attached top priority to liquefied natural gas and LNG imports from Qatar to meet his country's growing energy needs.

"LNG will have a significant component in our energy mix as we seek to boost supplies to our industries, textile sector in particular, Hamid said in reply to a question by *Gulf Times* at a media event at QatarEnergy's headquarters yesterday.

Qatar currently delivers more than 3.5mn tonnes per year of LNG to Bangladesh. With this new SPA, QatarEnergy reaffirms its position as the LNG supplier of choice for its partners in the South Asia LNG markets.

Qatar will add 65mn tonnes per year of LNG to meet the growing needs of the world from its North Field expansion and its project in the United States, al-Kaabi said at the recently concluded Qatar Economic Forum in Doha.

Project Qatar 2023 attracts over 18,000 visitors

The 19th edition of Project Qatar 2023 concluded yesterday after attracting over 18,000 visitors across four days at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre.

The 19th edition of the event was held with the support of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and in partnership with the Public Works Authority (Ashghal).

Project Qatar showcased numerous innovative products, services and technologies from both domestic and foreign exhibitors. The event provided a unique opportunity for industry professionals to network, interact, and explore business opportunities with over 325 companies.

In addition to drawing a sizeable number of visitors, Project Qatar 2023 received overwhelmingly positive feedback from both exhibitors and visitors. Participants praised the event's professionalism, organisational

tion, and high level of engagement. The exhibition acted as a catalyst for insightful conversations, encouraging significant alliances, and fostering industrial expansion.

On the sidelines of the exhibition, the 9th edition of the Q Green Conference was also held yesterday, providing an exceptional forum for networking and knowledge exchange within the sector. Participants from a wide range of industries gathered to discuss and share best and innovative practices for sustainable development.

There were keynote addresses on 'Qatar's Efforts in Sustainability and Climate Mitigation' and 'Environmental Achievements of FIFA World Cup 2022'. The sessions yesterday were on 'Green Investment in Waste Management: A Driver of Economic Development', 'Recycling all World Cup Waste into Energy', 'Green

Homes: Guide to Greener and Healthier Homes', 'Retrofitting through the EPC (Energy Performance Contract) Model', 'Achieving Net Zero Buildings with Radiant Cooling and Active Desiccant Systems', and 'Sustainable Integrated Facility Management Approach'. Additionally, a workshop on 'Enabling the Future of Sustainable Built Environment', focused on global trends in energy efficiency and green building.

As the Strategic Partner of the exhibition, Ashghal supported and sponsored Project Qatar, while Qatar Tourism sponsored the visiting commercial delegations. The event was also sponsored by Qatar Chamber as the Business Community Partner, Qatari Diar as the Real Estate Development partner, Qatar Development Bank as an Official Partner, Free Zones Authority as the Free Zones Partner, Suhail Industrial Holding Group as



Project Qatar 2023 concluded yesterday after attracting over 18,000 visitors across four days. **PICTURE:** Thajudheen

an Industrial Partner, Al Sraiya Holding Group as the Platinum Sponsor, and Midea as the Diamond Sponsor. Other prominent participants included Qatar Navigation (MILHA), Qterminals, HBC, and Silver Spon-

sors Abdullah Abdulghani & Bros.Co, Modern Home, an agent of Hisense, sponsored the event's ventilation and cooling. The next edition of Project Qatar will be held from May 27 to 30, 2024. **Page 12**

US imposes sanctions on Sudan companies

The United States yesterday imposed sanctions on companies it accused of fuelling the conflict in Sudan, stepping up pressure on the army and a rival paramilitary force to bring an end to the fighting as ceasefire talks are at risk of collapse.

The US Treasury Department said in a statement it targeted two companies affiliated with Sudan's army and two companies affiliated with the rival paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), accusing them of generating revenue from the conflict and contributing to the fighting.

"Through sanctions, we are cutting off key financial flows to both the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Armed Forces, depriving them of resources needed to pay soldiers, rearm, resupply, and wage war in Sudan," Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said in the statement.

"The United States stands on the side of civilians against those who perpetuate violence towards the people of Sudan." **(Reuters)**

Finance minister in Paris meetings



HE the Minister of Finance Ali bin Ahmed al-Kuwari met with a number of officials at financial and governmental institutions, during his visit and the accompanying delegation to the French capital Paris. The meetings were held, among others, with Sebastien Bazin, CEO of Accor; Philippe Brassac, CEO of Credit Agricole and Xavier Musca, CEO of Credit Agricole CIB and Deputy General Manager of Credit Agricole SA. During the meeting, they reviewed the existing co-operation relations and prospects of enhancing and developing them especially in the fields of investment, finance, and economy, in addition to a number of issues of mutual interest. HE Ali bin Ahmed al-Kuwari met with Governor of the Bank of France Francois Villeroy de Galhau. During the meeting, they reviewed the existing co-operation and prospects of enhancing and developing it especially in the fields of investment, finance, and economy, in addition to a number of issues of mutual interest. HE the Minister of Finance also met with Secretary-General of the OECD Mathias Cormann. They reviewed the existing co-operation and prospects of enhancing and developing it especially in the fields of investment, finance, and economy, in addition to a number of issues of mutual interest. **(QNA)**



Singapore president meets deputy PM



President of Singapore Halimah Yacob yesterday met at the Presidential Palace in Singapore with HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Dr Khalid bin Mohamed al-Attiyah. The meeting dealt with topics of mutual interest in addition to bilateral co-operation and ways to promote and develop them. Qatar's ambassador to Singapore Saoud bin Jassim al-Jufairi attended the meeting. **(QNA)**

Qatar elected as Chair of WHO Executive Board

QNA
Geneva

The Executive Board of the World Health Organisation (WHO) elected Qatar as President of the Board at its 153rd session for period of one year. The election is an acknowledgment by Member States of the leading role played by Qatar at the international level, and its strong support for the WHO in performing its mission of promoting health and wellness for all.

HE the Minister of Public Health Dr Hanan Mohamed al-Kuwari expressed Qatar's appreciation to the Member States for the confidence they had shown in electing Qatar as Chair of the Executive Board, and confirmed to work closely with the Member States and the WHO's governing bodies to implement the goals of the World Health Organisation and achieve universal health coverage.

The meetings of the Executive Board of the World Health Organisation began Wednesday in its 153rd session, for two days, in Geneva, Switzerland, chaired by HE Minister of Public Health Dr



HE the Minister of Public Health Dr Hanan Mohamed al-Kuwari attends WHO meeting in Geneva.

Hanan Mohamed al-Kuwari. The meetings discuss a number of important topics, most notably the outcome of the meetings of the 76th World Health Assembly, the committee's report on health emergency prevention, preparedness and response, in addition to topics related to the fourth pillar of the World Health Organisation regarding the enhancement of the organisation's efficiency and effectiveness in providing countries with better support and improving the budgetary, programmatic and finance governance of WHO. The main functions of the Board are to implement the decisions and policies of the Health Assembly, and advise and generally to facilitate its work. The Board is composed of 34 members who are technically qualified in the field of health, and they meet at least twice a year.

Film workshop begins today

Expatriate organisation Film Lovers Qatar (Filqa) will hold a film making workshop in Malayalam today and tomorrow (Friday and Saturday) at Skills Development Centre at Salatha Al Jadeeda. Noted director Zakariya Mohamed and documentary director M Noushad will lead the workshop covering the basics of film making, script writing, photography and videography. More information is available from 55466163.

AI, e-learning part of strategic planning in education: minister

QNA
Doha

HE the Minister of Education and Higher Education Buthaina bint Ali al-Jabr al-Nuaimi said that the development of e-learning environment systems and Artificial Intelligence (AI), and promoting the digital transformation of the educational environment, has become an integral part of any educational strategic plan in Qatar.

HE the Minister praised the

State's keenness on integrating technology into the various teaching and learning processes, to prepare the learners to face all the requirements of modern practical life.

Addressing the 13th Conference of Arab Ministers of Education, organised by the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO) and hosted by the Ministry of National Education, Preschool and Sports in Morocco, HE al-Nuaimi explained that the tremendous and successive developments of

information and communication technology and Artificial Intelligence have led to economic, educational and cultural changes in all fields, especially after the challenges posed by the (Covid-19) pandemic.

HE the Minister emphasised the importance of the role of countries in ensuring that all efforts are harnessed to translate their commitments into measures towards shaping the future of education, stressing the need to exert all available means to support and advocate the continuation of the global

movement to achieve the desired education transformation. She explained that Qatar was chosen among five countries to lead the education transformation at the invitation of the secretary-general of the United Nations. On the margins of the conference, HE al-Nuaimi met with Morocco's Minister of National Education, Preschool and Sports Chakib Benmoussa, where they discussed aspects of co-operation between the two countries in the field of education, and ways to support and enhance it.

Military Secondary School celebrates graduation



The Military Secondary School celebrated yesterday the graduation of the third cohort, under the auspices of HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Dr Khalid bin Mohamed al-Attiyah. HE the Chief of Staff of Qatar Armed Forces Staff Lt-General (Pilot) Salem bin Hamad al-Nabit attended the graduation ceremony of the 99 graduates. During the period of their study, the graduates received training and military and cognitive skills, which help them to continue their studies. On this occasion, Acting Commander of the Military Secondary School, Colonel Salem Masoud al-Hababi, welcomed the Chief of Staff and all the attendees. He also thanked all the leaders for their continuous support, and urged the graduates to continue their perseverance in their future career. At the end of the ceremony, HE the Chief of Staff honoured the outstanding students. A number of senior officers in the armed forces, and the students' parents attended the ceremony. **(QNA)**



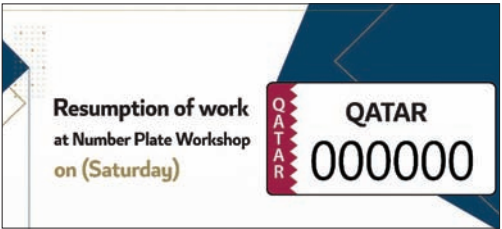
Environment ministry attends workshop on global forest resources assessment



The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change's Wildlife Development Department yesterday concluded its participation in a regional workshop aimed at fostering technical capacities for the global forest resources assessment, in Jordan's capital Amman. Organised by Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the four-day event aimed to improve the quality and consistency of data with the Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA 2025), by providing comprehensive, transparent and reliable insights that enable stakeholders to make informed decisions that affect forests and their sustainable management. The workshop focused on improving the participants' reports on forest data, understanding FRA 2025's terms and definitions, and the guidelines and effective use of the online platform that compile their countries' reports. Participants were given the opportunity to use innovations such as geospatial tools to address problems specific to the region, and to benefit from the experiences of other countries. In March 2023, FAO launched a strategy for capacity development and data collection for FRA 2025, which features a series of regional workshops to provide technical assistance and guidance to national correspondents. **(QNA)**

Number plate workshop

The Number Plate Workshop of the General Directorate of Traffic will be open on Saturdays every week. According to a tweet by the Ministry of Interior (MoI), this is in order to enhance traffic services and make it more convenient for visitors. The ministry tweeted that working hours on Saturday will be from 8am to 12pm.



Qatar special envoy meets US officials



HE the Special Envoy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Counter-Terrorism and Mediation in Conflict Resolution Dr Mutlaq bin Majed al-Qahtani met separately yesterday with Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) for Strategic Policy Scott Rembrandt and Acting Assistant Administrator of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for the Middle East region Andrew Plitt, as part of his current visit to the US. The two meetings discussed bilateral co-operation between the two countries, and several regional and international issues of common concern. In another context, HE the Special Envoy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Counter-Terrorism and Mediation in Conflict Resolution participated in a panel discussion at Hudson Institute. During the panel discussion, he touched on the latest developments in a number of regional and international issues. (QNA)

QRCS and Qatar Press Center sign agreement

QNA
Doha

The Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Qatar Press Center as a general framework to establish bilateral understanding, work together towards the common goals, and capitalise on each party's respective resources and expertise, inspired by the pillars and priorities of Qatar National Vision 2030.

The MoU was signed by the President of QRCS Yousef bin Ali al-Khater and the Chairman of Qatar Press Center Saad bin Mohamed al-Rumaihi. The MoU sets strengthening co-operation between both sides in the journalistic and humanitarian fields, exchanging knowledge and expertise, jointly organising workshops and training for the employees of both institutions, and sharing information.

Al-Khater emphasised QRCS's belief in the utmost importance of the media in the modern time, with their potential to support charitable, humanitarian, and volunteering organisations through promotion, fundraising, and trust building. "This is exactly what our Qatari media and journalistic institutions do," said al-Khater. "They have always been there to help QRCS in fundraising campaigns and



The agreement signing ceremony.

publication of the news of its local and international operations". He thanked the leaders of Qatar Press Center for making this agreement a reality and looked forward to stronger co-operation, by enhancing QRCS's visibility on the one hand, and providing health, relief, and volunteering training for journalists on the other.

For his part, the chairman of

Qatar Press Center stated: "This understanding would strengthen the social role of Qatar Press Center and QRCS, serving as a model for co-operation among the country's media and humanitarian organisations. We at Qatar Press Center seek to make the most out of QRCS's humanitarian and media track record and enable journalists to benefit from its expertise, for the benefit

of everyone. At the same time, all the resources of Qatar Press Center will be available for QRCS to use, towards our shared goals". Al-Rumaihi revealed plans to hold a joint training workshop on 'Media Coverage from a Humanitarian and Legal Perspective'. Presented by experts from QRCS, the event will be attended by many journalists working in Qatar.

talabat showcases Made-in-Qatar brands in tie-up with Monoprix

talabat, the leading platform in the Middle East, has partnered with Monoprix, a reputable retail chain in Qatar, to promote locally-made products on its app. With a focus on supporting the homegrown brands of Qatar, talabat is providing customers with an exclusive selection of Made-in-Qatar products through its platform.

The partnership was announced by Francisco Miguel De Sousa, managing director of talabat in Qatar, and Khaled el Khatouri, store manager of Monoprix at a recent press conference at talabat's corporate headquarters.

The range of products available through talabat's Monoprix store include a diverse selection of snacks, dairy products, puffs, bakery items, fresh meat, and beverages from some of the most reputable and well-known brands in Qatar. These include American Garden, Baladna, Dandy, Ghadeer, Mazzraty, Mcvitie's, Pringles, Qatar Pafki, QBake, and Raayyan.

Francisco Miguel De Sousa, said: "At talabat, contributing to the growth of the local economy and offering a taste of Qatar's rich and authentic culture is very important to us. By promoting Made-in-Qatar brands on our app, we aim to support local businesses and celebrate the authenticity and traditional flavours of homegrown products."

Sebastien Farhat, regional general manager of Monoprix, said: "We are delighted to work with talabat to showcase the best of Qatar's homegrown brands. Our commitment to quality products and excellent customer service is aligned with talabat's vision, and we are excited to work together to provide customers



Francisco Miguel De Sousa and Khaled el Khatouri at the press meet.



The range of products available through talabat's Monoprix store include a diverse selection of snacks, dairy products, puffs, bakery items, fresh meat, and beverages from some of the most reputable and well-known brands in Qatar.

with a unique and convenient shopping experience."

"talabat's commitment to supporting local brands aligns with the country's vision of promoting the growth and development of the local economy," a statement said.

"With its collaboration with Monoprix, talabat aims to take

the lead in supporting and promoting the Made in Qatar products, which are the pride of the country. Customers can now order Made-in-Qatar products through the talabat app and have them delivered straight to their doorstep, experiencing convenient and hassle-free shopping," the statement added.

PHCC provides heat-related illness prevention guidelines

The Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) has offered some tips to prevent common summer diseases. Dr Al Anoud Saleh al-Fehaidi, senior consultant family medicine and manager of PHCC's Qatar University Health Center, said that during summer season, certain diseases arise due to rising temperatures and humidity.

Some cases of pulmonary and respiratory infections, allergic rhinitis, allergic sinusitis, eye allergies, and skin allergies, increase due to the direct effect of heat and humidity on the body and the sudden change in temperature when moving from a cold place to a hot place and vice versa, using air conditioners or electric fans, or diving into swimming pools and the sea.

Dr al-Fehaidi advised the public to avoid direct and too much exposure to the sun, especially around noon, and not to position themselves directly under the air conditioning, especially when it is bedtime. They should also take precautions and adhere to social distancing to prevent the transmission of infections.

As for asthma patients, they



Dr Al Anoud Saleh al-Fehaidi

should be more careful with high humidity and dusty weather. They should avoid doing outdoor activities in this weather and be sure to bring their medicines and inhalers, especially when exercising, walking, or riding a bicycle.

Dr al-Fehaidi suggested that people should not leave food out of refrigeration in hot weather for too long, as this may lead to food spoilage, which may lead to stomach flu or even food poisoning, noting that this causes symptoms like stomach and abdominal pain, diarrhoea, vomit-



Avoid direct and too much exposure to the sun, especially around noon.

ing, and extreme fatigue.

Food poisoning may also lead to severe dehydration and organ failure, which may lead to death if appropriate treatment is not given. People most vulnerable to this are children, the elderly, and those with chronic diseases. She advised the public to wear appropriate light and comfortable clothing for the hot weather, made of breathable and sweat-absorbing fabrics, such

as cotton and linen, noting that they should avoid wearing tight clothing and heavy fabrics such as rayon, polyester, nylon, and velvet.

In addition to wearing light colours, applying sunscreen to protect the skin from dryness and skin burns, wearing appropriate sunglasses, and wearing appropriate straw hats or using umbrellas to avoid direct exposure to the sun, Dr al-Fehaidi added.

Qatar Airways resumes daily Tokyo Haneda-Doha services

Qatar Airways has resumed a scheduled non-stop service between Tokyo International Airport (Haneda) and Hamad International Airport. Qatar Airways will operate its state-of-the-art Airbus A350-900 aircraft, equipped with 36 Qsuite business class seats and 247 seats in economy.

In addition to the existing Narita-Doha service, the resumption of daily flights from Haneda Airport will increase the flight frequency from the greater Tokyo area from seven to 14 flights a week.

Travellers from Tokyo will be able to enjoy "seamless" connections to over 160 destinations using the airline's extensive global network, including popular destinations across Africa, Europe, the Middle East and more,



Qatar Airways regional manager (Japan and Korea) Shinji Miyamoto, said, "We are very pleased to announce the resumption of flights to Haneda Airport. We are also very pleased that Japanese customers will be able to experience Qatar Airways' award-winning business class, Qsuite, which is being introduced for the first time ever in Japan.

Qatar is scheduled to host various world-class events this year following the successful FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, including the coveted Formula 1 race for motorsports fans. We hope many Japanese will fly with Qatar Airways to visit Qatar, as it is a destination that features countless tourist attractions such as magnificent desert experiences and preserved heritage sites."

through Doha's Hamad International Airport. Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive HE Akbar al-Baker said, "The resumption of the Tokyo Haneda-Doha service follows our major network expansion announced at ITB Berlin 2023, which will see an extra 655 weekly flights in 2023 compared to 2022.

"Japan remains a significant market for Qatar Airways and its passengers, and in addition to Haneda, the airline will soon be resuming flights to Osaka this year."

'European Language Activities' launched in collaboration with Katara Public Diplomacy

The Delegation of the European Union (EU) to Qatar has announced the launch of the 'European Language Activities' programme yesterday (June 1), aimed at celebrating and promoting the linguistic heritage and culture of four EU member states: Sweden, Greece, Italy, and Portugal.

In a statement, the EU Delegation

said this unique initiative, in collaboration with Katara Public Diplomacy, will witness four EU member states hosting a series of engaging events that provide an opportunity for the public to explore and appreciate Europe's rich linguistic background, culture, and history throughout June.

The events, which will take

place at Katara - the Cultural Village (Building 15), include a variety of formats such as musical performances, lectures, and open classes. The venue is renowned as a dynamic centre where diverse cultures come together, fostering a sense of mutual understanding, friendship, and peace.

"These events will be open to the general public, and we en-

The events, which will take place at Katara - the Cultural Village (Building 15), include a variety of formats such as musical performances, lectures, and open classes

courage all our friends and partners from both the Qatari community and other communities residing in Qatar to join us. Our aim is to foster a greater understanding and appreciation of

the rich linguistic background, culture, and history of Europe," the EU Delegation said. "We are grateful to our esteemed partners at Katara Public Diplomacy, who have enthusiastically embraced

this idea and have facilitated bringing it to life."

Set to offer participants a chance to discover various linguistic traditions, the programme schedule for the lan-

guage sessions are: Swedish (June 6), Greek (June 11), Italian (June 13), and Portuguese (June 21).

Each session will provide an engaging and interactive experience, where participants can deepen their understanding of these languages, their cultural contexts, and foster an appreciation for the diversity of human expression.

Global institutional efforts sought to address challenges of climate change on human rights

QNA
San Salvador

HE the Chairperson of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) and Chairperson of the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) Maryam bint Abdullah al-Attiyah underscored the desperate need for setting out a collaborative rights-based approach to climate change and crystallising the increasing global demand for laying out an international human rights instrument on climate change.

In her inaugural speech before the International Seminar for National Human Rights Institutions “Impacts of Climate change on Human Rights” hosted by the Human Rights Ombudsmans Office (PDDH) in Salvador, HE al-Attiyah said such an approach must be handled through practical means, such as representing the rights of affected communities, integrating and protecting

GANHRI chairperson underscores the desperate need for setting collaborative rights-based approach to climate change

them in all relevant programmes, policies and operations to fulfil the pledge that was upheld at the centre of the sustainable development plan.

She outlined that the year 2023 marks the midpoint on the global efforts devoted to achieving the sustainable development plan for 2030 which identified climate change as a major challenge in the goal 13 which is closely related to all sustainable development goals affecting people’s livelihood in each country and continent.

The chairperson of the NHRC added that climate change remained a threat to humanity, and although it impacts all countries of the world, however, feeling its impact is mounting among communities which live in fragile and marginalised situations, pointing

out that addressing the adverse effects of climate change is a priority for the GANHRI and its members in multiple areas.

HE al-Attiyah emphasised that national human rights institutions have developed their role as effective and resolute entities in addressing climate change within their ordinary function to encompass provision of counselling to states on climate measures that place human rights at the centre of their interests and orientations, co-operating with vulnerable groups and individuals whose rights would be most susceptible to the risk of damage due to climate change, monitoring climate change effects on human rights and reporting them both at the national and international levels, engaging in achieving climate justice and holding



HE Maryam bint Abdullah al-Attiyah

those tasked with functions accountable.

In addition, HE al-Attiyah pointed out that national human rights institutions represent a bridge that supports information exchange with their other peers at the international level, along with policymakers, civil society and other stakeholders, including the most vulnerable groups.

HE al-Attiyah talked about the most prominent efforts undertaken by the GANHRI and national institutions to counter the increasing threats arising from

climate change, asserting that the UN Human Rights Council and international community acknowledged the critical contributions that can be afforded by national human rights institutions to address effects of climate change on human rights.

She noted that one of the major outcomes of advocacy provided by the GANHRI is the adoption of the resolution No. 51/31 by the Human Rights Council to promote human rights in the context of climate action and encourage national human rights institutions to continue strengthening their work in this regard.

She highlighted the critical contributions provided by the international community and defenders of human rights of indigenous peoples and environmental justice, indicating that they commonly face risks and threats and sometimes lose their lives, because of their advocacy for human rights against climate change effects and environment degradation.

She stressed the major role

played by states and their core responsibility to protect all human rights defenders, adding that international human rights institutions should significantly contribute to promoting positive narratives on the critical role played by human rights defenders, protecting them and holding perpetrators of these crimes accountable.

HE al-Attiyah noted the GANHRI’s efforts aimed at promoting efficiency and engagement in climate talks, pointing out that the alliance submitted a request to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) last August to grant the GANHRI, national human rights institutions and regional networks an observer status to help the UN climate change operations capitalise on the unique expertise that can be virtually provided by national human rights institutions to discuss climate change and taking decisions.

She affirmed that the seminar is an opportunity to proceed

with sharing expertise and approaches and learning from them in pursuit of addressing multiple complex challenges arising from climate change. Attended by Vice-President of El Salvador Felix Ulloa, Head of the Ombudsman Office in El Salvador Raquel Caballero de Guevara, President and GANHRI Secretary-General in Morocco Amina Bouayach and Representative of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) Katharina Rose, the seminar intends to provide a venue of discussion and analysis between representatives of national human rights institutions from all over the world to identify the joint activities of technological and academic nature, in addition to paving the way for the presence of specialists in climate change and laying out a roadmap that directs the procedures of national human rights institutions concerning human rights protection in countering climate change effects all over the world and protecting the rights of vulnerable groups.

QNL June events to nurture life skills

Qatar National Library (QNL) is presenting a series of events throughout the month of June, offering insights on parenting, financial and legal literacy, creativity, initiating a book club, and more.

The “Mommy to Be” lecture series, which was presented by experts and specialists in the field of motherhood, childhood and health, took place yesterday. “Mommy to Be: Help Me Sleep Through the Night”, with Dr Rola Qatani, maternity and childhood specialist, explored the positive effects of sleep on a child’s overall well-being and assisted mothers, particularly working mothers, in managing their time.

The second series of the QNL engage podcasts, titled “The Role of Libraries in Creating an Educated and Cultured Society” kicks off this month. The first episode on June 4 delves into the importance of financial literacy for the younger generation.

Accomplished entrepreneur Hamad al-Hajri will share his insights on the significance of financial literacy and its impact on personal growth. Episode 2 on June 11 – “Legal Advice for



The Qatar National Library.

New Companies” – will hear from Hamad al-Yafei, a renowned attorney, who will shed light on the essential aspects of legal awareness for entrepreneurs and businesses.

The third episode, on June 18, features Dr Dena al-Thani, assistant professor at Hamad Bin Khalifa University, speaking on the subject, “How to Make AI Accessible”.

As part of the “Art of the Book” event series, QNL, in collabora-

tion with the French embassy and the Institut Français, presents a fascinating lecture called the “History of Arab Printing in Europe” on June 6.

Presented by Slimane Zeghidour, writer and chief editor at TV5MONDE, the session will delve into the scholarly and artistic significance of this cross-cultural exchange.

With a focus on families, QNL presents a session on navigating the adolescent years successfully

for children with Down syndrome. The online talk on June 7 will be presented in Arabic by Ruba Dababat, speech and language pathologist at Qatar Foundation Learning Centre.

On June 8, youth from ages 12 to 18 can learn more about “The Six Thinking Hats” – one of the most important methods of creative thinking. Presented in Arabic, the session will reveal the importance of each hat and its characteristics. Be prepared to be swept away on an enchanting melodic journey by The Philharmonic at the Library: Harmonie-musik for Wind Octet, on June 14.

Experience the beauty of pieces by Rossini, Haydn, Beethoven, and Dvořák as the Philharmonic’s musicians bring the spirit of the 18th century court and salons of Europe to life. On June 20, the “How Do I ...” series of talks will look at how to start a book club, providing valuable insights on launching your own reading circle.

It will also include tips on how the Library can provide support by offering a curated list of book club titles available in its collections.

‘Labseer’ exercise for Military Science Diploma course held



The Training Center for Candidates has concluded the ‘Labseer’ exercise for the course of military science diploma No.10 under the auspices of HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Dr Khalid bin Mohamed al-Attiyah and in the presence of Chief of Staff of Qatar Armed Forces HE Staff Lieutenant-General (Pilot) Salem bin Hamad al-Nabit. The exercise was intended to test the candidates’ capabilities in applying combat skills and highlighting their leading role and information in mobilisation through battle procedures for commanders of the minor sub-units (platoon-company) under exigent circumstances, understanding war principles generally, including obstructive and defensive principles, methods of correctly applying them on the ground, planning and carrying out patrols, training on sea landing, and developing combat skills in built-up areas. The exercise was attended by a number of senior officers in the armed forces, along with several Amiri Guard officers, Ministry of Interior and Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya). **(QNA)**

AZF welcomes delegation of QU students



Aspire Zone Foundation (AZF) welcomed a delegation from Qatar University (QU) consisting of 31 Executive Masters in Leadership students on May 30. The delegation visited AZF to learn about its facilities and the leading global services it provides to support sports and athletes. During the tour, the students learned about the distinguished services provided by the members of Aspire Zone Foundation: Aspire Academy, Aspetar – the Orthopedics and Sports Medicine Hospital, in the areas of nurturing and caring for gifted athletes, providing pioneering medical services for professionals, Aspire Logistics – learning about the strategy of Aspire Zone Foundation; and the Sport Accelerator. At the end of the visit, the students appreciated this unique experience, which proves how wonderful and different the institution is from other sports facilities in the world, as it combines a sports academy, a hospital in sports medicine, and international stadiums.

Man arrested for drug trafficking



The General Directorate for Drug Enforcement has arrested a person from an African country for trafficking various narcotics and handed him over to the Public Prosecution to initiate the necessary legal procedures. According to a tweet by the Ministry of Interior (MoI), after obtaining permission from the competent authorities, he was apprehended and an order was issued by the Public Prosecution to search his residence. “The search operation resulted in the seizure of several containers filled with drugs in the form of rolls, envelopes, and capsules of different sizes. The seized items were 2,800gm of methamphetamine, 1,800gm heroin and 200gm hashish. During the interrogation, he confessed to the charges against him, and both he and the seized items were handed over to the Public Prosecution to initiate the necessary procedures in this regard,” the tweet explained.

HBKU’s CIS launches three postgraduate programmes

The College of Islamic Studies (CIS) at Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) has announced the opening of admissions to three programmes in its academic offerings, with further enhancements to its distinctive multidisciplinary catalogue set to follow.

Beginning Fall 2023, the College will welcome cohorts to its renewed Graduate Certificate in Islamic Studies (GCIS) and Graduate Certificate in Islamic Finance (GCIF) programmes, alongside the introduction of its new PhD in Islamic Studies (DIS) programme, a statement said.

Further details on all programmes will also be discussed with prospective students in a forthcoming information session scheduled for June 5. The event will be followed by a public lecture titled Routed Revival: How We Will Educate Future Scholars, to be delivered by Dr Mehmet Gormez, former president of the Presidency of Religious Affairs of Türkiye.

The PhD programme in Islamic Studies will instil a comprehensive understanding of Islam as well as a mastery of a chosen disciplinary pathway for each of its students. It encompasses distinguishing elements, including a comparative approach, a strong bilingual feature, and an applied perspective.

The interdisciplinary programme is structured with six foundational courses and six elective courses, the latter of which will allow the student to craft their academic specialisation



tion in a diverse range of subject areas including traditional Islamic sciences; Islamic art, architecture, and urbanism; global affairs; Islamic psychology; and applied Islamic ethics. It also comprises a strong language component, in which the primary languages of Arabic and English are supplemented by a subsidiary research language associated with Muslim societies, including Persian, Turkish, Bahasa Indonesia, and Hausa.

The refreshed graduate certificate programmes will span one year, and serve as a bridge for students considering Master’s degrees in these fields, while also dispensing practical knowledge that can be applied in professional and educational settings. The GCIS programme will give students the opportunity to explore the interdisciplinary nature of Islamic studies and gain a better understanding of Islamic history, theology, philosophy, law, and ethics, while the GCIF programme will provide training in the requisite skills to operate effectively in the Islamic finance market.

“Through this slate of interdisciplinary programmes, HBKU’s CIS will provide future generations of academics, financial experts, social thinkers, researchers, and practitioners a platform from which they can further apply their understanding of Islamic studies across their chosen disciplines.

“The PhD programme in particular aims to produce future scholars of Islam whose academic training is rooted in traditional Islamic disciplines and immersed in contemporary social science discourses. After all, here at CIS, we approach Islam as conceptually both a religion and a civilisation,” said Dr Recep Sentürk, Dean, HBKU’s CIS.

CIS is a result of a vision-ary approach to Islamic studies and the thought leadership that defines its contributions on the national, regional, and global scales. Admissions for the CIS’s Fall 2023 programmes are now open. More information about the College and its entire range of programmes is available from <https://www.hbku.edu.qa/en/cis>, the statement added.

Birds of a feather



A curious juvenile dove chick and one of its parents rest on a Sidra tree in a Doha backyard. Doves and pigeons are among the most prolific breeders of the birds found in Qatar, irrespective of the season.
PICTURE: Gulf Times news editor Bonnie James.

Karwan-e-Urdu Qatar fetes renowned poet and writer

Karwan-e-Urdu Qatar, a Doha-based literary organisation, held the Jashn-e-Sheen Kaaf Nizam and Aalami Mushaira 2023 on Friday, May 26, at the DPS MIS auditorium in Al Wakra.

Many well-known Urdu poets from Qatar, India and Pakistan participated in the ceremony. The poets brought to life the brilliance of Urdu poetry and captivated the audience with their couplets, ghazals, and nazms that spoke of beauty, love, peace, struggle and the purpose of life.

A large number of Urdu-speaking people who attended the gathering appreciated the poets for their acclaimed works.

Mohamed Shahid Khan, the general secretary of KUQ, welcomed the guests, while renowned poet, critic and writer Sheen Kaaf Nizam chaired the function.

N A Nasir was the guest of honour and Meraj Haidar, a philanthropist and successful businessman from Lucknow, India, was the chief guest of the grand international Mushaira.

Master Zaid Rahmatullah recited verses from the Glorious Qur'an.

KUQ chairman Azim Abbas delivered the official welcome address. He welcomed the local and guest poets from India and Pakistan, and thanked all executive members of KUQ for organising the event.

KUQ president Ateeq Anwar thanked the guests, the sponsors of the event and the volunteers for conducting the Mushaira successfully and audience for listening to each and every poet and guest attentively, patiently and main-

taining decorum. He also spoke on the life and works of Sheen Kaaf Nizam.

Later, Karwan-e-Urdu Qatar, which works for the promotion of Urdu literature and poetry in Doha, presented mementos to the poets for their contribution to the promotion of the Urdu language and expanding its love and acceptance among the masses of the world.

A LifeTime Achievement Award was presented to Sheen Kaaf Nizam with a cash prize of Rs100,000 for his immense contribution to Urdu poetry and literature. A LifeTime Achievement award was also presented to N A Nasir for his continuous support and assistance for the promotion of Urdu.

Dr Neshat Ahmed Siddiqui shed light on the life and the achievements of Sheen Kaaf Nizam and his exemplary contributions in the promotion of Urdu literature.

The event also marked the launch of the Hindi version of Maqsood Anwar Maqsood's collection of poetry entitled Aasman To Hi Bata.

Abrar Kashif conducted the Mushaira in his unique style.

Poets included Sheen Kaaf Nizam from Jodhpur, Iqbal Ashhar from Delhi, Aqeel Noman from Bareilly, Rehman Faris from Lahore, Abrar Kashif from Maharashtra, Dr Tariq Qamar from Lucknow, Nusrat Ateeq from Gorakhpur, and local poets Ateeq Anwar, Maqsood Anwar Maqsood, Ijaz Heider, Dr Nadeem Jilani and Rashid Alam Rashid.

The audience, including families, enjoyed and appreciated all forms of Urdu poetry until the end of programme.



Glimpses from the event.



What is the list of chemical elements sorted by atomic number called?

By Shafqat Nabi

N11. Out of more than 100 collection of entities, 41 are named after places, 19 are named after people (the heaviest named after the only one alive), 15 are named after mythological references, and a few are named after minerals.

What is this collection of entities called?

N12. The 2023 FIA Formula One World Championship is a motor racing championship for Formula One cars, which is the 74th running of the Formula One World Championship. Who is Formula 1's official sole tyre supplier until 2024?

N13. This term is used to define a custom in many US cities of going out on a particular day of the week to eat a food item. In 1989, Taco John's was granted this term's trademark that extends to all of the US except New Jersey. In 2019, LeBron James began sharing social media posts on Instagram about his family's weekly dinners of this food item and dubbed it thus. Identify this term that refers to the custom of dedicating a specific day of the week to savour a food item.

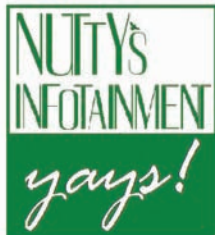
N14. Contiguous transcontinental states are those countries that have one continuous or immediately adjacent piece of territory that spans a continental boundary. Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkey are countries that lie in both Asia and Europe. Name the only country that lies in both Asia and Africa.

N15. Before this event in 1973, Participant 1 entered the arena in the style of Cleopatra, on a feather-adorned litter carried by four bare-chested muscle men dressed in the style of ancient slaves. Participant 2 followed in a rickshaw drawn by a bevy of models. Participant 2 presented Participant 1 with a giant Sugar Daddy lollipop, and Participant 1 responded by giving him an animal. Name this event.

N16. Estadio Milton Correa, usually known as Zerao, is a multi-purpose stadium located in Macapa, Brazil. It is used mostly for soccer matches and hosts the home matches of notable Brazilian soccer teams. Its name (and the fame) comes from the common belief related to its unique feature. What is it?

N17. Asahi Ryokan is a hotel in the Japanese city of Fukuoka where guests have the option to pay just ¥100 (about \$1) per night to stay the night if they agree to what?

N18. As per statistica.com, which country holds the



record for the highest number of islands of any country in the world?

N19. Montague and Capulet are the respective family names of which famous fictional characters?

N110. Similar to how we use "RIP" on modern-day headstones, the tombstones of many ancient Romans featured the inscription "NFFNSNC." These letters stand for non fui, fui, non sum, non curo, (as pictured) a Latin phrase representing an Epicurean philosophy. What does it mean?



Answers

N11. Periodic Table.

N12. Pirelli, the Italian multinational tyre manufacturer based in Milan.

N13. Taco Tuesday. Restaurants will often offer special prices, every Tuesday night.

N14. Egypt.

N15. The "Battle of the Sexes" tennis match between Bobby Riggs and Billie Jean King.

N16. That the midfield line lies exactly on the Equator - zero latitude - thus causing each team to defend one hemisphere.

N17. To have their entire stay livestreamed. The feed is video-only, so guests will have privacy in their conversations or phone calls. Guests are permitted to turn the lights off, and the bathroom area is out of camera range.

N18. Sweden, with estimated 267,570 islands within its territory, the majority of which are uninhabited. Even the capital of Stockholm is built across a 14-island archipelago with more than 50 bridges.

N19. Romeo and Juliet. Capulet and Montague are the heads of two feuding families in William Shakespeare's famous tragedy Romeo and Juliet.

N110. I was not, I was, I am not, I don't care.

Tribe Nl.yays

Navy SEALs are the US Navy's primary special operations force. What does the acronym SEAL stand for? Sea, Air and Land.

(Ravi Ranjan, Wakra)

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



IWA Bazaar exhibition organised

Indian Women's Association organised an exhibition titled 'IWA Bazaar-by the women, for the community' at Indian Cultural Centre (ICC) recently to empower women entrepreneurs. The chief guest, ICC president Manikantan A Pand, special guests, cultural head Sumaa Mahesh, Instituto Burro Moda co-founder and academic head Meenu Prasad and Indian Sports Centre's head of yoga and women's sports Shalini Tiwari inaugurated the exhibition.

BPS students shine in Qatar Olympiad

Three Birla Public School (BPS) students have been awarded the third prize in the National Olympiad for Creativity in Math and Science 2023, organised by the Department of Educational Supervision in Qatar.

The students' project was recognised as an exemplary demonstration of their creativity, ingenuity, and dedication to STEM education, a statement from the school said.

BPS was selected from over 200 schools that applied for the initial rounds.

The project was developed by Jai Aadithya, Mahika Rao, and Nihal Ashik, all from grade XII. They were guided and supported by Department of Mathematics head

Shibumon P S and teachers Anu Antony, Nisha Unnikrishnan, and Nancy Baiju.

The name of the project is S.A.F.E., which stands for 'Shark Alert and Flagging Equipment'. The project involves a robotic device that can detect and identify sharks in the water using an SSD mobile net AI classification model, and alert nearby swimmers or divers using a flagging system. The device can also be used for other purposes such as counting species of marine life, monitoring endangered species and collecting data on water quality.

The National Olympiad for Creativity in Math and Science is held annually. BPS management and senior leadership team lauded the achievers.



MES student wins martial arts prizes

Rakshan Jayabalan (VI-A) of MES Indian School won prizes in Silambam, an Indian martial art originating in Tamil Nadu, in two events held last month in India.

In the 4th National Level 2023 tournament organised in Goa by the School Games Sports Development Foundation, India, Rakshan bagged the first prize in both single stick (age under -11) and double stick (age under -11) representing Tamil Nadu. He also won a gold (age 9-10 category) in the 7th National Level Silambam championship in Kochi, again representing his home state.

Mental health programme held at Rajagiri Public School

Rajagiri Public School (RPS) organised the fourth session in the Excelsior Lecture Series for senior students. Dr Aju Abraham, consultant psychiatrist at Dr Aju Abraham Medical Centre addressed the students on the topic 'Recognising and Preventing Burnout in High School Students'.

The session focused on the comprehension of the term 'burnout' which is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress.

The speaker discussed about the symptoms, the causes and the different stages of burnout. Through different case studies, the students

were introduced to the various techniques to manage the stress in teenagers. Dr Abraham also guided the students with some strategies to deal with their studies. Head girl Anna Jerry observed that such sessions are highly beneficial for students, especially for those who are in their teenage.



Memoir on humanitarian released by Lankan community

Sri Lankan community members released *Puttalaththin Puthalvan - A memoir on late Kamardeen Abdul Balz*. Bishrin Mohamed, Abdul Rahman, Nusri Rahmathullah, Rawees Mohamed and Hidayathullah Ajmal shared their views on the book and the late humanitarian. The memoir, a collection of condolences compiled by Mohamed Mufassir and published by Shahid Sharafath, was launched by KAB Foundation led by Isham Marikar.



MES lifts SOP football championship

The boys under-10 football team of MES Indian School became champions in the Level 1 Football tournament of the 16th edition of the School Olympic Programme. The event was organised under the aegis of Supreme Education Council and conducted for all the independent and expatriate schools in Qatar at the Aspire Dome on May 18. The winning team that comprised Mohamed Fadhil, Aman Ziyen, Raymond James Bobby, Mohamed Misab, Marshal Binu Varghese, and Ameen Aneesh was coached by Binoy K K, a faculty member of the Physical Education Department. Principal Dr Hameeda Kadar felicitated the winners.

Ishrae Qatar Chapter organises GWC Indoor Cricket League 2023



The Indian Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers (Ishrae) Qatar Chapter organised an indoor cricket league. The five-day event which finished on May 26 was held at the Al Arabi Indoor Stadium and The Hamilton International School. The indoor league match concluded with Al-Ta'adhod Group and Almoayyed Air Conditioning competing in the finals. Al-Ta'adhod Group defeated Almoayyed by a margin of 35 runs. GWC was the title sponsor for this event. Ranjeev Menon, Group CEO, GWC, said: "Sports are based on the principle of discipline, fraternity and determination - all ingredients which are essential in all walks of life, and especially in building healthy communities and work-life balance. Supporting this event is our way of promoting team-building, healthy lifestyle and sharing of knowledge in Qatar."

Best speaker, rebuttal awards for MES School



Sheza Fatima (class XD) of MES Indian School bagged the Best Speaker and the Best Rebuttal awards in the Polemic Challenge 2023 conducted at the Shantiniketan Indian School on May 25. About 10 schools participated in the competition. Each speaker was given three minutes to speak after which he/she had to participate in the rebuttal session wherein he/she had to refute and respond to arguments in the opponent's speech. Sheza Fatima and Aryan Unnikrishnan represented MES Indian School in the competition.

Wednesday Fiesta performances enthrall visitors

The Wednesday Fiesta at the Indian Cultural Centre (ICC) on May 24 featured a dance performance titled 'Nrutya Sourabha' by actors and dancers Vikram Suri and Namitha Rao, famed for spectacular acts comprising Pushpanjali, Dashavatara, Mohini Bhaskarasura and Kathak. Local Indian singers Shivapriya Suresh, Mythilli Shenoy, Lazim Siddique and Hamna Siddique rendered some classical tracks. The Wednesday Fiesta takes place at 7pm every week.



Jordan crown prince weds Saudi architect

AFP/Reuters
Amman

Jordan's Crown Prince Hussein bin Abdullah married Saudi architect Rajwa al-Saif yesterday in a wedding attended by royals from across the globe.

The ceremony took place in the mid-century Zahran Palace in the capital Amman – the scene of other key Hashemite kingdom weddings including that of King Abdullah II to Queen Rania and also that of his father, the late King Hussein bin Talal.

The king's eldest son and al-Saif, both 28, tied the knot at a ceremony attended by their families and 140 guests, including US First Lady Jill Biden and UK's Prince and Princess of Wales.

King Abdullah II, aged 61 and on the throne since 1999, has long groomed his eldest son to succeed him, bringing him on important visits and to meetings, former information minister Samih Maaytah previously told AFP.

Hussein became heir to the throne in 2009. In recent years, he has increasingly taken on the duties of a future king, rubbing shoulders with world leaders including US President Joe Biden.

At the Arab League summit in Jeddah last month, he walked alongside his father to greet Saudi Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman. The three were photographed together.



The convoy carrying Crown Prince Hussein and Rajwa al-Saif leaves after their royal wedding ceremony in Amman.

At home, Hussein is regularly seen chairing meetings of government agencies.

The newly titled Princess Rajwa was born in Riyadh.

She is descended from the Al Sudayri family of Najd in what became modern day Saudi Arabia, known to be closely linked to the Saudi royal family.

Other notable guests included the Netherlands' King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima, as well as Belgium's King Philippe and Crown Princess Elisabeth and Danish Crown

Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Mary.

The highly anticipated nuptials were met by celebrations across Jordan, with thousands gathering to witness the procession in Amman in streets decorated for the occasion with pictures of the couple and banners.

A royal red motorcade, reserved for special occasions, crossed the capital from Zahran Palace in the centre to Husseinia Palace in the west.

"We are certainly very happy with the crown prince's wedding. This is the joy of all of Jordan," said Sawzan Rifaia, 26, clad in a white shirt with a picture of the newlyweds and a red Jordanian keffiyeh wrapped over her white headscarf.

Jordan enjoys relative stability compared to its Middle East neighbours, but has seen protests in recent years as it struggles with economic woes.

The World Bank says Jordan is heavily in debt and faces around 23% unemployment.

The country relies extensively on foreign aid. The Jordanian king has wide-ranging political powers in a nation of 11mn people, a parliamentary monarchy, and he is also supreme leader of the armed forces.

Hussein followed in his father's footsteps by attending Britain's Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and then studied history at Washington's Georgetown University.

His bride was born and raised in Saudi Arabia but is also Western-educated, having studied architecture at Syracuse University in New York.

Eswatini convicts jailed legislators

AFP
Mbabane

Two pro-democracy lawmakers in Eswatini were found guilty of murder and "terrorism" yesterday, in a trial stemming from a wave of protests that hit Africa's last absolute monarchy in 2021.

Mduduzi Bacede Mabuza and Mthandeni Dube were convicted by a high court in the capital, Mbabane, almost two years after the pair were arrested on accusations of having incited unrest.

"I find (the) accused ... guilty of all charges preferred against them," Judge Mumcy Dlamini told the court.

The two, who had pleaded innocent to all counts, face up to 20 years in jail.

A sentencing hearing is to take place "a date to be determined", said Dlamini.

Mabuza and Dube were held in July 2021 during protests calling for democratic reforms. The demonstrations were violently quashed by security forces, with dozens killed.

The verdict comes just months before parliamentary elections, which are due to be held on September 29.

The vote is unlikely to change the political landscape in the southern African nation of 1.2mn people, which has been ruled by King Mswati III since 1986.

The king wields absolute power.

The convicted lawmakers had advocated for reforms to a complex system of non-party elections that effectively ensures Mswati faces no meaningful dissent.

Candidates cannot be affiliated to any political group under the constitution, which emphasises "individual merit" as the basis for selecting members of parliament and public officials.

Mswati can veto any legislation, appoints the prime minister and cabinet, and is constitutionally above the law.

Billboard collapse kills one, injures five in Egypt

One person was killed and five others were injured yesterday when a billboard collapsed in a major thoroughfare as a result of a sandstorm that swept through Egypt's capital. The storm "crushed" four vehicles on the October 6 motorway in the centre of Cairo, home to a population of 20mn people, according to the state flagship paper *Al-Ahram*. Traffic authorities worked to "remove the wreckage of the billboard and restore the movement of traffic", the newspaper added. Sandstorms regularly pummel Egypt during the spring, causing respiratory issues, according to the health ministry. -**AFP**

Zimbabwe adopts law banning criticism against the government

AFP/Reuters
Harare

Zimbabwe's parliament has approved a law that ostensibly promotes patriotism but has been condemned by the opposition as a "draconian" attempt to stifle dissent ahead of national elections.

The Criminal Law Code Amendment Bill, widely known as the "Patriotic Bill", contains a clause that criminalises "wilfully damaging the sovereignty and national interest of Zimbabwe".

It was passed by the lower house on Wednesday evening.

In the most extreme cases, violators run the risk of up to 20 years in prison.

"What they are criminalising is differing opinion against Zanu-PF ... and this happens at the edge of an election showing without any doubt that the envelope of reform is being ignored," said Ostallos Siziba, spokesman for the op-

position Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) party.

"Free speech is now dead," prominent journalist and activist Hopewell Chin'ono wrote on Twitter, adding it was "a very sad day for Zimbabwe".

CCC spokesperson and lawyer, Fadzayi Mahere, described the law as "dangerous".

"Zanu-PF has reduced our great nation into an outpost of tyranny," Mahere told Reuters. "None of it will work because Zimbabweans go to the polls with one mission – to win Zimbabwe for change. No amount of panicky despotism by Zanu-PF will stand in the way of change whose time has come."

The law was approved just hours after the government, ending months of uncertainty, announced nationwide elections for August 23.

Analysts are bracing for a tense ballot in a country where discontent at entrenched poverty, power cuts and other shortages runs deep.

Joseph Chinotimba, a lawmaker from the ruling Zanu-PF party, told parliament that the new law is aimed at encouraging Zimbabweans to be "patriotic".

"This bill is not meant to curtail the existence of political parties but it is there to encourage the people of Zimbabwe to love their country and stop denouncing it," Chinotimba said.

He described the law as "noble ... with good intentions".

However, opponents said it bans any criticism of the government at a time when rights groups and opposition parties are already complaining of a clampdown.

"Let history be known that I was not part of this commotion and circus," opposition lawmaker Temba Mliswa told parliament before getting kicked out.

The law will now go to the Senate. It will then need to be approved by President Emmerson Mnangagwa – something Zimbabwe Human Rights

NGO Forum director, Musa Kika, said is all but granted.

"This bill is the most draconian law that we have seen in Zimbabwe," Kika told AFP.

Eighty-year-old Mnangagwa, who replaced strongman ruler Robert Mugabe in 2017 after a military-led coup, is seeking a second term in August.

His main challenger is Nelson Chamisa, a 45-year-old lawyer and pastor, who leads the recently formed CCC party and narrowly lost to Mnangagwa in 2018.

The new legislation provides, among other things, for the punishment of those who actively partake in meetings where sanctions or a trade boycott against Zimbabwe are discussed.

The government has long complained about the impact of sanctions imposed by western countries on a number of entities and individuals because of human rights abuses and corrupt practices.

Tehran's 'meowseum' purrfect for Persians

AFP
Tehran

Strolled nonchalantly across the doorstep, a large tomcat welcomes visitors to Tehran's cat museum and cafe, a curious establishment where some 30 friendly felines roam freely throughout the exhibition space.

Shahrzad, Farrokh, Shapoor and Shirin are among the real stars of this attraction in a small two-storey building in the centre of the Iranian capital.

Director Hossein HamlehDari says that when it first opened in 2020 it was named the "meowseum".

It is a place where visitors and cats coexist peacefully in the exhibition rooms and on the cafe terrace.

The privately funded museum's faded walls feature reproductions of paintings, photographs, caricatures and even stamps celebrating the cat from countries as diverse as Iran, South Korea, Guinea and Ukraine.

Most visitors come here seeking to interact and play with the adopted cats, which hail from a wide variety of breeds.

Among them are several Persians, known for their long hair and placid character, a breed which originated in Iran and neighbouring Turkiye.

"I love cats, so I really like this place and its friendly atmosphere," says Mina, a 21-year-old student cuddling a soft brown-coated tomcat.



People visit the 'meowseum', a privately funded cat museum and cafe where some 30 friendly felines roam freely throughout the exhibition space, in Tehran.

Her friend Mohamed, 20, says he too is fond of animals as pets, and has decided "to buy a cat" in the coming weeks.

"When people come here and meet Farrokh, a cat that was born blind but is still very agile, they realise cats are also citizens of this city and can coexist with residents," HamlehDari says.

The animals' reputation in Iran has suffered knocks in the past because of the large number of strays in big cities, Tehran in particular.

However, unlike dogs, cats

have been valued pets in Iran for centuries.

"They are represented in many works of art, in particular Persian miniatures," HamlehDari says.

He cites the example of Babri ("tigerish") Khan, the famous pet cat of Naser al-Din Shah of the Qajar dynasty, who reigned over the country from 1848 to 1896.

And all Iranians are familiar with the fable *Masnavi of Mush-O Gorbeh* (*The Mouse and the Cat*), a political satire by the

14th century poet Obeid Zakani.

It has become increasingly fashionable among wealthy Iranians in recent times to own a dog, preferably a small pedigree breed.

However, this trend is not entirely welcomed by religious conservatives.

In 2021, a bill that would have outlawed pets caused a public outcry.

However, nothing has been heard since – a clear signal from Iran's pro-pet lobby that they won't take things lying down.

Swiss court confirms war crimes ruling against Liberia warlord

Reuters/AFP
Geneva

A Swiss court upheld yesterday a guilty verdict for war crimes in the case of a former Liberian rebel commander and convicted him of crimes against humanity in a landmark case.

Alieu Kosiah, who fought in the 1990s against then-president Charles Taylor's army, was sentenced to 20 years in prison in June 2021 for rape, murder and cannibalism in Switzerland's first ever war crimes trial.

Those charges and others were upheld by the court although he was acquitted of ordering and inflicting cruel treatment, the Swiss Federal Court's appeal bench said in a statement.

Four of his acts were deemed crimes against humanity – a term reserved for the most serious, systematic attacks.

The three-judge panel sentenced Kosiab to 20 years in prison and expelled him from Switzerland for 10 years after his term is up.

As well as being a first for Switzerland, the verdict is one of the only examples of justice for acts committed during Liberia's back-to-back civil wars between 1989-2003 which became infamous for their brutality, with marauding child soldiers and drugged-up fighters.

"The courage and the determination of the victims who fought relentlessly for 30 years has been rewarded. Justice was handed down today and this is a strong message for all perpetrators: they will not escape justice," Zena Wakim, one of the prosecution lawyers, told Reuters.

Alain Werner, a Swiss lawyer for the prosecution and director of NGO Civitas Maxima, which has worked on the case since 2014, called it a "great day for these incredibly brave Liberian victims".

The trial was often heavy with emotion as some Liberian witnesses and victims confronted Kosiab for the first time since the wars.

One of them who was raped by Kosiab as a child broke down during testimony.

Kosiab's lawyer denied the charges against him throughout the proceedings and said he was not present when the crimes were committed. Dmitri GIANOLI hinted that his client, who pleaded his innocence and demanded an acquittal, would appeal the decision to Switzerland's Supreme Court.

Kosiab was arrested in 2014 in Switzerland, where he had been living.

A 2011 Swiss law allows prosecution for serious crimes committed anywhere.

Liberia has never tried its warlords and some still hold prominent roles in society.

Clashes break out in Senegal after opposition leader is imprisoned

AFP
Dakar

Violence erupted in Senegal's capital Dakar yesterday after a court sentenced firebrand opposition leader Ousmane Sonko to two years' jail for "corrupting youth", a move that darkens his hopes of contesting presi-

dential elections next year.

Groups of young people attacked buses, a transport ticket office and other public property in parts of the city, burning tyres and placing obstacles in the streets, an AFP photographer saw.

Clashes broke out between the young people and security forces, with stones and tear gas being thrown.

Images of unrest elsewhere in the

country circulated on social networks.

Satire Mbaye, a presidential party official in the Dakar suburb of Keur Massar, said the party headquarters had been "ransacked".

"They broke the windows and destroyed the equipment inside," she said. "They asked where was the house of Assome Diatta, the party's local leader".

The motorway leading to the airport

was cut off by demonstrators, according to local media, while a commuter train connecting the new city of Diamniadio to the capital halted service.

The violence came hours after a ruling by a Dakar criminal court against Sonko, President Macky Sall's fiercest opponent.

The two-year-old case deeply divided the West African state, sparking spo-

radic but deadly clashes that have battered the country's image of stability.

Attention has focused on whether a conviction would bar Sonko, 48-year-old head of the PASTEF-Patriots party, from contesting next year's vote.

The court convicted him of "corrupting youth", which consists of encouraging the "debauchery" of a young person under the age of 21.

ECONOMY
**Lanka's surprise rate cut
signals rebound from crisis**

In a sign of confidence that the worst of Sri Lanka's financial crisis is over, its central bank surprised markets by cutting interest rates for the first time in three years yesterday. The country plunged into crisis last year as its foreign exchange reserves ran out and protesting mobs forced the ouster of the country's president. A new government negotiated a \$2.9bn bailout from the International Monetary Fund in March. Inflation, which hit a record high of around 70% in September, is coming down. The Central Bank of Sri Lanka cut its standing deposit facility rate and standing lending facility rate by 250 basis points – to 13% and 14%, respectively, from 15.5% and 16.5%.

WARNING
**India minister demands
surrender of looted guns**

India's interior minister demanded people in a restive state surrender guns following deadly inter-ethnic fighting during which rival forces raided police stations and seized assault rifles. Home Minister Amit Shah, speaking to reporters on a visit to Manipur's state capital Imphal, warned of "stringent charges" for those who failed to hand in their weapons before a major police sweep begins today. Shah arrived in Manipur earlier this week to tackle the unrest and also announced a probe into the causes of the violence. Clashes erupted in May between the majority Meitei, who are mostly Hindus and live in and around Imphal, and the mainly Christian Kuki in the surrounding hills.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
**India, Nepal pledge to
ramp up co-operation**

The leaders of India and Nepal yesterday pledged to enhance co-operation on energy and economic projects, as New Delhi seeks to counter Beijing's increasing influence in Kathmandu. Nepal's Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal arrived in India yesterday, on his first foreign trip since returning to power last year. "We will continue to strive to take our relationship to Himalayan heights," Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said at a ceremony with his counterpart. During their talks, they agreed to extend a petroleum pipeline between the two countries, and reviewed progress on a major hydroelectricity project and a power transmission line running from Nepal to Bangladesh via India.

LAW AND ORDER
**New Zealand police charge
man with five murders**

New Zealand police said they had levelled five murder charges against a man suspected of igniting a deadly hostel fire in Wellington last month. The 48-year-old, already remanded in custody on two counts of arson, now also faces five murder charges, police said. The blaze engulfed the four-storey, 92-room Loafers Lodge hostel a fortnight ago in Wellington's city centre, killing five men whom police have named. The suspect, who cannot be named under an interim court suppression order, appeared in court on May 19 after being charged with starting a sofa fire inside the hostel and, a few hours later, setting the building itself alight. He did not make a formal plea.

REALTY
**UK house prices
posts record fall**

British house prices fell by the most since 2009 in the 12 months to May and the country's housing market faces further headwinds after a recent jump in borrowing costs, mortgage lender Nationwide said yesterday. Compared with May last year, the average house price was down 3.4% after a 2.7% annual fall in April, Nationwide said. That was the biggest year-on-year drop since 2009, during the global financial crisis. House prices edged down by 0.1% in May from April after a monthly 0.4% rise in April, Nationwide said. "Headwinds to the housing market look set to strengthen in the near term," Robert Gardner, Nationwide's chief economist, said.

Australian ex-soldier loses war crimes suit

AFP
Sydney

One of Australia's most decorated soldiers lost a landmark defamation case yesterday after a bruising trial filled with accusations of murder, domestic violence, witness intimidation and war crimes.

Ben Roberts-Smith, a former member of Australia's elite Special Air Service Regiment, sued three newspapers for 2018 reports that alleged he was involved in the murders of unarmed prisoners in Afghanistan.

Roberts-Smith denied the allegations and launched a multi-million-dollar defamation case in response.

But after two years of proceedings, justice Anthony Beskano ruled that the papers had proven the bulk of their allegations to be "substantially true" and dismissed the case against them.

The defendants hailed the verdict as a major victory for media freedom in Australia, where defamation laws are often used to muzzle the press.

But journalist Nick McKenzie said it was also a victory for servicemen who testified against their former comrade and for Afghan victims.

"It's a day of justice for those brave men of the SAS who stood up and told the truth about who Ben Roberts-Smith is – a war criminal, a bully and a liar."

"Australia should be proud of those men in the SAS, they are the majority in the SAS."

"Today is a day of some small justice for the Afghan victims of Ben Roberts-Smith," he added.

Before the trial, Perth-born Roberts-Smith had been Australia's most famous and distinguished living soldier.

He won the Victoria Cross – Australia's highest military honour – for "conspicuous gallantry" in Afghanistan while on the hunt for a senior Taliban commander.

He met Queen Elizabeth II and his image hung in the hallowed halls of the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

Brigade Major's Review



Members of Foot Guards of the British military patrol during the Brigade Major's Review, on Horse Guards Parade, central London, yesterday.

Tensions between US, China expected to dominate Asia security meeting

Reuters
Singapore

Tensions between the US and China are expected to loom over Asia's top security meeting this week, as China has declined a bilateral meeting between the superpowers' defence chiefs.

The Shangri-La Dialogue, which attracts top defence officials, senior military officers, diplomats, weapons makers and security analysts from around the globe, will take place June 2-4 in Singapore.

More than 600 delegates from 49 countries will attend the meeting, which opens with a keynote address by Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese.

Analysts say the dialogue is invaluable for the many bilateral and multilateral military-to-military meetings held on the sidelines of plenary sessions and speeches delivered by defence ministers.

China's new Defence Minister Li Shangfu, however, has declined to meet US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin, the Pentagon said on Monday.

China's defence ministry spokesperson said in response to a query at a news conference in Beijing that exchanges between the two militaries have always been ongoing but that the US was "entirely to blame" for current difficulties.

"On the one hand, the US keeps saying that it wants to strengthen communication, but on the other hand, it ignores China's concerns and artificially creates obstacles, seriously undermining the mutual trust between the two militaries," said the spokesperson, without saying what the obstacles were.

Austin, speaking in Tokyo yesterday, called it "unfortunate" that they would be no planned meeting.

"I would welcome any opportunity to engage with Li," Austin said. "I think defence departments should be talking to each other on a routine basis or should have open channels for communications."

Russia's war in Ukraine, tensions between China and Taiwan and North Korea's weapons programmes will also be high on the agenda of many delegates at the dialogue, analysts said. However, no Russian or North Korean government delegates will attend.

Some regional diplomats and defence analysts said they will be watching the performance of General Li, who was named China's new defence minister in March and was sanctioned by the US in 2018 over weapons purchases from Russia.

Although the defence minister is a largely diplomatic and ceremonial post within the Chinese system, Li serves on the powerful Central Military Commission under President Xi Jinping and is close to his key military ally, Zhang Youxia, they said.

Drew Thompson, a visiting senior research fellow at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore (NUS), said the snub to

the US was most likely Xi's decision.

"The reality is that General Li is coming with a set of instructions to paint the US in a very negative light rather than a set of instructions to engage in dialogue to improve and stabilise the relationship and that is unfortunate," Thompson said.

NUS political scientist Chong Ja Ian said the lack of a formal bilateral meeting does not mean the two countries will not have contact.

"I'm sure they will go at each other during the plenary sessions, then there are the break-outs and possible informal conversations," he said.

Lynn Kuok, a senior fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies – the think tank that organises the Shangri-La Dialogue – said she was not optimistic about US-China relations improving.

"What we really need to be focused on here, however, are guard rails to prevent competition from spiralling into open conflicts, but I think China is also suspicious of that (the guard rails)," Kuok said.

Other key issues that are likely to be discussed include ongoing tensions in the disputed South China Sea and East China Seas.

Taiwan-US trade deal prompts China warning

The US and Taiwan was expected to sign a trade deal later yesterday, Taipei said, in a move that sparked a warning by Beijing. The Office of Trade Negotiations in Taipei announced that the first batch of agreements under "The US-Taiwan Initiative on 21st Century Trade" will be signed in Washington. The initiative looks to boost trade by streamlining customs checks, improving regulatory procedures, and establishing anti-corruption

measures between the US and Taiwan. Taiwan's government has described the deal as "the most comprehensive" trade agreement signed with Washington since 1979. China warned Washington yesterday against signing any pact "with connotations of sovereignty or of an official nature with China's Taiwan region". The US "must not send the wrong signals to Taiwan independence forces in the name of trade", foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said.

India's plan for chip making faces setback

Reuters
New Delhi/Oakland, California

Big companies including a Foxconn joint venture that bid for India's \$10bn semiconductor incentives are struggling due to the lack of a technology partner, a major setback for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's chipmaking ambitions.

A planned \$3bn semiconductor facility in India by chip consortium ISMC that counted Israeli chipmaker Tower as a tech partner has been stalled due to the company's ongoing takeover by Intel, three people with direct knowledge of the strategy said.

A second mega \$19.5bn plan to build chips locally by a joint venture between India's Vedanta and Taiwan's Foxconn is also proceeding slowly as their talks to rope in European chipmaker STMicroelectronics as a partner are deadlocked, a fourth source with direct knowledge said.

Modi has made chipmaking a

top priority for India's economic strategy as he wants to "usher in a new era in electronics manufacturing" by luring global companies.

India, which expects its semiconductor market to be worth \$63bn by 2026, last year received three applications to set up plants under the incentive scheme. They were from the Vedanta-Foxconn JV; a global consortium ISMC which counts Tower Semiconductor as a tech partner; and from Singapore-based IGSS Ventures.

The Vedanta JV plant is to come up in Modi's home state of Gujarat, while ISMC and IGSS each committed \$3bn for plants in two separate southern states.

The three sources said ISMC's \$3bn chipmaking facility plans are currently on hold as Tower could not proceed to sign binding agreements as things remain under review after Intel acquired it for \$5.4bn last year. The deal is pending regulatory approvals.

Talking about India's semiconductor ambitions, India's

deputy IT minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar said in a May 19 interview ISMC "could not proceed" due to Intel acquiring Tower, and IGSS "wanted to re-submit (the application)" for incentives. The "two of them had to drop out," he said, without elaborating.

Tower is likely to reevaluate taking part in the venture based on how its deal talks with Intel pan out, two of the sources said.

ISMC consortium partners Next Orbit Ventures did not respond to a request for comment. Tower and Intel declined to comment. Singapore-based IGSS and India's federal IT ministry did not respond to requests for comment.

Most of the world's chip output is limited to a few countries like Taiwan, and India is a late entrant. Amid much fanfare, in September, the Vedanta-Foxconn JV announced its chipmaking plans in Gujarat. Modi called the \$19.5bn plan "an important step" in boosting India's chipmaking ambitions.

Mamata backs wrestlers



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee attends a rally to support Indian wrestlers protesting against Brij Bhushan Singh, the wrestling federation chief over allegations of sexual harassment and intimidation, in Kolkata yesterday.

Japan sees warmest spring on record

AFP
Tokyo

Japan experienced its warmest spring on record this year, the national weather agency said yesterday, as greenhouse gases and El Nino send temperatures soaring worldwide.

Temperatures across March, April and May were 1.59 degrees Celsius (34.9 Fahrenheit) higher than average, the Japan Meteorological Agency said.

That made it the hottest spring since the agency started taking comparable measurements in 1898.

"Global warming has made such record-level temperatures more frequent, and they are expected to become even more common in the future as global warming progresses," it said.

Average sea-surface temperatures for waters around Japan in the same months were tied for the third-highest recorded since 1982, the agency added.

The United Nations said last month it was near-certain that 2023-2027 would be the warmest

five-year period ever recorded.

This is partly due to a growing likelihood that the weather phenomenon El Nino will develop in the coming months, fuelling higher global temperatures.

El Nino – a naturally occurring climate pattern typically associated with increased heat worldwide, as well as drought in some parts of the world and heavy rains elsewhere – last occurred in 2018-19.

There is also a two-thirds chance that at least one of the next five years will see global temperatures exceed the more ambitious target set out in the Paris accords on limiting climate change, according to the UN's World Meteorological Organisation (WMO).

The 2015 Paris Agreement saw countries agree to cap global warming at "well below" two degrees Celsius above average levels measured between 1850 and 1900 – and 1.5C if possible.

The global mean temperature in 2022 was 1.15C above the 1850-1900 average.

Much of south and southeast Asia has sweltered through spring heatwaves as global warming exacerbates adverse weather.

Argentina’s candidate elected to lead WMO

AFP
Geneva

The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) voted yesterday for Argentina's Celeste Saulo to become its first woman leader and steer the WMO's critical global role in tracking climate change.

Saulo, a WMO vice-president who has headed Argentina's weather service since 2014, won a landslide vote at the UN climate and weather agency's congress in Geneva.

The WMO's role in climate change has become increasingly prominent and Saulo, 59, will likely become a well-known advocate on this pressing world issue.

"In these times when inequality and climate change are the greatest global threats, the WMO must contribute to strengthening the meteorological and hydrological services to protect populations and their economies, providing timely and effective services and early warning systems," she said following her election.

"My ambition is to lead the WMO towards a scenario in which the voice of all members is heard equally, prioritising those most vulnerable and in which the actions it undertakes are aligned with the needs and particularities of each one of them," Saulo said.

She will take over from the

outgoing secretary-general Petteri Taalas on January 1.

The Finnish meteorologist is coming to the end of his maximum second four-year term.

The WMO brings together international efforts in monitoring greenhouse gases, sea levels, temperatures, glacier melting and other climate change indicators.

It relies on satellites and thousands of weather stations to measure key parameters of the atmosphere, land and ocean.

The leadership election was held on the penultimate day of the World Meteorological Congress, the general assembly of WMO's 193 member states and territories, which takes place every four years.

The congress, which opened on May 22, voted to ensuring that everyone on the planet is covered by early warning systems for hazardous weather events by the end of 2027.

It put the cryosphere – the frozen world – high on the agenda, given the increasing impacts of melting sea ice, glaciers and permafrost on sea level rise.

It also approved a new initiative aimed at boosting global greenhouse gas monitoring through an integrated system of space- and surface-based observations.

"The main goal is to work for the member countries and territories and bring their voice, the voice of the less developed world, the small island states, the devel-



Argentina's Celeste Saulo

oping world, working all together to achieve our priorities," Saulo told AFP.

"Early warning for all is a key initiative, we will work on that, we will achieve that," she said. "I am definitely optimistic. This result shows that people are optimistic and we can change for the better."

Three other senior figures from within the WMO put themselves forward for the leadership.

They were the WMO's current number two, Russian-Swiss deputy secretary-general Elena Manaenkova; the number three, Chinese assistant secretary-general Zhang Wenjian; and second vice-president Albert Martis of Curacao.

Saulo, the director of the Argentinian National Meteorological Service, won the required two-thirds majority on the first ballot with 108 votes.

Her closest competitor, Zhang, received 37, a diplomatic source said.

West raises diplomatic pressure as Serbs rally in north Kosovo town

AFP
Zvecan, Kosovo

Ethnic Serbs gathered again in a flash-point town in north Kosovo yesterday at the site of clashes earlier this week with Nato-led forces, as Pristina and Belgrade came under mounting international pressure to defuse tensions.

French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz met Kosovo President Vjosa Osmani and her Serbian counterpart Aleksandar Vucic on the sidelines of a European Political Community summit in Moldova, hoping to head off further unrest in the region.

United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken also urged both Pristina and Belgrade to ease tensions, warning they were putting their aspirations of European integration at risk.

Macron and Scholz said they had urged Kosovo to allow new elections in four disputed northern municipalities.

Osmani said she had told the European leaders that this would be possible under Kosovo law if the Serbian leadership in Belgrade did not encourage Serbs to boycott the poll.

"We have asked the two parties to organise new elections in these four municipalities as soon as possible, with an undertaking from Kosovo with participation in these elections in a clear manner on the part of the Serbian side," Macron said.

Kosovo is mainly populated by ethnic Albanians, but the Serbs who make up around 6% of the population have remained largely loyal to Belgrade, especially in the north where they are a majority.

Kosovo's ethnic Serb minority boycotted April local elections in the north, allowing ethnic Albanians to take control of local councils despite a voter turnout of less than 3.5%.

In the northern town of Zvecan, dozens of protesters – significantly fewer than crowds seen on previous days – rallied outside the town hall, sealed off with barbed wire and encircled by North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato)-led peacekeepers (KFOR) in full riot gear.

Many Serbs are demanding the withdrawal of Kosovo special police forces as well as the ethnic Albanian mayors they do not consider their true representatives.

Kosovo police said two ethnic Albanian men were injured in an attack near a square on the Serb-populated part of the ethnically divided city of Mitrovica.

"The victims were attacked by a group of criminals who were masked and organised for the attack," the police said, adding that they sustained injuries and were sent for medical treatment.

In Zvecan, a KFOR armoured vehicle was parked near the road leading to the town hall, a move requested on Wednesday by a local Serb party after masked protesters smashed windows of two Kosovo police cars in the town centre, injuring an officer.

Russia says US hacked thousands of Apple phones in spy plot

Reuters
Moscow

Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) said yesterday that it had uncovered an American espionage operation that compromised thousands of iPhones using sophisticated surveillance software.

Moscow-based Kaspersky Lab said dozens of its employees' devices were compromised in the operation.

The FSB, the main successor to the Soviet-era KGB, said in a statement that several thousand Apple Incorporated devices had been infected, including those of domestic Russian subscribers as well as foreign diplomats based in Russia and the former Soviet Union.

"The FSB has uncovered an intelligence action of the American special services using Apple mobile devices," the FSB said in a statement.

The FSB said the plot showed "close co-operation" between Apple and the National Security Agency (NSA), the US agency responsible for cryptographic and communications intelligence and security.

The FSB provided no evidence that Apple co-operated with, or had any awareness of,

the spying campaign.

In a statement, Apple denied the allegation.

"We have never worked with any government to insert a backdoor into any Apple product and never will," the firm said in a statement.

The NSA declined to comment.

Kaspersky chief executive Eugene Kaspersky said on Twitter that dozens of his employees' phones were compromised in the operation, which his company described as "an extremely complex, professionally targeted cyberattack" that had targeted workers in the "top and middle-management".

Kaspersky researcher Igor Kuznetsov told Reuters that his company had independently discovered anomalous traffic on its corporate Wi-Fi network around the start of the year.

He said that Kaspersky did not circulate its findings to Russia's Computer Emergency Response Team until yesterday.

He said he could not comment on Moscow's allegation that Americans were responsible for the hacking or that thousands of others had been targeted.

"It's very hard to attribute anything to anyone," Kuznetsov said.

Technical issue causing Air Canada flight delays for second time in weeks

Air Canada said yesterday that a technical issue has affected flights for the second time in two weeks, leading to delays. Canada's largest carrier said a technical issue with its communicator system used to communicate with aircraft and monitor performance was "resulting in flight delays across our system, but we continue to operate flights at a reduced rate". Technical problems have resulted in delays globally for airlines. Southwest Airlines Co blamed a one-hour stoppage of its flights in April on a vendor-supplied computer network firewall. Last week, Air Canada said a temporary ground stop on May 25 was undertaken due to an issue with the communicator system. Air Canada did not describe the specific issue. – **Reuters**



This May 31 image courtesy of the Nova Scotia government shows one of eight aircraft from New Brunswick that drops a mix of water and fire retardant making a pass over the fire near Barrington Lake, Shelburne County.

Canada’s military, US firefighters to aid Nova Scotia’s wildfire fight

Reuters
Ottawa

Canada's government is sending the military to the Eastern province of Nova Scotia to help tackle wildfires, and more US firefighters will come to battle the early summer blazes, the minister responsible for emergencies said.

Nova Scotia is battling two large fires that are threatening communities on the outskirts of Halifax, the provincial capital.

At the same time, the western province of Alberta has 61 wildfires, 16 of them out of control, officials said.

While Canada often sees wildfires in the summer, rarely has it seen so many so early, with incidents on both the East Coast and in the West at the same time.

There are 211 wildfires burning across Canada, and 82 of those are out of control, Emergency Preparedness Minister Bill Blair said.

"These conditions this early in the season are unprecedented," Blair told reporters. "Due to cli-

mate change, similar extreme weather events may continue to increase in both frequency and severity across our country."

Some 28,000 Canadians have been forced to flee their homes, officials said.

Some 18,000 of the evacuees are in Nova Scotia, which is forecast to remain hot and dry. There are wildfires burning in seven of Canada's 10 provinces.

The Canadian Armed Forces will provide both equipment and personnel to relieve firefighters "who have been working tirelessly around the clock to protect communities right across Nova Scotia", Blair said.

Earlier this month, the federal government sent the military to Alberta to help battle blazes there. Canada is also receiving help from other countries.

Some 800 firefighters have come from the United States, mostly to Alberta, with another 100 scheduled to arrive in Nova Scotia over the next five days, officials said.

Australia and New Zealand have sent some 224 firefighters, and South Africa is sending more than 200 in coming days, officials said.

President of ex-PM Khan’s party arrested

Reuters
Lahore

The president of former Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan's party was arrested in the eastern city of Lahore yesterday on charges of corruption, a government official said.

Pakistan is beset by political turmoil as Khan's party has faced a countrywide crack-down since his own arrest on May 9 for suspected graft sparked widespread protests that saw mobs ransacking state installations, including military assets.

Pervez Elahi, president of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, joins a long list of key PTI leaders arrested in the security swoop to halt turmoil that has threatened to worsen instability in a country reeling from a crippling financial crisis.

"Pervez Elahi is wanted in several corruption cases," Amir Mir, caretaker information minister in the eastern prov-

ince of Punjab, told Reuters.

He added that Punjab's anti-corruption department had been looking for Elahi for days.

Elahi previously denied accusations of corruption.

Khan was freed on bail on May 12 for an initial two weeks, obtained a three-day bail extension from a high court and later a further extension from the trial court until June 19.

Dozens of top and mid-tier leaders in the PTI have been arrested alongside hundreds of Khan supporters since the violent protests of May 9.

Many have quit the party after being released while other leaders remain on the run to avoid arrest.

Khan, who denies wrongdoing, says the arrests are part of a campaign to dismantle his party and that the state is using pressure tactics to force out his aides.

The government denies this. Khan has been embroiled in a tussle with Pakistan's military since he was removed from power last year in a parliamentary no-confidence vote.

Tape recording shows Trump acknowledging he kept classified document

Federal prosecutors have a 2021 audio recording of former president Donald Trump acknowledging that he kept a classified Pentagon document about a possible attack on Iran after leaving the White House, CNN reported on Wednesday.

CNN did not listen to the recording but cited unidentified multiple sources describing it. Reuters was not able to confirm the report.

The recording shows Trump, who is seeking the 2024 Republican presidential nomination, understood he retained classified material after he left the White House in 2021, according to the cable television network.

Trump's remarks indicated he would like to share the information but was aware of the limitations on his ability to declassify documents after leaving office, two sources told CNN.

Trump has denied wrongdoing.

A Trump representative would not comment on the report of the recording or on the specific remarks attributed to Trump and called the investigation politically motivated.

"Leaks from radical partisans behind this political persecution are designed to inflame tensions and continue the media's harassment of President Trump and his supporters," Trump spokesperson Steven Cheung said on Wednesday.

Peter Carr, the spokesperson for Special Counsel Jack Smith's office at the Justice Department, declined to comment.

The Justice Department is investigating whether Trump broke the law by retaining US government records, some marked as top secret, after leaving office in January 2021.

In August, the department disclosed that it was investigating Trump for removing White House records because it believed he illegally held documents including some involving intelligence-gathering and clandestine human sources – among America's most closely held secrets.

Smith's probe includes whether Trump or his associates obstructed the Justice Department's probe into his retention of thousands of government records, about 300 of which were marked classified.

The special counsel is also investigating efforts to overturn Trump's 2020 election loss that culminated in the deadly January 6, 2021, attack on the US Capitol. – **Reuters**

Biden trips, falls on Air Force stage

AFP
Colorado Springs

President Joe Biden took a face-first tumble yesterday after tripping over an obstacle on stage at the Air Force Academy in Colorado, but he appeared unhurt.

Biden, 80, who had delivered the commencement address to graduates of the military academy, had just shaken hands with a cadet and begun walking back to his seat when he fell.

Air Force personnel helped him back up and he did not appear to require further help.

As he rose, Biden pointed to the object that had apparently caught his foot. It resembled a small black sandbag on the stage.

Biden is the oldest person ever in the presidency and is seeking a second term in the 2024 election.

His official doctor's report this year declared him physically fit and he exercises regularly.

In November 2020, shortly after winning his election against the incumbent Donald Trump, Biden broke his foot while playing with a pet dog.



Biden is helped up after falling during the graduation ceremony at the United States Air Force Academy, just north of Colorado Springs in El Paso County.

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GULF **TIMES**

Give America a debt brake

Since 1960, the United States has raised its debt ceiling 78 times – soon to be 79, if Congress approves the latest last-minute deal. On a wall in Manhattan, not far from Times Square, a billboard-size display has kept a running tally of the national debt amount.

Since its inauguration in 1989, the National Debt Clock has ticked inexorably higher, from \$2.7tn to more than \$31tn today. Never before has America or the world economy been so indebted. And since 2000, the stock of global debt has soared, from \$87tn to over \$300tn today – a rate nearly double the pace of world GDP growth.

Leaving aside the political theatrics, intrigue, and brinkmanship that nowadays accompany every increase in the US debt ceiling, can anything be done to stop – or even slow – the clock?

At the turn of the century, Switzerland devised a solution called a “debt brake,” which obliges the federal government to balance its budgets over the course of an economic cycle. In response to mounting public debt and repeating deficits in the 1990s, a group of Swiss economists and politicians began advocating for a constitutional amendment to limit government spending and borrowing. In 2001, the Swiss government proposed the debt brake, voters approved it overwhelmingly in a referendum, and it became a part of the country’s constitution.

The measure has yielded astonishing results. Since it was enacted, total government debt as a share of GDP has declined from 30% to 20%. Over the same period, debt has ballooned to unprecedented levels in Britain (186%), Japan (227%), the US (123%), and elsewhere.

Switzerland’s debt brake works because it has a simple and compelling goal: to limit the growth of public debt by preventing the government from spending money it doesn’t have. Moreover, because it is enshrined in the Swiss constitution, it has a high level of political legitimacy and is difficult to repeal or amend. And providing a clear benchmark against which progress can be measured makes elected officials’ more accountable to the citizens they represent and eliminates the temptation to run up debt to secure re-election while passing the burden of repayment to future generations.

At the same time, the debt brake is not a straitjacket. It includes automatic and countercyclical stabilisers, which allow for temporary deficits during periods of economic weakness, such as during the Covid-19 crisis, and encourages debt repayment during good times.

Today, Switzerland enjoys a AAA credit rating, which matters in a world of rising borrowing costs. At current levels of debt and interest rates, American taxpayers spend roughly 15 times more on interest payments than Swiss taxpayers. And while the Swiss thereby free up resources to invest in education, research, childcare, and other vital public goods and services, American taxpayers’ grandchildren will have to service the debt without ever having seen the benefits.

Nobody would deny the importance of the intergenerational social contract: the elderly pass their traditions and wisdom to the young, who bring fresh perspectives, ideas, and technological advances. But there must be a fair deal for everyone. The German word for debt, schuld, is also the word for “guilt” – a kind of moral synonym reminding us to keep our end of the bargain.

Admittedly, the US Constitution is far more difficult to change than its Swiss counterpart. But the US founders regarded the accumulation of public debt as a matter of fundamental importance. They recognised that excessive debt could burden future generations, threaten economic stability, and compromise national independence. They knew that excessive debt led to the downfall of the Roman Empire, the French monarchy, the Dutch Republic, and the Spanish Empire. The recipe was always the same: costly wars and extravagant spending.

America’s founders, by contrast, believed in the importance of fiscal responsibility and advocated for limited government spending and the avoidance of excessive debt. With that goal in mind, the US Constitution was designed with checks and balances to prevent abuses of power, including fiscal irresponsibility. While its framers assigned the power of the purse to the legislative branch, their intent was to ensure oversight and control of spending.

The US Constitution has been amended only 27 times since 1787, whereas the Swiss constitution is amended regularly. But a rigorous and challenging process implies greater legitimacy. This is what happened when 85% of Swiss citizens voted in favour of including a debt brake. American citizens deserve a chance to decide if they want something similar. – Project Syndicate

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Poland’s electoral inquisition

By **Stawomir Sierakowski**
Warsaw

Poland’s ruling party, Law and Justice (PiS), has now taken another step toward full-scale autocracy. With parliamentary elections approaching this fall, PiS has drafted a law to create a special commission to investigate Russian influence between 2007 and 2022, a period that includes the opposition party Civic Platform’s time in power (2007-15). Worse, Polish President Andrzej Duda has already signed the bill, while referring it to the PiS-subservient Constitutional Tribunal for a rubber-stamp review.

The commission will be able to ban people from holding public office for up to ten years if it concludes that they have ever done anything “under Russian influence.” Nothing more needs to be proven. It will issue its full report by September 17 – as if the summer vacation season provides enough time to examine 15 years of Polish politics.

Seeing the move as an obvious and brazen attempt to head off any electoral challenge by Civic Platform’s Donald Tusk, the opposition has called the legislation “Lex Tusk” (“Tusk Law”). This is not mere speculation. State Secretary Janusz Kowalski has openly admitted that he hopes “the result of the commission’s work will be to bring Donald Tusk to the State Tribunal.”

The commission will simultaneously play the role of secret service, state prosecutor, judge, and jury. Its nine members will be

appointed (or dismissed) by the PiS-controlled parliament, and its procedural rules will be set by the prime minister. It will have the power to enforce its subpoenas with fines of zł20,000-50,000 (\$4,500-11,700), or by detaining non-compliant individuals.

It also has the right to order the prosecutor general’s office to search homes and other premises, and to record and disclose any information (except religious confessions) from any person or institution, including corporate trade secrets (a category that will include the media). The commission’s members will be covered by parliamentary immunity, and thus cannot be held accountable for their decisions in the future. It will be their prerogative to change any administrative decision made between 2007 and 2022 if they believe that Russian influence was involved.

The commission violates every fundamental legal principle in Poland. Public authorities are supposed to operate within the confines of the law as established by Article 7 of the Polish constitution, which is based on a division of legislative power, executive power, and judicial power. Criminal liability applies only to acts that were prohibited at the time they were committed (Article 42), and everyone has a constitutional right to defend his honour and good name (Article 47). Yet in this case, the commission’s accusations will be the final word.

The commission reflects PiS Chairman Jarosław Kaczyński’s ruthlessness and desperation to stay in power. If ousted in the election this

fall, he and dozens of his associates could face criminal liability for their lawlessness, corruption, and mismanagement over the past eight years. No-one is surprised at the lengths to which they will go to prevent that outcome.

What is more puzzling is Duda’s support for the law. Since he is already serving his second term and seemed to be hoping for some respectable international post or mission after he leaves office in 2025, one might think that he would be more influenced by the United States than by his own party at this point. The US has a long history of interfering with Polish authorities’ decision-making, such as when it intervened to save TVN, the largest private television station in Poland, from a Kaczyński takeover attempt. The Americans have also prevented the PiS government from purging the top ranks of the military.

Moreover, before Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Duda had been consigned to international isolation, owing to his role in the anti-democratic reforms that PiS has implemented since coming to power in 2015. Not until Poland proved indispensable in providing aid to Ukraine was he brought in from the cold. His global profile has since risen considerably.

So why plunge back into the darkest populist waters now? And why have the Americans not tried to stop this outrageous attempt to eliminate Poland’s top opposition leader from political contention? When asked, the best response the US ambassador to Poland, Mark Brzezinski, could

muster was: “We fully appreciate and understand why President Duda redirected this law to the Constitutional Tribunal.”

Since Brzezinski certainly knows that this legal referral was just a trick, and that the Court is fully subservient to PiS, we must conclude that as long as there is a war in Ukraine, that will remain the top priority for the US, even if it means that the rule of law in Poland will be eroded further. Besides, why make life any more difficult for a Polish government that spends tens of billions of dollars purchasing US weapons and nuclear power plants. We can also conclude that Duda no longer expects to receive a cushy international sinecure after he leaves office. Since he will be only 53 years old, he will need Kaczyński’s support if he hopes to remain a player in Polish politics.

What will Lex Tusk mean for the opposition and Tusk himself? Early signs suggest that it could be galvanising. Though he is not an MP, Tusk appeared defiantly in parliament during the passage of the law, and will lead a protest march on June 4, which may bring out a record-breaking crowd. If Tusk is eliminated as a candidate, he may be replaced by an even more popular opposition leader: Warsaw’s Mayor Rafał Trzaskowski. With apparently nothing left to lose, has Kaczyński finally overreached? The stakes in this year’s election are now even higher. – Project Syndicate

● *Stawomir Sierakowski, founder of the Krytyka Polityczna movement, is a senior fellow at the German Council on Foreign Relations.*



UNDER SIEGE: State Secretary Janusz Kowalski has openly admitted that he hopes “the result of the commission’s work will be to bring Donald Tusk (above) to the State Tribunal.”

Marriage and social duties of Muslims

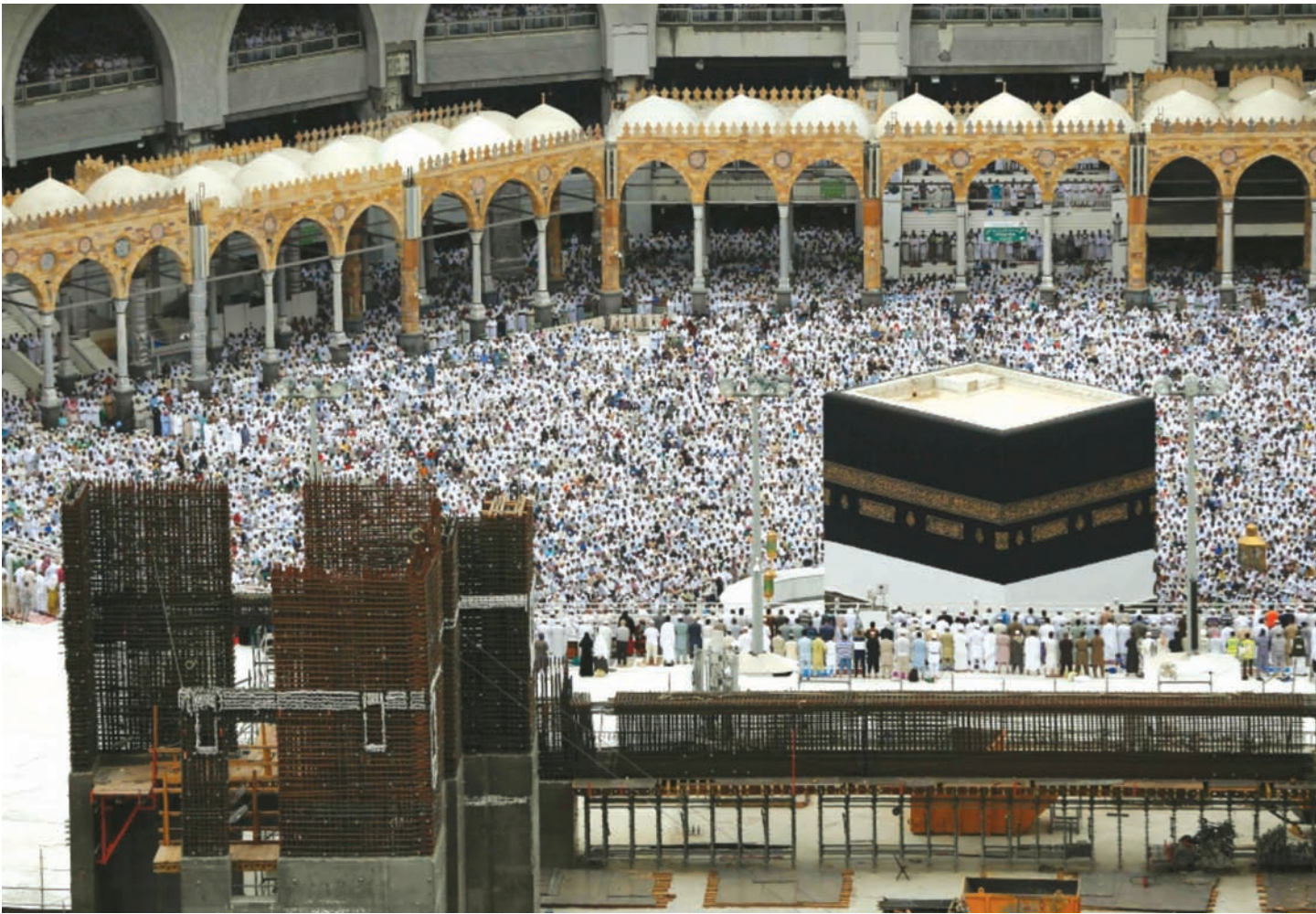
The foremost and fundamental institution of human society is the family unit. A family is established by the coming together of a man and a woman, and their contact brings into existence a new generation. It then produces ties of kinship and community, which gradually develop into a large society. The family is the institution through which a generation prepares the succeeding generation for the service of human civilisation and for the discharge of its social obligations with devotion, sincerity and enthusiasm.

This institution does not merely recruit cadets for the maintenance and development of human culture but its guardians. They earnestly desire that those who have to replace them in the future should be better than themselves. In this respect the family can be truly called the fountain-head of progress, development, prosperity and strength of human civilization on Earth.

Hence, besides the social problems, Islam devotes much attention to those relating to the family and strives to establish this important social unit on the healthiest and strongest foundations. According to Islam, the correct form of relationship between a man and woman is marriage, that is, the one in which full social responsibilities are undertaken by them and which results in the emergence of a family. Irresponsible behaviour are not condoned by Islam as innocent past times or ordinary transgressions. Rather, they are acts that strike at the very roots of human society.

Hence, Islam aims at purifying and purging the society of all activities that encourage such irresponsible action or provide opportunities for them. Regulations of *Hijab* (an outfit women must adhere to in Islam), ban on free mixing of men and women, restrictions on music and films and discouragement of the spread and propagation of obscenities and aberrations, are all intended to guard against this.

Their sole object is to protect and strengthen the institution of the family. Islam does not merely regard the desirable form of social contact as just permissible but holds and affirms it as a good and virtuous act. Indeed, it is seen as an act of worship. It does not simply look



upon celibacy of an adult person with disfavor, but calls upon every young man and woman to take, in his turn, the social responsibilities of married life just as his or her parents did in their time.

Islam also strongly disapproves those rites, ceremonies or restrictions that make marriage a difficult and tedious affair. The intention of

Islam is that marriage may become easy and fornication (and adultery) the most difficult thing in society, and not vice versa as it is in most of the societies today.

Hence, besides debarring a few specified relatives from entering into matrimony with one another, it has legalised marital relations with all other near and distant kith and kin. It has re-

moved all distinctions of caste and community and permitted matrimony of any Muslim with any other Muslim, although being equivalent in status is a matter that is recognised when considering marriage. It has enjoined that the amount of *Mahr* (dower) should be fixed at a low and easy figure, the burden of which can be easily borne by the husband and has dispensed

with the necessity of clerics and offices of compulsory registration.

In an Islamic society, marriage is such a plain and simple ceremony as can be performed anywhere before two witnesses, and a *Wali* (woman's guardian or one whom he authorises), though it is essential that the proceedings should know that the couple is now going to live a matrimonial life.

Within the family itself, Islam has assigned to the man a position of authority so that he may maintain order and discipline as the chief of the household. Islam expects the wife to obey and look after the comforts and well-being of her husband and expects the children to behave accordingly with their parents. Islam does not favor a loose and disjointed family system, which is devoid of any authority, control and discipline and in which someone is not pointedly responsible for the proper conduct and behaviour of its members.

Discipline can only be maintained through a central authority and in the view of Islam the position of father in the family is such that it makes him the fittest person to take over this responsibility. But this does not mean that the man has been made a tyrant and an oppressor in the household and the woman has been handed over to him as a helpless chattel. According to Islam, the real spirit of marital life is love, understanding and mutual respect. If the woman has been asked to obey the husband, the latter has been called upon to exercise his privileges towards the welfare of the family and treat his wife with love, affection and sweetness.

Islam makes the marital bond strong but not unbreakable. It aims at keeping the bond intact only so long as it is founded on sweetness of love or for as long as at least the possibility of lasting companionship exists. When this possibility of lasting companionship exists. When this possibility dies out, it gives the man the right of divorce and the woman the right of separation. Under certain conditions, when married life has become a source of misery and nuisance, it also gives the Islamic courts of justice the authority to annul the marriage.

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

The pillars of Islamic marriage contract

Marriage in Islam is based on a contract between a man and woman intending to be unified in marriage. Thus, as in any contract in Islam, there are elements which are considered essential to its existence, called "pillars", as well as the possibility of stipulations of different kinds, legal effects of the contract, etc. Each of these must be understood correctly in order to ensure that the marriage has been performed according to the legal conditions and that the rightful effects of the marriage are guaranteed to each of the contracting parties.

The pillars of a marriage contract according to the majority of scholars

1. Offer and acceptance are among the pillars. For most scholars, the offer must be from the woman's side and the acceptance from the man.

2. The two parties to the contract: the prospective husband and the guardian of the woman.

Some also count the following among the pillars, although the majority of these scholars count them among the prerequisites:

* The presence of witnesses. * Dowry.

The wording of the contract

There are a variety of opinions as to exactly which phrases are valid in the transaction of the marriage contract. However, the best format is that actually used by the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, and his companions. Also, it is recommended that the contract be executed verbally. However, due to need or necessity, it may be done through writing or signing.

Among the different possible phraseology, the very clear terms such as: "I marry you" is accepted by all scholars. Anything which indicates a temporary nature of the contract is forbidden. There is some difference of opinion concerning the validity of other phrases such as: "I present to you", "I give to you", "I sell to you", etc.

Does it have to be in Arabic?

According to the majority of scholars, it is not necessary for the marriage contract to be executed in Arabic, even for those who have the ability to speak Arabic. The scholars of the Hanbali school, who required the use of forms of the words *Nikah* or *Zawaj* (marriage), required that the contract be transacted in Arabic for this reason.

The different types of conditions or prerequisites

At this point, we need to learn the definition of some general terms in Islamic *Fiqh* (jurisprudence), related to this issue, which come up in many subject areas, including the one at hand.

Saheeh (Sound): A contract which fulfils all of the pillars and the prerequisites, and has full effect in the law.

Baatil (Void): A contract that has failed to fulfil specific pillars or vital prerequisites. A contract which is *Baatil* is the opposite of one which is *Saheeh* and has no legal effect at all. If a marriage contract is found to be void, even if it is only discovered after consummation, the legal condition will be as if it never happened at all. The lineage of the father (of a child produced in such a 'marriage') will not be established and there is no waiting period (*'Iddah*) upon the woman. An example of this would be if a man married a woman who was married to someone else at the time.

Faasid (Defective): This is a contract which fails to fulfil some of the prerequisites, but not the pillars.

With respect to marriage, there are four different kinds of conditions which must be met:

1. Conditions Required for Initiating the Contract These are the conditions that must be present with respect to the pillars or fundamentals of the marriage contract.

2. Conditions Required for the Soundness of the Contract These are conditions which must be fulfilled in order for the marriage to have its proper legal effect. If these conditions are not met, the contract is 'Defective' (*Faasid*), according to

Hanafi *Fiqh*, and 'Void' (*Baatil*) according to the others.

3. Conditions Required for the Execution of the Contract These are conditions which must be met for the marriage to have actual practical effect. If these conditions are not met, then the marriage is 'Suspended' (*Mawqoof*) according to Hanafi and Maaliki *Fiqh*; for example, a minor girl until she reaches puberty.

4. Conditions Required for Making the Marriage Binding If these conditions are not met, then the marriage is non-binding, meaning that either of the two parties or others may have the right to annul the marriage. If they accept the marriage with such shortcomings, it becomes binding.

Prerequisites required for initiating the contract

In this category, there are conditions concerning the two who are getting married, as well as the form in which the contract takes place.

Concerning the two getting married:

The two people must meet the qualification of legal competence, i.e., they must be adult and sane. If they are not, the marriage will be invalid.

Secondly, the woman cannot be from those categories of women that are forbidden for a man to marry. For example, suppose a man married a woman and later discovered that they had been breastfed by the same woman. In this case, it is as if the marriage never took place because these two were not allowed to marry each other and the marriage becomes null and void.

Concerning the contract:

There is near unanimous agreement on the following conditions relating to the transaction of the marriage contract:

1. The offer and acceptance must be done in one sitting. In general, this means that the response must be immediate. Exactly what is considered a 'sitting' depends on custom and other related factors.

2. The acceptance must correspond to what is being offered. If the guardian says: "I marry you to Khadeejah", a response of: "I accept Faatimah as my wife" would not constitute a valid contract. An exception to this is if the *Wali* (guardian) mentions a specific dowry amount and the groom responds with a higher amount. It is regarded that there is no reason for dispute here since it is assumed that a higher dowry will be acceptable.

3. The *Wali* cannot rescind the offer. Unlike transactions of selling, neither party can say: "I have changed my mind" once they have uttered the offer/acceptance. It is immediately binding. In a sale, they both continue to have the option to change their mind until the 'sitting' is over and they part.

4. The marriage must be effective immediately. If the *Wali* says 'I will marry her to you after one month; there is no marriage and the two remain unmarried.

Note that the custom of saying: 'I accept' three times, which is common in some Muslim cultures, has no legal significance. Once the first 'I accept' has been uttered, everything after that is meaningless - whether positive or negative.

Adding stipulations to the marriage contract

This is where one party states a stipulation binding on the other party for specific reasons or goals. The offer/acceptance is tied to this stipulation by mention. There is a difference of opinion among the scholars concerning the validity of conditions of this nature.

Conditions of contracts are two types:

1) Those imposed directly by the *Shari'ah* (Islamic Legislation) and

2) Those drawn up by one or more of the parties. When any contract is entered into, the first type of conditions are covered automatically, even if they are not stated in the contract.

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

Establishing the marital bond

Marriage is one of the most serious and important commitments an individual will make in his lifetime. It is a bond that once established, cannot be easily broken. It is one of the most important relationships in a society, as it is the building stone of the overall structure. Marriage is so important in Islam that the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "Whoever marries has completed half of his faith. So let him have fear of Allah in the remaining half." [At-Tabaraani]

As an act of worship, Muslims should make the intention to please Allah, Almighty, during this process and act in accordance with His laws.

Unfortunately, in this time, more and more Muslim marriages are crumbling, primarily due to the fact that they were not in conformity with the laws established by Allah. The intention to please Allah was not there from the beginning.

As this is a rather immense topic, it will be spread out over several issues. Some of the initial components in the process are considered in the following, with the focus on women who are entering the marital bond.

The presence and guidance of a *Wali* (guardian - father or whoever takes his place) is one of the conditions required for soundness of a marriage contract. The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "There is no marriage except with a *Wali*." [Ahmad, Abu Daawood and At-Tirmithi] He, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, also said: "If any woman marries herself without the permission of her *Wali*, then her marriage is void, then her marriage is void." [Ahmad, Abu Daawood and others]

The *Wali* is the one who will be responsible for finding a suitable spouse for his ward, one who is religious and an appropriate match. The *Wali* must be male, mature, of good moral character, and of the same religion as the woman.

In the ideal situation, the *Wali* should be the closest male relative of the woman, so first it has to be the father, if not then it passes to the closest male relative on the father side, her grandfather, then her son, then her full brother, then her half brother, then his sons, then paternal uncles, then their sons, then the father paternal uncles, then the Muslim judge. For women who have entered Islam from another religion, however, it is not acceptable for her non-Muslim father or other non-Muslim relative to act as her *Wali*. In this case, the responsibility falls upon the leader of the community. A woman cannot choose any person for her *Wali*. The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "There is no marriage but with a *Wali*. And the ruler is the *Wali* for one who does not have a *Wali*." [Ahmad and others]

A woman should never be forced to accept a marriage proposal. This is very clear in Islam. If a woman is forced to accept a marriage proposed against her will, she would have the right either to annul the marriage or accept and remain in it.

Ibn 'Abbaas, *radhiallah 'anhuma*, narrated that a young virgin woman came to the Prophet and stated that her father had married her and she disliked it. So the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, gave her the option (to annul the marriage or remain in it). [Abu Daawood and Ahmad]

The relationship between the woman and her *Wali* is ideally one of cooperation involving mutual respect and consideration.

Finding a Spouse with Faith and Piety:

The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "If someone whose religion and character you are pleased with comes to you (to marry your daughter or ward) then marry (her off to) him. If you do not do so, there will be commotion on the earth, and a great deal of evil." [At-

Tirmithi and Ibn Maajah]

The *Wali* should assist the woman in finding a spouse who has strong faith and piety, which is reflected in behaviour.

The happiness of the marriage often rests upon this important element. One of the goals of marriage is to find comfort, repose, and security in the relationship. This goal is more likely to be achieved if each spouse has fear of Allah and adheres to Islam.

Unfortunately, women often look for a man who has wealth and letters behind his name (M.D., Ph.D., etc.) assuming that this will bring them happiness. Although there is no harm in considering these things, yet it should not be given first priority. How helpful will that wealth and those letters be when the person is being disrespectful and uncaring towards his wife? How beneficial will he be in helping her to fulfil her obligations to Allah?

Women should carefully arrange their priorities when it comes to selecting a spouse, for the success and happiness of the marriage may depend on this.

Payment of Mahr (dowry):

Payment of the *Mahr* is also a necessary condition for soundness of a marriage contract. It is given to the wife as a way of honouring and respecting her and as a symbol of the husband's commitment to provide for and take care of his wife.

Allah Says (what means): "And give the women (upon marriage) their bridal gifts graciously." [Qur'an 4:4]

This verse and others establish the obligatory nature of the *Mahr*. There is no minimum or maximum amount of *Mahr* stated explicitly in either the Qur'an or Hadith.

Anything of value is acceptable as *Mahr*, regardless of whether it is something material or something non-material (if the person lacks wealth). The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "Search for something, even if it just be a ring made from iron." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim] In fact, the *Mahr* could be knowledge of the Qur'an as related in a popular narration. The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, accepted the dower of a person's knowledge of Qur'an. He said: "Go for I have put her under your charge (in marriage) due to what you have of the Qur'an." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

There is no maximum amount of dower as Allah Says (what means): "But if you want to replace one wife with another and you have given one of them a *Qintaar* (great amount of gold) in gift, do not take (back) from it anything." [Qur'an 4:20]

A *Qintaar* is a very large amount of gold, which implies that it is allowed to give such large amounts. The Caliph Umar, *radhiallah 'anh*, however, did advise the people at one time not to be excessive with regard to a woman's dower. The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, also encouraged people to be easy in this area. He said: "The best *Mahr* is the one which is easiest (to be paid)." [Al-Haakim and Ibn Maajah]

Some women request enormous amounts of money, jewelry, and goods from their prospective husbands, oftentimes making it impossible for the men to fulfil these requests. Men are actually foregoing or postponing marriage because they are unable to pay the "going rate" or to find a woman who is willing to accept a lesser amount.

This creates a great deal of corruption, trial and temptation not only for individuals, but also for society as a whole. Women should look beyond their own personal desires and interests and consider loftier values and benefits.

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



QU and Ebn Sina Medical Company officials at the MoU signing ceremony.

Qatar University, Ebn Sina Medical sign agreement

Qatar University (QU) and Ebn Sina Medical Company, a subsidiary of Aamal Company, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at fostering excellence and providing enriching opportunities for pharmacy students.

This collaboration marks a significant step forward in advancing the field of pharmacy and nurturing the next generation of pharmaceutical professionals, a QU statement said.

The signing, in the presence of Dr Asma al-Thani, vice-president of the Health and Medical Sciences Sector at the QU, was done by Prof Feras Alali, acting dean of the College of Pharmacy, and Ebn Sina Medical Company chief executive Rashid al-Mansoori.

The MoU outlines a comprehensive framework for co-operation between the QU and Ebn Sina Medical Compa-

ny in the areas of internship programmes, training initiatives, professional development, and recognition through excellence awards in line with the mission of both parties.

The partnership seeks to bridge the gap between academia and industry by providing students with practical experience through seminars, workshops, and lectures, as well as training courses targeting the Qatari community, exposure to real-world scenarios, and mentorship from seasoned professionals.

Prof Alali said: "This agreement serves as a model for collaboration between the private and public sectors and aims to enhance healthcare in Qatar, providing opportunities for student training and education to benefit from the skills and expertise at Ebn Sina Medical Company."

"On the other hand, we will serve as the educational arm of Ebn Sina Medical Company by organising work-

shops and facilitating knowledge exchange between the faculty members and the professional staff at the company," he said.

Since the establishment of the College of Pharmacy, Ebn Sina Medical Company has sponsored awards to recognise outstanding pharmacy students who demonstrate exceptional academic performance, leadership qualities, and a commitment to advancing the field of pharmacy.

Al-Mansoori said: "Ebn Sina Medical Company is committed to providing the best for the community, and as a business, it is our social responsibility to offer the best to society and take care of the students by providing them with training and development opportunities that will benefit the community."

Al-Mansoori also toured the College of Pharmacy and met students and professors.

QPO concert today

The Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra (QPO) is set to enchant audiences with an exquisite evening of classical music, featuring the timeless works of Franz Joseph Haydn, Johannes Brahms, and Bela Bartok.

Led by acclaimed German conductor Elias Grandy, this captivating concert will take place today (June 2), at 7.30pm at The Hamilton International School Theatre, Mesaimeer.

The concert will commence with Haydn's illustrious *Surprise Symphony*, also known as *Symphony No. 94 in G Major*, named for the "surprise" – an astoundingly loud chord that punctuates the gentle flow of the second movement.

The performance will continue with Brahms' *Variations on a Theme of Haydn*, a composition based on the theme and variations of the *Saint Anthony Chorale* by Haydn.

The night will end with Bartok's *Concerto for Orchestra*, a colourful showpiece that is arguably the most popular of Bartok's orchestral works.

Grandy is renowned for his passionate interpretations of operatic and orchestral repertoire and has been the music director of Heidelberg's Opera and Philharmonic Orchestra from 2015 to 2023.

Under his leadership, both institutions experienced a significant rise in artistic quality, establishing Heidelberg as a vital musical hub.

Grandy's international profile continues to soar as he conducts first-class orchestras across Europe, America, and Asia, captivating audiences with his precision and musical depth.



Elias Grandy

Sustainable, environmental, green solutions discussed

By Shafeeq Alingal
Staff Reporter

Project Qatar 2023's Q Green Conference yesterday discussed green, sustainable and environmental mobility solutions while underlining the need for integrating new approaches and innovation during development projects.

Project Qatar 2023, the 19th edition of the event, concluded yesterday after attracting more than 18,000 visitors across four days.

The Q Green Conference also hosted a workshop on *Exploring the Significance of ESG in Business Strategy*.

The workshop touched upon the crucial

role of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors in shaping business strategies across industries in the rapidly changing business landscape where companies are recognising the significance of integrating ESG considerations into their core strategies.

The objective was to explore the benefits and impacts of ESG integration on business performance, reputation, and stakeholder relationships.

While presenting the topic of *Green, sustainable and environmental mobility solutions*, Anish Gopal, Warehouse Solutions head at Abdullah Abdulghani & Bros. Co, stressed the need to go green while changing the behaviour and lifestyle to reduce the amount of pollution and waste generated.

While suggesting sustainable ways to go green, he said that switching to electric or even hybrid or LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) cars and equipment can give good results.

"Reuse, saving energy, and digital transformation are the sustainable ways to go green," Gopal said.

He also talked about the phases of evolution of power in the material handling industry.

Midea managing director Emad Chen spoke about *Midea Comprehensive HVAC Solutions*, while Anne Marie Thodsen, managing director at The Umbrella Institute, gave a presentation on *A Circular Systems Approach to Net Zero City Development: Ensuring in Country Value and Sustainable Supply Chains*.



Emad Chen



A section of the audience at the Q Green Conference yesterday. PICTURES: Thajudheen



Anne Marie Thodsen



Anish Gopal



Senior executives from SC, FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 LLC (Q22) and FIFA attended a knowledge transfer event in Miami.

Qatar 2022 organisers share lessons learned with next World Cup hosts

A delegation from Qatar shared key lessons learned from the successful staging of the FIFA World Cup with the 2026 host nations.

Senior executives from the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC), the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 LLC (Q22) and FIFA attended a knowledge transfer event in Miami with counterparts from the US, Canada and Mexico to outline tournament preparations and delivery.

In November and December last year, Qatar hosted the most compact edition of the FIFA World Cup in modern history.

All eight stadiums were within an hour's drive of central Doha, with fans having the chance to attend more than one match per day during the early stages of the tournament.

The average attendance topped 53,000, with Qatar hosting more than 1.4mn fans during the 29-day event.

Argentina won the tournament after arguably the greatest final in history, with Lionel Messi lifting the trophy at Lusail Stadium after a thrilling penalty shoot-out victory over France in front of 88,966 fans.

A host of important subjects were covered during the opening day of the workshop, including key learnings, pitch management, overlay, infrastructure, accommodation, transportation, logistics, guest management, workforce and volunteers, arrivals and departures, and team facilities.

On day two, delegates discussed the last mile operation near stadiums, dressing and signage, the FIFA Fan Festival, information technology (IT) solutions, safety and security, ticketing and

hospitality, media and broadcast operations, and workers' welfare.

In a press statement, SC director-general engineer Yasir al-Jamal said: "It was a pleasure to share important lessons learned from Qatar 2022 with our counterparts in the US, Canada and Mexico ahead of 2026."

"We are very proud to have hosted an incredibly successful tournament, which was the first edition in the Middle East and Arab world," he said.

"Our colleagues were particularly keen to hear about the fan experience, volunteering, transportation and media and broadcast operations – areas we excelled in during Qatar 2022," the official continued.

Al-Jamal said: "We would like to thank the United 2026 organisers and FIFA for organising this event and wish them the very best of luck in hosting yet another memorable edition of the FIFA World Cup in just over three years' time."

Q22 chief executive Nasser al-Khater said: "The dust has only just settled on what was a remarkable tournament for football fans in Qatar, the Arab world and globally."

"There were many key learnings from the tournament during the 12 years of build-up and we were happy to share our experiences with the next host nations, who between them will deliver the first 48-team FIFA World Cup in history," he said. "We look forward to following their progress over the next few years and attending what is sure to be an exciting edition of the tournament."

The FIFA World Cup 2026 will be held in 16 host cities across the US, Canada and Mexico, starting in June with the final taking place on July 19.

Windy, dusty, hot weather to continue

Strong wind with slight to blowing dust is forecast today in Qatar, both inshore and offshore, according to the Met office. The temperature forecast is a minimum in the range of 27-31° Celsius and maximum in the 33-40C range.

Qatar also experienced windy and dusty weather yesterday as indicated by this hazy picture of the Doha skyline. Minimum temperature was in the 26-32C range and maximum in the 33-42C range.

PICTURE: Shaji Kayamkulam

