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PM opens Qatar Real Estate Forum 2023

By Shafeeq Alingal
Staff Reporter

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani yesterday inaugurated the first edition of the Qatar Real Estate Forum at the Sheraton Doha.

The two-day forum has been organised by the Ministry of Municipality under the theme of 'Regulations and Legislation for an Optimal Quality of Life and a Sustainable Real Estate Industry'.

HE the Prime Minister hoped that the forum would serve as a platform for investors and realtors to exchange experiences.

"Joined the opening of the first Qatar Real Estate Forum, titled 'Regulations and Legislation for an Optimal Quality of Life and a Sustainable Real Estate



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani with other dignitaries at the inauguration of the Qatar Real Estate Forum yesterday.

Industry', hoping it will be a platform for investors and realtors to exchange global and local experiences to reach a sustainable real estate industry," he tweeted.

The forum is being attended by around 1,500 leaders, decision-makers, experts and actors in the real estate from Qatar and beyond. It highlights regional and global best expertise and practices related to the real estate sector. **To Page 3**

Deputy Amir chairs third QU Board of Regents meeting



His Highness the Deputy Amir and Chairperson of Qatar University (QU)'s Board of Regents Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani, chaired yesterday the board's third meeting for the academic year 2022-2023, which was held at the Amiri Diwan. At the outset of the meeting, the board reviewed what has been implemented of the decisions and recommendations taken during the second meeting of the academic year 2022-2023. It also discussed the topics on the agenda and took the appropriate decisions thereon. The board approved the establishment of a BA programme in speech and language therapy at the College of Health Sciences, an MSc programme in business analysis at the College of Business and Economics, in addition to introducing an area of concentration in environmental engineering at the College of Engineering. The board also approved to turn the Department of Mathematics, Statistics and Physics into two: the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, and the Department of Physics and Materials Science, as part of the plan to develop the College of Arts and Sciences. **(QNA)**

Sheikha Moza attends first QF Schools Commencement

Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation (QF), yesterday attended the first QF Schools Commencement Ceremony, which celebrated the achievements of 249 graduates from seven schools. The students, representing 18 nationalities, including 202 Qataris, were honoured at Qatar National Convention Centre yesterday. HE Sheikha Hind bint Hamad al-Thani, Vice-Chairperson and CEO of Qatar Foundation, also attended the ceremony, and - as an alumna of Qatar Academy Doha, one of the schools under QF's Pre-University Education (PUE) - delivered the keynote speech. Celebrated on the occasion were the achievements of students from Qatar Academy Doha, Qatar Academy Al Khor, Qatar Academy Sidra, Qatar Academy for Science and Technology, Qatar Leadership Academy, Qatar Academy Al Wakra, and Awsaj Academy. **Page 12**

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Full coverage on Pages 2 and 3

QCB grants Paywise licence to provide digital payment services



The Qatar Central Bank (QCB) has granted Paywise (Dibsy) a licence to provide digital payment services in a continuation of the efforts made to develop and reinforce the financial technology sector (fintech). With this, QCB said in a tweet that the number of companies brought under its supervision in the fintech sector has reached nine. **(QNA)**

Qatar's FDI projects surged by 70% from 2019-2022: minister

By Shafeeq Alingal
Staff Reporter

Foreign direct investment projects in Qatar witnessed a surge between 2019 and 2022 and are set to increase further this year, HE the Minister of Municipality Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie said at the inaugural Qatar Real Estate Forum yesterday.

Speaking at the opening of the forum at the Sheraton Doha, HE the Minister explained that foreign direct investment projects in the country achieved a 70% annual growth during the 2019-2022 period, and are expected to grow by 2.4% by the end of 2023, putting the country on top of the list of recipients of foreign direct investment in the world.

"The real estate sector is one of the fastest growing sectors in Qatar, and ranks second after the energy sector,



HE Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie speaking at the Qatar Real Estate Forum yesterday. **PICTURE: Shaji Kayamkulam**

with investments exceeding QR82bn (more than \$23bn) and the launch of 135 real estate projects in 2022. This is a big addition to Qatar's infrastructure achievements," he said.



He attributed this achievement to Qatar's infrastructure that is among the best in the world, and its position as the world's safest country for the fifth year in a row. Also, Qatar has highly advanced health and education sectors with one of the most flexible and adaptive sovereign funds, as well as strong financial institutions and an environment that encourages business growth, and a steady rise in the volume of local investment, he explained.

Besides, Qatar is the first country in the Middle East where all municipalities have been awarded the 'Healthy City' title by the World Health Organisation, he added. **To Page 2**

Gulf Times honoured



The sponsors, partners and participants of the first Qatar Real Estate Forum were honoured yesterday by HE the Minister of Municipality HE Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie at a dinner at Fairmont Doha. The entities honoured included *Gulf Times*, which is a media partner of the forum. HE Dr al-Subaie presented a memento to Faisal Abdulhameed al-Mudahka, Editor-in-Chief of *Gulf Times*, on the occasion. **PICTURE: Shaji Kayamkulam Page 2**

Mowasalat makes tremendous gains in sustainable initiatives

Mowasalat (Karwa) has made tremendous achievements in sustainable mobility, reduction of water and electricity consumption, and production of fertiliser and compost from the food waste of more than 4,000 staff, it was announced yesterday on the occasion of World Environment Day 2023.

With a focus on sustainable mobility, Mowasalat (Karwa) has electrified a large portion of its bus fleet while ensuring zero emissions and minimal noise pollution. Karwa's all City Taxis have been replaced by latest-model hybrid cars while considerably reducing harmful exhaust fumes, and with the fully electric 'Iconic Limousine', the company has also started looking into the electrification of its light vehicle fleet.

"Mowasalat (Karwa) constantly

pushes the agenda for digital solutions to improve operational efficiency, which is also a determining factor for cleaner transportation and a healthier environment for the community," a statement said.

While acknowledging the importance of effectively managing valuable resources, the company has implemented substantial measures to reduce water and electricity usage. In 2022, the company achieved a remarkable 27% reduction in freshwater and a 21% decrease in electricity consumption compared to the previous year.

"Mowasalat (Karwa) has reaffirmed its dedication to environmental preservation on World Environment Day 2023. The company is committed to continue and increase initiatives that were launched in the previous years to promote sustainability and reduce its



Khalid al-Kaabi

ecological footprint," it noted. Khalid al-Kaabi, Health, Safety, Security and Environment (HSSE) manager of Mowasalat (Karwa), said: "By implementing sustainable practices and adopting innovative solutions, we strive to set a positive example in shaping a greener future for Qatar.

An innovative approach towards waste management is another keystone of Mowasalat (Karwa)'s environmental initiatives. In co-operation with a professional partner, the company produces fertiliser and compost from the food waste of more than 4,000 staff, generated at the canteens of depots and accommodations.

The resulting compost is utilised to nourish trees and plants in Karwa City, where drivers are encouraged to cultivate their own green spaces. In 2022 alone, around 1,600 trees and shrubs

were planted in and around all staff accommodation areas, further enhancing both the quality of air and the quality of life.

The company's eco-conscious management also extends to recycling used oils, scrap metal, tyres, electronics and paper for effectively reducing its environmental impact. This practice not only minimises waste but also contributes to the conservation of natural resources.

Mowasalat (Karwa) continues to explore new avenues for sustainable development and remains steadfast in its efforts to preserve the environment. Through ongoing initiatives and partnerships, the company aims to contribute to a cleaner and more sustainable Qatar for generations to come in line with the Qatar National Vision 2030, the statement added.

Qatar's real estate future looks promising, says minister

HE the Minister of Municipality Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie has stressed that the real estate sector's future in Qatar is promising, thanks to several factors, including the high rate of economic growth, and the security enjoyed by the country, as it ranks first in the list of the safest countries for the fifth year in a row.

Qatar also has an infrastructure that is among the best in the world, including highways, an integrated transport network, and an airport at the highest levels, HE Dr al-Subaie added.

During the ministerial session held yesterday under the theme 'Regulations and Legislation for an Optimal Quality of Life and a Sustainable Real Estate Industry', as part of the events of the First Qatar Real Estate Forum, he said that Qatar's promising future in the real estate sector comes from its possession of a highly advanced health sector, and an educational sector that competes with the largest educational systems around the globe.

Qatar also has freehold areas and residential, administrative and commercial units that constitute 25% of the real estate stock, with its possession of one of the most flexible and adaptive sovereign funds, in addition to its strong financial institutions and the foundations of a work environment that encourages the growth of business, as well as a steady rise in the volume of domestic and foreign investment, while being the first in the Eastern Mediterranean Region to have all its municipalities obtain the title of 'Healthy City' from the World Health Organisation (WHO).



HE Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie with other panellists at the Qatar Real Estate Forum yesterday. PICTURE: Thajudheen

HE the Minister noted that Qatar aims to reach the real estate trading volume to QR100bn, especially since real estate trading is multiplying at an accelerated rate, pointing out that there are many indicators in favour of this sector, including promoting available investment opportunities, facilitating the work of investors, and providing any services that help develop this sector, which is linked to many other sectors.

He expressed his hope that the Public Authority for Regulating the Real Estate Sector would play its role in developing this significant sector in the country.

With regard to the future of the Gulf real estate sector, HE Dr al-Subaie affirmed that it also has a promising future with its geographical diversity, large real estate production and easy

access to it, in addition to the stability and security enjoyed by the GCC countries, pointing out that there are other motivating factors, including tourism plans, which are a tributary to real estate development.

The region's rich heritage, authentic traditions and ancient history make it one of the most important tourist areas around the globe, whether in terms of religious, cultural or environmental tourism – all of which constitute an incentive for the real estate sector as well as innovation in products, financing methods and building sustainability, he said, adding that real estate has always been a safe haven against inflation, market fluctuations and global financial crises.

For his part, Kuwait's Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and Minister of State for Housing Mutlaq

Naief Omar Abu Raqaba al-Otaibi highlighted the diversity of services provided to the real estate sector in his country, pointing out the history of real estate development since the 1960s and the challenges faced by the state to meet the needs of citizens.

He explained that people's needs in the past were limited to housing, but the matter has developed greatly and the need has become urgent for residential, administrative, commercial and investment areas, pointing out the role of the state in providing customs, infrastructure, financial, security and legislative facilities to regulate this sector.

He also addressed the impact of renewable energy on urban development and the use of modern technology, as well as the development of investment in renewable energy stations, expressing his optimism about

the future of the real estate sector, not only in Kuwait, but in all GCC countries, thanks to the stability the region enjoys and the enactment of legislation and laws that give a safe future outlook for this vital and important sector.

Omani Undersecretary of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning Eng. Hamad bin Ali bin Sulaiman al-Nazwani pointed out governmental housing plans and strategies and their impact on the growth of the real estate sector, stressing the importance of adopting an attractive vision for foreign investments that keeps pace with urban development and shaping the real estate structure in line with transparency, governance and contribution to the gross domestic product.

Eng. al-Nazwani presented the stages of Oman's real estate strategy 2040 and the major steps it took in implementing it and adopting many legislations and laws that form a strong foundation for everything related to the real estate sector, explaining the role of tourism in the development of the real estate sector in the Sultanate, considering that it has been the reason for the establishment of integrated complexes and resorts that include various housing options.

He emphasised the necessity of establishing new cities with sustainable designs, finding innovative housing solutions, and providing the opportunity for free ownership for foreigners, with innovation in financing methods, increasing spending on infrastructure, and integrating the strategies of all GCC countries to come out with a unified strategy that serves all sectors. (QNA)

Qatar's FDI projects surged by 70%

From Page 1

All of these accomplishments embody the great efforts made in all sectors of the country in providing sustainable options to achieve the health and well-being of the residents of Qatar in addition to striving to implement the comprehensive urban plan for the country, as well as effective and directed investment for infrastructure projects, HE al-Subaie noted.

"These are all in accordance with the Ministry of Municipality's national and sustainable development strategy aimed at the realisation of Qatar National Vision 2030," he said.

Further, HE the Minister stressed that the success achieved by the country in hosting the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 had a positive impact in terms of attracting a large number of foreign investors, thus enhancing the distinguished position that Doha occupies today as a thriving financial centre that leads dialogues and provides the possibility of exchanging views in order to enhance synergies among the main players in the economic arena at the local, regional and international levels.

HE the Minister said that the First Qatar Real Estate Forum comes in the wake of Amiri Order No 28 of 2023, issued on April 11, establishing the Public Authority for Regulating the Real Estate Sector.

"This is a pioneering and important step to strengthen this vital sector and continue its development through organising, motivating and contributing to its advancement, in implementation of the country's ambitious policies and directions within Qatar National Vision 2030, taking into account the economic and social development plans and achieving urban development in a balanced and inte-

grated manner that preserves the quality of life and sustainability," he explained.

He expressed happiness at the opening of the first edition of the forum, which sheds light on regulations and legislation and their role in achieving a sustainable real estate industry, and reviews the best regional and global experiences and practices related to the real estate sector with the aim of creating an outstanding climate for the real estate investment sector.

He also expressed gratitude for the great interest that Qatar has in developing the real estate sector, under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani.

The forum stems from the importance of the real estate sector in Qatar and its pivotal role in comprehensive development, as it is one of the active and influential sectors in the economic development process, HE the Minister said. "The forum also contributes to real estate development and sustainable housing amid the country's development and economic diversification, with the aim of reaching a future vision for the real estate industry and finding solutions to the challenges facing the future of real estate in Qatar in order to achieve an attractive and vital real estate boom."

He expressed hope that the forum would be a favourable opportunity to lay out a roadmap for the path of real estate development in Qatar, which would reflect positively on the returns for the real estate sector across all sectors that enhance it.

The forum has been organised by the Ministry of Municipality in partnership with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Finance, in addition to Expo 2023 Doha and Qatari Diar.

Gulf Times is a media partner of the forum.

Forum sponsors, partners honoured



By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

THE sponsors, partners and participants of the first Qatar Real Estate Forum were honoured yesterday by HE the Minister of Municipality HE Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie at a dinner at Fairmont Doha.

Present on the occasion were Mutlaq Naief Omar Abu Raqaba al-Otaibi, Kuwait's Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and Minister of State for Housing; engineer Hamad Ali Sulaiman al-Nazwani, undersecretary of Oman's Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning; engineer Abdullah Saud al-Hammad, CEO of the Saudi Real Estate General Authority and other dignitaries from Qatar and the region.

A group of senior officials and businesspersons, leaders, decision makers, experts, and stakeholders in the real estate sector from Qatar and the region were honoured by HE Dr al-Subaie. Gulf Times is a media partner of



PICTURES: Shaji Kayamkulam

the two-day event and Editor-in-Chief Faisal Abdulhameed al-Mudahka was honoured by the minister.



Focus on digital innovation for sustainable real estate

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

A talk at the Qatar Real Estate Forum 2023 yesterday highlighted the key role of technology in shaping sustainable and efficient practices in the sector, citing the latest advancements in digital innovation.

Seven speakers from GCC countries, including Qatar, discussed a number of successful digital programmes and systems that facilitated faster transactions, enhanced transparency and better customer experience, among other positive impacts.

Naif AlSharif al-Zeid, secretary-general of Wafi from Saudi Arabia, cited the success of the Wafi project, which revolutionised the real estate sector by introducing innovative digital solutions.

Due to its innovative approach, he said Wafi received positive feedback from stakeholders, including investors, owners, and developers, as it eliminated challenges related to approvals and transactional processes that often take time.

"The Wafi system is fair for all parties involved," said al-Zeid. Noting that the programme's fair and efficient system enabled digital transactions, reducing the need for physical presence and streamlining operations.

Maria Ahmed al-Dubaikhi, strategic partnerships manager at the National Housing Company of Saudi Arabia, underlined the transformative impact of the ejar platform (e-leasing platform), serving millions of beneficiaries, ensuring transparency, reducing disputes, and contributing to the country's GDP.

She noted that litigation was significantly reduced from two years to two weeks via the ejar platform, which also created more transparency in transactions and supported services in the banking sector and other funding entities.

Al-Dubaikhi emphasised the platform's expansion plans to offer even more services, aim-



The first set of panellists for 'The digital innovation for sustainable real estate industry' at the forum yesterday. PICTURE: Thajudheen

ing to enhance the real estate sector through smart and effective solutions.

Tayseer al-Mufarrej, general manager of strategic communications and spokesperson of the Real Estate General Authority in Saudi Arabia, lauded Qatar's strong infrastructure and real estate platform, saying it serves as a model for the world.

Echoing the views of other speakers, al-Mufarrej said digital governance in the real estate sector enhanced transparency and attracted many investors. The mediation process, for example, introduced innovative solutions, providing flexibility and protecting the rights of all parties involved.

With a unified platform, he added that the system generated several opportunities and increased work efficiency where people can avail of all the services related to mediation.

Amer Saeed al-Ghafri, director of the Real Estate Registration Department at the Ministry of Justice in Qatar, discussed the success of the Sak digital platform, which has significantly reduced the procedures involved in real estate transactions.

The platform, he stressed, contributed in generating accurate and authenticated e-registrations. The system's efficiency, where one person performs the work of multiple individuals, has attracted more investors to Qatar's real estate sector. Like similar programmes, Sak can process transactions in 30 minutes or less.

Al-Ghafri announced that other digital services and features will be enhanced and launched by the end of 2023 or early 2024, saying that they are looking forward to offering excellent services for interested parties.

The second set of panellists continued the discussion and focused on the importance of digital technology in enhancing various services and operations in the real estate sector.

Ziyad al-Shammari, strategic general manager of the Real Estate General Authority in Saudi Arabia, highlights the role of innovation in sustainability and the use of digital tools for data analysis, internal design, and market trends.

He said the real estate sector still needs a lot of innovative solutions for its further devel-

opment: from helping speed up procedures to using several tools that can be used to support these efforts.

Faris A al-Bassam, international co-operation director of the Real Estate General Authority in Saudi Arabia, praised the Mullak programme, which enables property managers and maintenance companies to offer services to owners' associations, contributing to the realisation of Saudi Arabia's National Vision 2030.

Khalifa al-Zeraim al-Suwaidi, CEO and board member of Emirates Real Estate Solutions in the UAE, underlined the importance of digital transformation in real estate regulations and updates.

He said the digital platform efficiently links partners, service providers, and government agencies, aiding remote transactions and approval processes. It also helps ease of access to services such as mortgaging, registering, and leasing contracts.

The system, al-Suwaidi noted, facilitates hundreds of transactions worth billions of dirhams in the real estate sector, and deals with investors efficiently.

PM inaugurates Qatar Real Estate Forum



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani inaugurated yesterday the first edition of the Qatar Real Estate Forum 2023. A lineup of ministers and members of diplomatic missions accredited to the country, along with several senior officials and businesspersons, attended the inauguration.

Qatari Diar invested \$60bn locally, globally; 'open to Ukraine'

Qatar fertile ground for real estate investment: Qatari Diar CEO

By **Santhosh V Perumal**
Business Reporter

Qatari Diar, a realty giant that has exposure to as many as 27 countries, has so far invested \$60bn locally and globally and is open to investing in Ukraine, according to its top official.

Addressing the first Qatar Real Estate Forum, organised by the Ministry of Municipality, Abdullah bin Hamad al-Attiyah, chief executive officer of Qatari Diar, also said the domestic market has become a fertile ground for real estate investments and that smart cities, like Lusail, are fast becoming an integral part of the modern economies.

"We have invested in more than 27 countries and have gained experiences. Our total investments (domestic and international) are (to the tune of) \$60bn," he said, adding the company's guiding principle has always been profitability and transformation when it carries out projects, which positively affect the economy and environment.

In this regard, he highlighted the investment in Washington City Centre project, which marks Qatari Diar's first significant investment in the US.

He said initially Qatari Diar was apprehensive of the project because of the crime rate in the region but after its completion, the project made positive impact in the neighbouring areas. Its other projects in the US include Conrad Hotel, Washington DC and The Jaxx in New York; while its Americas portfolio also has Panama Pacifico.

Its UK portfolio include Chelsea Barracks,



Abdullah bin Hamad al-Attiyah at the Qatar Real Estate Forum yesterday. **PICTURE:** Thajudheen

East Village, Elephant and Castle, Lewisham Gateway, Southbank Palace and The Chancery Rosewood in London; New Maker Yards in Manchester; and projects in Leeds and Glasgow. The African investments include Citygate (Egypt), Newgiza (Egypt), The St Regis Cairo (Egypt), Al Houara Resort (Morocco), and Mushaireb (Khartoum, Sudan). Highlighting that Qatar, Egypt, the US and UK formed a major part of its portfolio; he said it was open to any regions that offered potential. "In Ukraine, there is an opportunity and we can benefit from that," al-Attiyah said.

On the domestic front, he said Qatar tries to attract investors and real estate developers through a wide range of legislative, tax and infrastructure facilitations, along with free ownership assurances and others. Infrastructure in Qatar has been designed to accommodate 5mn people but the current size is 2.7mn; implying the growth potential. He highlighted the country's direct support to the real estate sector such as

incentive packages, laws that allow non-Qataris to own real estate, according to the Cabinet Resolution No 28 of 2020.

It was announced that 25 areas would be allocated, where non-Qataris would be allowed to own property under the usufruct system, and nine other areas where free ownership would be allowed. Regarding the legacy of World Cup's contribution to improving the sector's revenues and returns, there has been "remarkable" rise in occupancy rates of real estate units, including hotels, thus contributing to the recovery of the sector.

On the future of real sector in Qatar, al-Attiyah said the country has a promising potential in view of the investment friendly environment, safety and security; and economic stability. Asserting that hosting the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 was the beginning for Qatar but not the end, adding that the tournament revealed that Qatar is a secure and perfect family place for people to live and invest in, and the country has been working for the future and not for the tournament only, the Qatar News Agency reported.

Al-Attiyah noted that the tournament was a big challenge and motive for Diar to prove that Lusail City, which was implemented by the company, was ready for the tournament in record time. He said the city is designed to accommodate 450,000 people, and its population has increased by more than 5% compared to the same period last year, which underscores the substantial growth Lusail is witnessing. Its infrastructure has been connected with public utilities by leveraging cutting-edge technology, he added.

PM opens Qatar Real Estate Forum

From Page 1

The first session on the inaugural day of the forum saw a panel discussion on 'Future Trends in Real Estate', which was attended by HE Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie, Minister of Municipality; Mutlaq Naief Omar Abu Raqaba al-Otaibi, Kuwaiti Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and Minister of State for Housing; and Hamad bin Ali bin Sulaiman al-Nazwani, Omani

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning.

The session discussed the importance of real estate development to enhance the State's economy while shedding light on the strategic initiatives to build an attractive real estate investment environment.

There were three more sessions yesterday, titled 'Exploring the Future of Real Estate', 'Real Estate Sector Governance' and 'Digital Innovation for a Sustainable Real Estate Industry'.

Today, the forum's sessions will focus on 'The Post-World Cup Real Estate Sector', 'The Real Estate Investor's Journey - Reality vs Hope', 'Funding Policies and Processes', and 'Future Cities for a Better Life Quality'.

Besides, workshops are being held as part of the forum, while an accompanying exhibition showcases state-of-the-art technologies deployed in the sustainable real estate industry.

(With inputs from QNA)
Page 2, 3

PM meets France-Qatar Friendship Group president and Iraq transport minister



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met yesterday with the visiting President of the France-Qatar Friendship Group in the French National Assembly MP Christophe Naegelen, who is participating in the First Qatar Real Estate Forum. During the meeting, they discussed co-operation between the countries, and ways to support and develop them in various fields. (QNA)



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met yesterday with Iraqi Transport Minister Razak Muhibis al-Saadawi, on the sidelines of the opening of the First Qatar Real Estate Forum. During the meeting, they discussed bilateral relations and ways to enhance and develop them in various fields. (QNA)

Experts stress impact of regulations and legislation for real estate sector development

By **Joseph Varghese**
Staff Reporter

Experts from the Gulf region highlighted the need for regulations and legislation in the real estate sector for supporting the national economies yesterday at a panel discussion during the ongoing Qatar Real Estate Forum.

At a session titled 'Governance of the Real Estate Sector', speakers shared their experiences in their respective countries and how the system works with the support of appropriate strategies and policies.

Real estate market regulation and supervision mechanisms such as real estate brokerage, real estate contributions, sorting mechanisms, real estate registration, disputes and real estate arbitration mechanism were the major points of discussion.

Saeed Abdulla Saeed al-Suwaidi, assistant undersecretary for Real Estate Registration and Authentication Affairs and chairman of the Committee for Non-Qatari Ownership and Use of Real Estate, Qatar, said Qatar's new real estate law aims to make the real estate sector



Participants in the discussion on 'Governance of the Real Estate Sector'. **PICTURE:** Shaji Kayamkulam

the country successful.

"According to some recent reports, Qatar real estate sector is one of the best in the world and in the construction sector too Qatar is ranked very highly. Through the new law, we aim to take the sector to greater heights. We will be able to get more information about all aspects of the sector and gain accurate statistics about the sector in the country," said al-Suwaidi.

Speaking about the impact of regulations and legislation on the development of the real estate sector, Abdullah Saud al-Hammad, CEO of the Real Estate General Authority, Saudi Arabia, explained the reasons and rationale for forming a real estate policy in his country.

"In real estate sector, there are three stakeholders. The first one is those who want to buy the properties, the second one is the developers and the third are those who are engaged in the real estate activities. All the three of them are very important components of the whole system," said al-Hammad.

Essam Abdullah Khalaf, chairman of the Board of Directors of the Real Estate Regulatory Authority, Bahrain, pointed out that the real estate law is one of the main pillars in supporting the national economy.

"In Bahrain there are a lot of developments which are a great source of support for the government. There should be opportunities for the in-

vestors and this will provide more stability and security for them to develop modern infrastructure. Those who come to a country should also get facilities and services such as educational and healthcare services, as such steps will help the investors to gain more confidence," he explained.

According to Marwan Ahmed bin Ghalita, CEO of the Real Estate Regulatory Agency, Dubai Land Department, UAE, maintaining the rights and providing the facilities will help the investors in the real estate sector.

"It promotes confidence among the investors. There should be flexibility in the approach. In Dubai we understand that what is good for the private sector is good for the country as we promote private-public partnership," highlighted Ghalita.

Dani Kabbani, managing partner, Eversheds Sutherland, also provided his insights and legal aspects in the sector at the panel discussion moderated by Khalid al-Yahya. The speakers also stressed the need for confidence building measures as well as the need for speedy solutions for the disputes that might emerge.

Ministry launches three awards to encourage real estate investors

The Ministry of Municipality yesterday announced the launch of three awards to encourage and motivate investors in the real estate sector to consider sustainability, creativity and community service in designing and implementing their projects.

This came during a ceremony held to honour the sponsors and supporters of the first edition of the forum, in the presence of HE the Minister

of Municipality Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie. The awards announced are the Sustainability Award, Design Creativity Award and Community Service Award (companies).

The conditions and criteria for these awards will be provided in the coming days, while the winners will be announced in the second edition of the Qatar Real Estate Forum next year, a statement from the ministry said.



Transport minister holds meeting with Iraqi counterpart



HE the Minister of Transport Jassim bin Saif bin Ahmed al-Sulaiti has met Iraqi Transport Minister Razak Muhibis al-Saadawi. During their meeting in Doha yesterday they discussed aspects of bilateral co-operation between the two countries in transportation and the various activities of transport, ports and civil aviation, as well as all ways to enhance relations. The meeting was attended by a number of the ministry officials, representatives of transport sector agencies and the delegation accompanying the Iraqi minister. - QNA

Deputy Amir meets director of China's NEA



His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani has met the director of China's National Energy Administration (NEA), Zhang Jianhua, who called on His Highness at the Amiri Diwan yesterday to greet him on the occasion of his visit to the country. During the meeting, they discussed the existing co-operation and relations between the two countries and ways to enhance them, in addition to a number of topics of mutual interest. - QNA

Qatar to participate in labour conference in Geneva

Qatar will participate in the 111th session of the International Labour Conference (ILC), which will kick off today in Geneva. Qatar's delegation to the conference will be headed by HE the Minister of Labour Dr Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri. The conference will conclude on Friday. Its agenda includes a discussion regarding the report of ILO Director-General on advancing social justice, a report on the conditions of workers in the occupied Arab territories, and other reports on apprenticeships, gender equality, social protection for workers, and ways to achieve a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all. Qatar's delegation includes representatives from Qatar Chamber, QatarEnergy and Karwa company. More than 5,000 participants, including heads of state and government, relevant ministers, representatives of employers and workers, and international, governmental and labour organisations, will also attend the conference. - QNA

Health minister meets WHO secretary-general



HE Dr al-Kuwari with WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

HE the Minister of Public Health and Chair of the Executive Board of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Dr Hanan Mohamed al-Kuwari has met World Health Organisation (WHO) Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. During their meeting in Geneva yesterday, they discussed the most prominent decisions of the meetings of the WHO Executive Board at its 153rd session and the World Health Assembly (WHA) at its 76th session, recently concluded in Geneva, and means to accelerate the achievement of the WHO's goals and promote health and wellness for all. They also discussed aspects of co-operation between Qatar and the WHO in various health fields and future priorities as part of the "Sport for Health" partnership, signed in October 2021 for three years between Qatar's Ministry of Public Health, the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC), the WHO, and FIFA to make the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 a model for major sporting events in the future. On May 31, the WHO Executive Board elected Qatar, represented by HE Dr al-Kuwari, as Chair of the Council in its 153rd session. - QNA

INVITATION TO TENDER

Tender Reference	Description	Tender Fee	Tender Bond Value (QAR)	Bid Closing Date
QNL-RFQ-5	QNL Digital Repository and Content Platform Solution.	QAR 500	QAR 100,000.00	22 June 2023
CO-RFQ-35	Supply, Installation and Enhancement of CCTV Coverage and Access Control System for QF Sites.	QAR 2,000	QAR 50,000.00	17 July 2023
QF-RFQ-123	Supply of Library Books Including Cataloguing, Labelling, Library Software and Staff Training.	QAR 500	Not Applicable	26 June 2023

Qatar Foundation (QF) Procurement & Program Management Directorate is inviting companies to participate in the above listed public tenders. To receive the tender documents, please follow the below steps:

- Tender Fee:** Interested bidders shall first deposit the respective non-refundable and non-transferrable tender fee as mentioned above into the following Qatar Foundation bank account mentioning "QF Tender Reference Number" and "Bidder's Name":

Account Name	: QATAR FOUNDATION
Account Number	: 0 0 1 3 - 0 2 4 1 7 1 - 0 0 1
Swift Code No	: QNBQAQ2A
IBAN	: QA19 QNBA 0000 0000 0013 0241 7100 1
Bank Name	: Qatar National Bank

Tender Fee Payment Dates: From 05 June 2023 until 11 June 2023 between 9:00 AM - 02:00 PM except Friday and Saturday. The tender fees should be paid to QF account before 11 June 2023, 02:00 PM. Tender documents will not be issued if the tender fees is paid after the specified deadline.

Supplier Registration Number (SRN): It is mandatory to have QF SRN in order to participate in the above tenders. QF unregistered bidders, who have paid the tender fees, will not be able to download the tender documents without completing the Supplier Registration process. Therefore, please visit QF website at <https://www.qf.org.qa/supplier-registration> to complete the Supplier Registration process.

- All bidders, who are registered and have paid the required tender fees to QF, shall then request the tender document from QF by providing the below document via this email attendertender@qf.org.qa in a single email by providing the following:
 - Copy of bidder's tender fee receipt clearly highlighting "QF Tender reference number", "bidder's name" and
 - Name and email ID of bidder's focal point for all tender communications.

Upon receipt of the above information, QF will then issue an email notification to the bidder and provide a link to download the Tender documents after the due date of Tender Fee Payment.

The commercial bid must be valid for 120 days from bid closing date.

The commercial bid must be accompanied by a bank guarantee (tender bond) issued by a local bank in Qatar and should be valid for 120 days from the bid closing date.

The successful tenderer will be required to submit a performance bond as prescribed in each of the above tender documents.

QC provides drinking water to 1.2mn people in Ghana

Qatar Charity (QC) has announced that the number of beneficiaries of its water projects since the opening of its office in Ghana in 2016 until the beginning of this year has reached more than 1.2mn people, with an additional 128,000 people expected to benefit from the wells and water stations that the QC office in Ghana is working on implementing this year. The QC said in a statement that its water and sanitation projects have contributed to ending the suffering of the most vulnerable rural residents in need of safe drinking water in Ghana, while its field teams are now continuing to drill several wells and install water stations, totalling 128 wells and a new station under construction. Since the opening of its office in Ghana, the QC has been able to implement 1,207 projects to provide drinking water, whilst also expanding its humanitarian interventions and development projects there. The director of the Government Agency for Community Water and Sanitation in Ghana, Mohamed Ibrahim, has praised the QC's projects which are contributing to the provision and management of water facilities benefiting rural areas with very low water coverage. According to the data of the National Population and Housing Census in Ghana for 2021, in addition to official reports on primary healthcare in relation to the water situation for the same year, at least 3mn Ghanaian citizens in rural areas suffer because of their inability to access healthy drinking water sources, resorting to open dams, creeks, and shallow wells, and struggling to meet their daily drinking water needs. Following a field assessment study on the size of need, the QC focused on the implementation of water stations in the northern and northwestern parts of Ghana in the regions of Oty, Volta, Bono, and Ahafo, which are among the poorest regions and in need of water projects. - QNA



Since the opening of its office in Ghana, the QC has been able to implement 1,207 projects to provide drinking water.



Qatar Charity's water projects in Ghana have benefited more than 1.2mn people, with another 128,000 expected to benefit this year.

AL KHALIJ CEMENT COMPANY INVITATION FOR AUCTION

SER. NO.	AUCTION NO.	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	Document's Fees	AUCTION BOND (QAR)	AUCTION CLOSING DATE
1	AKCC/T03/23	For sale Bulker Trailers	21 Units	200 QR	10% of Bid Value	25/06/2023
		For sale Tractor Heads	27 Units			
		For sale Tipper Trailer	9 Units			
		For sale Flat Bed	5 Units			
		For sale Low Bed	1 Unit			
		For sale Skeleton Trailer	1 Unit			
		Container Handler	2 Units			
		Pick Up Cab (Isuzu / Nissan)	2 Units			

General conditions:
1) Auction Documents can be collected from Qatari Investors Group head office at below address:
Qatari Investors Group
Lusail, 1st Floor, Zone No: 69 / Street No: 223, P O Box 22504, Doha, Qatar
TEL. 974 44747000 - FAX 974 44860976
2) Documents fees should be paid by cash during collection of documents and not refundable
3) Auction closing date is June 25, 2023 at 12 pm, any offers after this date and time will be automatically rejected
4) Offers should be sent in sealed envelopes together with the Auction Bond or secured CHQ with CR copy & company ID.

Auction Announcement

ARPM Tender and Auction Committee announce the following Auction:

Auction Subject	Sale of Air Conditioning and Accessories stored in Asian City, Industrial Area, Doha.			
Launching Date	Closing Date	Auction Bond QR.	Auctions Documents Price QR.	Auction Method
05/06/2023	21/06/2023	10,000 (Qatari Riyals Ten Thousand) (refundable subject to conditions)	250 (Qatari Riyals Two Hundred Fifty)	One Closed Envelope

Auction description:
Auction purpose is for the following:
Sale of Air Conditioning and Accessories stored in Asian City, Industrial Area, Doha. The awarding will be made to the highest bid among the applicants.

General Conditions:

- Auction Documents / Conditions shall be obtained from Purchasing Department, ARPM Co., located on the 9th Floor, Al Rayyan Building, Old Salata, Zone 18, Al Muthaf Street, Next to Al Bustan Hotel during working hours 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (Fri. & Sat. Closed).
- Auction Documents Fee (QR 250 – Qatari Riyals Two Hundred Fifty only) - non-refundable, will be paid in cash in ARPM Co. Headquarter.
- Site visit for the Air Conditioning and Accessories shall be according to the Auction Conditions and the attendance of the visit shall be limited to those who obtain the Auction documents and pay the prescribed fees as per Item 2 above.
- To obtain Auction documents, the following documents are required:
Authorization letter from the bidding company in Arabic signed by the officially authorized manager and stamped with the company's seal - Copy of the establishment card - ID of the authorized person to receive the documents - Copy of the valid company's commercial registration - Company's classification certificate (if any).
- The Bid must be submitted according to the Conditions stated in the bidding documents. The Bid shall be enclosed with an Auction Bond in the name of Al Rayyan Project Management Company (to be placed in separate envelope inside the Bid envelope) in the form of a payable cheque certified by one of the banks operating in the State of Qatar of only QR10,000 (Ten Thousand Qatari Riyals only), and it will be returned back within 90 days from the closing date subject to the Terms & Conditions, noting that no bid shall be accepted unless it has been enclosed with Auction Bond document.
- The bid (Price of the Air Conditioning and Accessories) shall be submitted in local currency (Qatari Riyal) and shall be valid for 90 days from the closing date of the bid and cannot be revoked within that period.
- Deadline for accepting bids is 12:00 pm of the closing date (Wednesday 21/06/2023).
- All forms attached to the Auction documents including the form of undertaking, shall be filled, completed and authorized as stated therein and returned with the other documents.
- All necessary data for the company (contacts & follow-up) must be attached: Mobile - Phone - Fax - E-mail - company address of where the correspondence to be sent, clarifying the tasks of each individual (when purchasing Auction documents) and within the company bid.
- For any queries related to documents and bidding, contact Al Rayyan Project Management Co. - Tel: 40341846 – 40341804, Fax: 40341899 – email: lcabral@arpm.com.qa; m.aseef@arpm.com.qa
- Deadline for accepting inquiries and requests 14/06/2023.
- The extension of the closing date may be requested in case of necessity (with justifications), not less than (5) working days prior to the closing date for Tender and Auction committee desertion and decision.
- In case the closing date is extended or any modifications are made during the announcement period, the company will be notified by fax or e-mail formally.

Tenders and Auctions Committee
ARPM

QATARGAS OPERATING COMPANY LTD

Tender Invitation

No.	TENDER NUMBER / DESCRIPTION	TENDER ISSUE PERIOD	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER CLOSING DATE
1	LTC/MNT/6197/23 for Slug Catcher Cleaning Services on Call-Off Basis	04/06/2023 to 11/06/2023	0/-	3,500,000/-	25/06/2023

Scope of Work:
Company requires experienced, competent, and qualified Contractor(s) to carryout cleaning services of slug catchers installed at company's facilities on call off basis. The scope shall also include mobilization of manpower, resources, supply, erection/installation and management of all necessary rigging, scaffolding, insulation, blinding, de-blinding requirements and provision of other equipment and chemicals as necessary for the works / services.

The contract shall be for a period of 5+2 years and shall be effective from 4Q 2023 tentatively.

Bid Validity: Bid should be valid for 270 days from the Tender Closing Date.

Place for Tender Collection and Bid Submission:
ITT document for this tender will be available in Qatargas website under Suppliers tab >Current Open Tenders. The bids shall be submitted through the Qatargas online platform (SMART by GEP).

The World's Premier LNG Company
www.qatargas.com.qa

Fourth winner of Safari promotion gets prize



Ibrahim Md Hanif, winner of the fourth draw of Safari's mega promotion, the 'Win 5 Nissan Patrol Car 2022 Car' promotion (Coupon No 5027502), has received a Nissan Patrol 2022 model vehicle. The prize was presented to him by representatives of the Safari management during an event held at Safari Mall - Abu Hamour on June 3. The fifth draw of the promotion will be held on July 16 at Safari Hypermarket - Barwa Village.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds wins legal battle against fake outlet

Malabar Gold & Diamonds, 'the 6th largest jewellery retailer globally with 317 retail outlets across the Middle East, the Far East, the US and India', has won a major legal battle against brand impersonation in Islamabad, Pakistan, according to a statement issued yesterday in Doha by the brand.

"The case was filed by the brand against Muhammad Faizan, a Pakistani national, who was operating a jewellery store illegally in the name of Malabar Gold & Diamonds in Islamabad, Pakistan. In addition to using the brand name and other trademarks of Malabar Gold & Diamonds to operate his jewellery store, Faizan also managed social media pages in Pakistan using the brand name, brand ambassadors, and product images of Malabar Gold & Diamonds," the statement explained.

"Upon the filing of the civil case by the legal team of Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the Pakistani court immediately ordered that all 'Malabar Gold & Diamonds' sign



boards be taken down and to stop all usage of the brand name and trademarks. As the accused refused to abide by the court orders, Malabar Gold & Diamonds filed a contempt petition in court, resulting in the accused being arrested, imprisoned, and presented in the court," the statement said.

"Since imprisonment was an assured outcome of the civil case, Faizan

approached Malabar Gold & Diamonds for a settlement and subsequent agreement to the conditions put forth by the brand. This included the withdrawal of the trademark application filed by the accused for registering 'Malabar Gold & Diamonds' under his name, and publishing confession and declaration in all editions of major English and Urdu newspapers chosen by Malabar Gold & Diamonds; all of which Faizan agreed to and complied," the statement said.

Malabar Group chairman, M P Ahmed, added: "Ours is a business that has been established on the foundation of trust. The brand value that we have painstakingly built over the years is very dear to us and any attempts to exploit the goodwill and reputation of the brand will be prevented. I sincerely assure our loyal customers that as is evident from this case, Malabar Gold & Diamonds will do all that is possible to prevent and discourage any such activities to protect the trust placed in us by our customers."

Galleries Lafayette Doha marks 2nd edition of 'Beauty Weekend'

Continuing with its tradition of celebrating beauty, Galleries Lafayette Doha has held the second edition of the 'Beauty Weekend' in style. May 25-27 was a special weekend for all beauty lovers in Doha as the 'Beautiful You - Beauty Weekend' initiative opened the doors to an exclusive beauty-inspired experience.

From brand masterclasses, beauty treatments to counter animations, Galleries Lafayette Doha designed a complete 360-degree beauty escapade for the public to enjoy, a press statement noted. Top international brands such as Gucci, Indie Lee, Hermes, Guerlain, Christian Louboutin and Bobbi Brown were part of the weekend celebrations.

The 'Beauty Weekend' masterclasses, which were the highlight of the event, welcomed expert speakers from different fields. From the House Perfumer of French brand Caron, Jean Jacques, who was visiting Doha for the first time, to a first-time collaboration with Dr Nada Soueidan from Medi Spa: NuYu, Galleries Lafayette Doha made sure to offer a complete beauty experience.

A special beauty and haircare masterclass was delivered in collaboration with Doha's luxury salon and spa, Beauty Hive, and the world's leading luxury professional haircare brand, Kerastase.

In line with its vision to promote local talent, Galleries Lafayette Doha also used the 'Beauty Weekend' platform to promote local Qatari brands such as Abdulla Al Abdulla, the regional Qatari influencer who has launched his niche fragrances



Glimpses from the 'Beauty Weekend' at Galleries Lafayette Doha.



and organic skincare line, Abdulla Beauty.

The entire Parisian store was dressed up for the 'Beauty Weekend' and special care was taken to make sure that the guests can engage with the surroundings. While a beauty magazine backdrop were a super-fun way to make memories at the event, the 360-degree video booth, 'Glam Cam', offered a trendy way to capture some glamorous, lively images for social media.

Adding a twist to the already interesting decor, a make-up inspired bowling alley was created with pins resembling lipsticks, while the floor of the alley looked like an eyeshadow palette.

The La Suite, Galleries Lafayette Doha's exclusive penthouse, was also converted into a stage for a beauty experience. From an exclusive masterclass by Roja Dove for selected VIPs to a sen-

sory journey with Abdulla Al Abdulla's perfumes and skincare in collaboration with Inclub Studio, La Suite offered a true luxury beauty experience.

In line with the beauty theme of the event, a beauty macaroon station by Cafe Pouchkine and a special hydration station were stationed on the ground floor of the store. The hydration station offered lemon and lavender pink lemonade, perfect to boost health and beauty.

Speaking about the event, general manager of Galleries Lafayette Doha Kevin Gerard Pender said: "Galleries Lafayette celebrates beauty not just in the conventional sense. We want our clients to discover the true essence of beauty and all things beautiful it entails. Our 'Beauty Weekend' experience is a journey, where you learn, enjoy, win and go home with a lot of beautiful memories."

Galleries Lafayette Doha's 'Beauty Weekend' was an ideal opportunity to discover answers for all beauty needs and the three days felt too little for everything that the event offered.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

WE WOULD LIKE TO ADVISE THE FOLLOWING CUSTOMERS THAT PAYMENT ORDERS IN THEIR NAME ARE AWAITING FOR COLLECTION.

PLEASE CONTACT STANDARD CHARTERED BANK QATAR BRANCH WITHIN 30 DAYS FROM TODAY.

BY VISITING OUR OFFICE AT BURJ DOHA (DOHA TOWER) IN WEST BAY, AL-CORNICHE STREET, DOHA, QATAR OR CALL US ON +974 4424 8619 (between 7.30 am & 3.00 pm) .

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1- SADOK BEN AMOR RAHMANI | 36- PANTHALAN KANDI MOHAMED ALI |
| 2- ABDULWAHID S. MOHD M ABDULREHMAN | 37- SHOBI MAZHUVANNUPARAMBIL MATHEW |
| 3- AHMAD ESMAL A M AL HASHEMI | 38- KANNAN RAJESH PATHMARAJENDRAN |
| 4- SALEM MOHD S AL MANNAI | 39- TAJUL ISLAM HAFIZ MIAH |
| 5- TUMKUR MOHAMMED SALAHUDDIN KAMARAN | 40- MOHAMMADU SAMRIN MOHAMMADU AMEEN |
| 6- RAUL MARZAN JUANATAS | 41- GARY MANANSALA LOPEZ |
| 7- HISHAM MOHAMED FATHY ABDEL MEGEED YASSIN | 42- MOHAMED ZAKY RAMADAN MOHAMED |
| 8- ABDEL MONEM MOHAMED IBRAHIM EL SERWI | 43- SAWSAN AHMAD A ALFADLI |
| 9- JUVY TAPIT TORRECAMPO | 44- FLORANTE C PALASPAS |
| 10- RETCHIE BERIN DEMAISIP | 45- WALID MOHAMMAD YASSINE |
| 11- ARLENE OLLANO AGUILAR | 46- MOHAMAD OBIED |
| 12- ALFRED CAPILI TRINIDAD | 47- MOHAMMED ABDULAZIZ M A AL EMADI |
| 13- ISAMELDIN MOHAMED ELSAYED | 48- PAQUITO JR E. POMPERADA |
| 14- AASHISH GULATI ANIL GULATI | 49- SH ABDULLA THAMER MOHD AL THANI |
| 15- FAWZIYA GHANIM S M SAEED | 50- KADRE EISA ABDAL GHANE MELHOM |
| 16- PRASAD CHEERATH | 51- OUSEPH VERSEHESE |
| 17- ZARINA MOHAMMED E AZIZ LOKHAN | 52- OSMAN HUSSEIN ABDALLA IDRIS |
| 18- MURATH SYED KHALEEL | 53- SHEENA MARIE FERNANDES |
| 19- CESAR AGUILA MAUHAY | 54- AYMEN BALTI |
| 20- ODAI SADIQ | 55- SH JASSIM THAMIR I T AL-THANI |
| 21- SYED QADEER | 56- KARAMJEET SINGH GURUDAYAL SINGH CHANNA |
| 22- DIANA JAMAL ABDUL FATEH JABER | 57- DESAVILLE KENNETH TUNDAG |
| 23- AHMAD ABDULLA M A BILAL | 58- MOHAMMED ELSAYED ALY ELSAYED ABDEL KHALEK |
| 24- DHAVAKUMAR NATVARBHAI PARMAQ | 59- VALIYAKATH HASSAN HANAS |
| 25- BASHEER PALAMKULANGARA | 60- HANI MAAMMER |
| 26- RASHID HAMAD RASHID A ALMARRI | 61- NESTOR JOHN MASCARENHAS |
| 27- MOHAMED EISA ISMAIL OSMAN | 62- ERWEN MASCARINAS LOMEDA |
| 28- MOHAMED JAMALUDDIN MOHAMED FAROOK | 63- REFAAT MOHAMED IBRAHIM GALAL |
| 29- KATHIRAVAN KANNAN K SUDALAMUTHU | 64- TABREZ HASAN KHAN |
| 30- SHAMSUDHEEN VAYALILAKATH A.H | 65- ABDULLA HASAN J H MAKKI |
| 31- MOOYOTTO THAYAKUNIYIL HANEEDA | 66- SHYJUKARIM PUNTHARA LAWRENCE |
| 32- NASSER BAKHIT BELAL B AL MUBARAK | 67- MOHAMMED MISBAHUDDIN SHAKEEL |
| 33- ALI AHMAD S Q MURAD | 68- MURAD AL HALKI |
| 34- PHILIPS THOMAS | 69- RAMON DE GUZMAN ATIENZA |
| 35- TAREK GHASSAN ABDO & OR ABIR ELMOKDAD | |

TELEPHONE: +974 4424 8619

MWANI QATAR  مواني قطر

TENDERS AND AUCTIONS COMMITTEE

AUCTIONS ANNOUNCEMENT

SL no.	Auction For	Auction No	Bond	Document Fees	Closing Date	Contact
1	PREFABRICATED BUILDINGS AT HAMAD PORT	MQ\TAC/AUCT\29\2023	QRS. 150,000	QRS. 3,000	22.06.2023	ed @mwani.com.qa
2	FURNITURE (CHAIRS , TABLES AND CUPBOARDS) AT HAMAD PORT	MQ\TAC/AUCT\30\2023	QRS. 25,000	QRS. 500	21.06.2023	ed @mwani.com.qa
3	KITCHEN EQUIPMENTS, PHOTOCOPIING MACHINES, METAL FENCE PARTITION AND SCRAP AT HAMAD PORT	MQ\TAC/AUCT\35\2023	QRS. 10,000	QRS. 200	19.06.2023	ed @mwani.com.qa
4	(26) NOS. STAMFORD GENRATORS (777 KVA) AT HAMAD PORT	MQ\TAC/AUCT\36\2023	QRS. 75,000	QRS. 1,000	20.06.2023	ed @mwani.com.qa
5	LEASING THE SEAMEN CLUB AT HAMAD PORT (CAFETERIA WITH COMPLETE KITCHEN EQUIPMENT , MONEY EXCHANGE, BARBER SHOP, TELECOMMUNICATION MOBILE SHOP, PHARMACY)	MQ\TAC/AUCT\31\2023	QRS. 50,000	QRS. 500	05.07.2023	ed @mwani.com.qa
6	LEASING THE BUSINESS CENTER AT HAMAD PORT , VARIOUS COMMERCIAL SPACES (TAILOR SHOP, PERFUME SHOP , MONEY EXCHANGE, BARBER SHOP, PHARMACY TELECOMMUNICATION MOBILE SHOP.)	MQ\TAC/AUCT\32\2023	QRS. 30,000	QRS. 500	06.07.2023	ed @mwani.com.qa
7	LEASING OF TWO CAFETERIAS /COFFEE SHOPS AT VISITORS CENTER IN HAMAD PORT	MQ\TAC/AUCT\33\2023	QRS. 10,000	QRS. 200	09.07.2023	ed @mwani.com.qa
8	LEASING OF 3 CAFETERIAS WITH COMPLETE KITCHEN EQUIPMENT , AT INSPECTION PLATFORM AT HAMAD PORT	MQ\TAC/AUCT\34\2023	QRS. 10,000	QRS. 200	10.07.2023	ed @mwani.com.qa
9	CHARTER OF TWO LANDING CRAFTS FOR THREE YEARS	MQ\TAC/AUCT\37\2023	QRS. 250,000	QRS. 500	07.06.2023	dp @mwani.com.qa
10	MARINE UNITS (PILOT BOAT 2007 AND TUG BOAT 1999)	MQ\TAC/AUCT\38\2023	QRS. 30,000	QRS. 300	08.06.2023	dp @mwani.com.qa

The Tenders and Auctions Committee of Mwani Qatar hereby announces the above auctions with the following terms and conditions:

- Auction documents can be obtained (via Email) from the Finance and Accounting Department Tel No. (40453724/568) , after depositing the non-refundable amount mentioned above at MQ A/C No. (0850 - 102030 - 060) at GNB and submitting the bank depositing receipt and copy of the Commercial Registration/ ID to : (tender.secretary@mwani.com.qa) Tel. (40453724/568 - 31265655 / 30121037) .
- Offer should be accompanied with a Bond / issued by one of the Banks operating in Qatar for the amount shown in the above table and valid for 120 days from the closing date. The offer which is not accompanied by the Bond will not be considered. The successful bidder should pay the total awarding amount within five working days from the awarding date.
- Offers should be valid for ninety (90) days commencing from the closing date.
- The deadline for submitting offers will be **02:00 pm** of the date shown above. Any offer arriving thereafter will not be considered.
- The offers should be deposited in the Tenders and Auctions Committee Box of MQ as per the address given above. The auction submitting party should confirm that he has received the receipt for delivering the offer. It should be in closed envelopes, sealed with red wax and addressed to the Chairman, Tenders and Auctions Committee of MQ , writing the number and subject of the auction.
- The offers must be submitted in One envelope system, (Original and Copy) The envelopes should not bear any mark denoting the name of the Company. The original bond must be attached with the Original offer.
- Mwani Qatar has the right to divide the auction among more than one bidder.
- For Technical clarification please contact Services and Maintenance / Operation Dept. as per the Email above , For more information you can visit **MQ website : (www.mwani.com.qa)**



QATAR

Deputy PM meets Indonesian defence minister



HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Dr Khalid bin Mohamed al-Attiyah met Indonesia's Defence Minister Prabowo Subianto in Jakarta yesterday. During the meeting, they discussed issues of mutual interest, and bilateral relations and ways to develop them. The meeting was attended by Qatar's ambassador to Indonesia Fawziya bint Edrees al-Sulaiti. - QNA

Deputy prime minister meets Saudi assistant defence minister



al-Otaibi, on the sidelines of his participation in the 20th Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore. They discussed topics of mutual interest besides bilateral military co-operation relations and ways to boost them. Qatar's ambassador to Singapore Saoud bin Jassim al-Jufairi attended the meeting. - QNA

Qatar experts debunk Mers-CoV concerns

A research team from Qatar, with members from the Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), the Ministry of Public Health, Weill Cornell Medicine - Qatar and Sidra Medicine, has published a rigorous scientific study debunking hypothetical concerns about the increased risk of Mers-CoV transmission during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

Prof Adeel Butt, senior consultant in infectious diseases at the HMC, said: "In the lead-up to Qatar's successful hosting of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, several unsubstantiated opinion pieces were published in scientific journals raising a false alarm regarding the risk of Mers-CoV transmission during the tournament."

"Those authors argued, without any scientific evidence, that the tournament in Qatar and a camel pageant held

near the same time, may pose a high risk of Mers-CoV transmission across the globe," he said.

The findings of the study, which used surveillance and testing data from Qatar, were published in the *Journal of Travel Medicine*, ranked number three in the world in the field of infectious diseases, number two in the field of public, environmental and occupational health, and number eight in medicine, general and internal.

"Qatar prepared extensively to protect the health of the visitors and residents of Qatar," Prof Butt said. "Random respiratory samples from 200 camel workers and 100 camels were tested and were negative for Mers-CoV."

"To determine if any Mers-CoV infections were detected before or during the FIFA World Cup, the research team

reviewed all human Mers-CoV tests conducted in Qatar during 2022, including the duration of the FIFA World Cup," he added.

The study shows that a total of 17,281 Mers-CoV tests were performed on 14,703 individuals in Qatar in 2022. These included 2,457 tests on 2,305 individuals during November and December 2022, the months when the FIFA World Cup was held.

Tests were conducted on individuals according to the World Health Organisation (WHO)'s recommended testing and screening protocols.

Only two positive tests were recorded in 2022, in March and April last year, well before the arrival of any FIFA World Cup visitors.

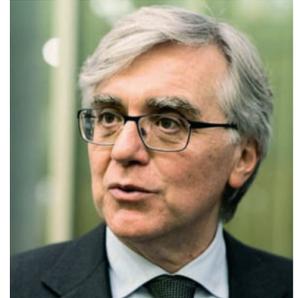
No positive cases were detected during the World Cup, and no cases of Mers-CoV related to travel to Qa-



Dr Abdullahif al-Khal



Prof Adeel Butt



Prof Roberto Bertollini

tar have been reported anywhere in the world since the completion of the World Cup.

Qatar's proactive public health and vaccination measures prioritised the safety of all, which led to a successful hosting of the FIFA World Cup.

The international medical community has recognised this response to the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and preparedness repeatedly.

In March 2022, the HMC won the top award from the Arab Hospitals Federation for the comprehensive response demonstrated during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Dr Abdullahif al-Khal, head of infectious diseases at the HMC, said that robust monitoring mechanisms instituted by Qatar before and during the FIFA World Cup played an important role in preventing disease transmission.

He emphasised that Qatar's forward planning and a co-ordinated national response can serve as a template for any future mass gathering event for early detection and prevention of infectious disease outbreaks.

Prof Roberto Bertollini, senior adviser to the Minister of Public Health, noted: "These robust data suggest that the risk of Mers-CoV transmission as-

sociated with mass gatherings is low, and standard infection control precautions remain the main barrier to its transmission."

"Not a single case was detected in Qatar among the 1.4mn visitors for the FIFA World Cup despite a comprehensive surveillance and testing mechanism put in place," he said.

Prof Bertollini also cautioned against future publishing of unsubstantiated reports related to infectious diseases that could raise false alarm, and cause distress to travellers as they have the potential of disrupting the fragile recovery after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Amir's visit 'opens new chapter in Arab, Central Asian relations'

Two experts in strategic studies and international relations have affirmed that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's visit to Uzbekistan as part of his Central Asian tour opens a new chapter in Arab and Central Asian relations and paves the way for a transitional phase in bilateral co-operation.

The experts said in remarks to the Qatar News Agency (QNA) that Qatar's approach to strengthening co-operation with Central Asian countries will benefit both sides, given both parties' enormous potential.

Executive director of the Development Strategy Centre in Uzbekistan Eldor Tulyakov described His Highness the Amir's visit as an important and strategic milestone bringing a quantum leap in the co-operation between Qatar and Uzbekistan.

He said that the visit to Uzbekistan is of great importance to both countries as it would open the way for a comprehensive strategic dialogue on strengthening co-operation in economy, trade, energy, transport, culture, and other vital sectors.

Uzbekistan believes that the co-operation relationship with Qatar is important, Tulyakov said, due to reasons that include Qatar's international reputation, its extensive experience gained in the construction and infrastructure fields, and its comprehensive development process, mostly noted during its

hosting of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

He said that Uzbekistan has a strategic vision for development and wants to benefit from Qatar's experience on how to overcome challenges on its journey toward comprehensive development.

The official pointed out the various dimensions in the areas of co-operation with Qatar.

He stressed that the talks that will be held between His Highness the Amir and the Uzbek president will give a strong momentum to co-operation, activate agreements and memorandums of understanding (MoUs), and conclude new agreements in all sectors and fields of interest to the two countries.

The Development Strategy Centre reaffirms that strengthening co-operation between Uzbekistan and Qatar is vital, and called for both countries to take advantage of the potential they enjoy to achieve economic benefits by launching investment projects in Uzbekistan and benefiting from the incentives provided by the Uzbek government.

Tulyakov added that the trade exchange between Uzbekistan and Qatar will increase after His Highness the Amir's visit thanks to the resolve of the leaderships of the two countries, who realise that the political relations must be translated into reality.

International relations expert Dr Ahmed Mohamed Ghaith al-Kuwari said that His Highness the Amir's visit will establish a new



Dr al-Kuwari

Eldor Tulyakov

phase of relations to serve the two countries.

He said that Qatar and Uzbekistan have shown, in recent years, their determination to move forward in developing their relations at various levels.

This is evident in the opening of the Qatar embassy in Tashkent a few weeks ago, in conjunction with the third round of political consultations between Qatar and Uzbekistan.

Dr al-Kuwari believes that building bridges of communication between Qatar and Uzbekistan and establishing commercial, agricultural, and industrial partnerships serves Qatar National Vision 2030 to achieve sustainable development that guarantees a decent life for its people.

He referred to the investment opportunities enjoyed by the Central Asian countries, their political stability, and their aspiration to form partnerships with Qatar, and expressed the importance of involving the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) and Qatari businessmen in investing in these countries.

Central Asian countries see Qatar as a reliable partner in light of its international presence, effective diplomacy, strong economy, and role in energy security.

Dr al-Kuwari said that Qatar is confident that His Highness the Amir's visit will give bilateral relations a strong impetus and establish a new phase of co-operation and partnership. - QNA

Uzbeks hail Qatar's role in Islamic world

Leaders of Islamic institutions and centres in Uzbekistan have commended the pioneering role played by Qatar in spreading the principles of the tolerant Islamic religion in the world, and providing various types of support and assistance to Islamic countries in normal circumstances or times of crisis.

Deputy chairperson of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan Dr Uygun Gafurov said that Qatar has become a role model for developed Islamic countries, which have kept pace with renaissance and modernity, while preserving their traditions and customs derived from the principles of the Islamic region.

In a statement to the Qatar News Agency (QNA), he said that the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 was an opportunity for Qatar to appear as a developed and advanced country, adding that Qatar has presented to the world an unprecedented edition of the World Cup, which at the same time contributed to spreading the principles of Islam, and promoting Islam's tolerance to the world.

Qatar is also a pioneer in the field of dialogue among civilisations and dialogue between religions, especially after having launched multiple editions of the

Conference of Inter-faith Dialogue over the past years, which granted the country a prominent role in this field, at the regional and global level, Dr Gafurov added.

He described the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to Uzbekistan as an important step to enhance bilateral relations in Islamic matters, which will not only benefit the two countries, but the entire Islamic world.

He emphasised the importance of co-operation between Uzbekistan and Qatar in Islamic sciences and modern knowledge, which serve the Muslim world, especially since Qatar is one of the advanced countries in education and research.

Uzbekistan is interested in Islamic sciences and their development, based on its long history in this field, he added.

Director of the Centre of Islamic Civilisation in Uzbekistan Shaazim Minovarov said that the Uzbek people welcome the visit of His Highness the Amir, noting that they also appreciate the noble and courageous stances that Qatar has always taken in support of the Islamic world.

In addition to strengthening bilateral relations between Uzbekistan and Qatar, the visit of

His Highness will also contribute to strengthening fraternal ties between two Islamic countries, he added.

Minovarov explained that Uzbekistan, which has been the homeland of prominent scholars of the Islamic nation, such as Imam Bukhari, Al-Tirmidhi and Ibn Sina, is proud of its similarity to Qatar in terms of focusing on science, research and innovation in all fields.

He added that the distinguished relations between the two countries will pave the way for more co-operation in the field of Islamic sciences and modern science.

Minovarov also stressed the importance of strengthening economic and trade ties between Qatar and Uzbekistan.

He welcomed the co-operation with Qatar authorities that specialise in the field of research, science and Islamic studies, citing the memorandum of understanding signed by the centre with the Qatar National Library (QNL) to enhance co-operation in efforts to preserve and protect the documentary heritage, to facilitate access to it, and to the exchange of publications and digital copies of manuscripts, which fall within the public domain on topics of mutual interest. - QNA

Metrash2
"Communicate with us" window allows you to report traffic violations (Occupying Disable Parking, Override from the Right, Obstructing Traffic, Parking at the Prohibited Area, other).

- 1 Communicate with us
- 2 Traffic
- 3 Report Traffic Violations
- 4 Fill in the Details

Metrash2 allows easy reporting of traffic violations

The Ministry of Interior (MoI) has stressed that reporting traffic violations has never been easier thanks to the 'Communicate Us' option on the Metrash2 app. "You can report traffic violations - such as occupying disabled parking, overtaking from the right, obstructing traffic, parking in a prohibited area, and more," the MoI said on social media.

Indonesian authors donate books to QNL

In collaboration with the Qatar National Library (QNL) and with support from the Indonesian embassy in Doha, Indonesian authors residing in Qatar conducted a book donation activity at the QNL on June 1.

Defy Taslim, author of a novel titled *Love Above the Sky of Qatar (Cinta di Atas Langit Qatar)* said he believed that a book is an excellent way of bringing the community together.

His novel set in Qatar has sold thousands of copies in Indonesia.

Fellow author Diday Tea has written seven books during his 14 years in Qatar. His books are focused on motivational and inspirational stories, especially for youth.

"One of my books (*Amazing Life in Qatar*) explored the progress that Qatar has made to



Officials and writers at the event.

in the lead-up to the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. It was published in Indonesia only weeks before the World Cup," he said, noting that he selected this topic since "there are so many lessons learned that we can obtain from Qatar 2022".

Former air stewardess Dilla

Shinta started writing after she resigned from the service.

"Together with my colleagues - also former air stewardesses - I wrote this book with the hope that we can share our inspirational stories with others," she said.

According to Ali Murtado,

head of the Socio-Culture Division of the Indonesian embassy, there are currently around 23,000 Indonesians living in Qatar, who are employed in various sectors.

On the sidelines of their work, some members of the Indonesian diaspora share their stories.

In 2021, the embassy published a book called *Mutiara Inspirasi dari Qatar (Pearls of Inspiration from Qatar)*, a collection of articles from more than 40 Indonesian authors living in Qatar, from different backgrounds.

"We collaborate with the Qatar National Library to do this book donation programme because we believe a book is a perfect place to exchange ideas," said Murtado. "Further, it will bring better understanding among the people in the two countries."

Years of Culture, EAA promote cross-cultural learning, collaboration

The Years of Culture (YoC) initiative has teamed up with the Education Above All Foundation (EAA) through its Reach Out To Asia (Rota) programme to promote cross-cultural collaboration with this year's YoC partner, Indonesia.

The volunteer trip supports one of the EAA Foundation's projects in Indonesia's West Kalimantan province.

This initiative brings together a group of dedicated student volunteers from the University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST), the Qatar Academy for Science and Technology (QAST), and Indonesian students from the Sui Ambawang High School to learn from and inspire each other through mutual learning and cultural discovery.

Student from the UDST and QAST shared

what they are most excited about, ahead of their departure to Indonesia this week.

A number of students said they were happy to share their knowledge and expertise with students in Indonesia.

They added that the trip offers them a chance to learn about Indonesian culture, and to enhance mutual understanding through the sharing of cultural activities. - QNA

HIA reaffirms commitment towards environmental sustainability on World Environment Day 2023

The Hamad International Airport (HIA) supports the UN's World Environment Day theme for 2023 - to Beat Plastic Pollution, which focuses on encouraging people and businesses around the world to review their plastic consumption and introduce a shift towards a circular economy, a statement said yesterday. Part of HIA's environment sustainability goals consists of waste management and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The airport is tackling its waste management processes, engaging with commercial stakeholders and government entities in order to adopt the best environmental standards that will have a positive impact on the environment. Through an enhanced waste management system introduced by HIA, about 40% of the waste generated through the airport operations was reused



An exterior view of Hamad International Airport.

or recycled in the fiscal year 2022-2023, including 736 tonnes of plastic waste, and the non-recyclable waste is used to produce electricity. The Oryx Airport Hotel, situated at departures has replaced plastic water bottles with containers created from 76%

vegetable origin, introduced bamboo guestroom cards, utilises recycled paper for all hotel collaterals and plastic hotel amenities substituted with more biodegradable materials. To maintain the airport landscape features and requirements, organic fertiliser



HIA's Oryx Airport Hotel key cards are made of bamboo.

originating from recycled green waste is used. This was introduced as one of the initiatives from HIA's partnership with the Ministry of Municipality. Through HIA's dedicated wastewater treatment plant, 100% of the wastewater generated from the airport is reused for landscape irrigation,

resulting in zero wastewater being discharged to the sea. HIA's commitment to environmental protection and objective of zero to landfill has initiated processes to further enhance its waste management systems, resulting in over 1,200 tonnes of waste being diverted from landfill for further

segregation, recycling and energy recovery, each month. When HIA was constructed, energy conservation was one of the environmental components considered in the build and suitable materials were chosen for the roof and walls installation. Since then, HIA has implemented multiple initiatives and environmental controls to further reduce energy within its daily operations such as cooling system optimisation, smart-metering, ambient air quality and noise monitoring and incorporating LED lighting to control and reduce carbon dioxide emissions. HIA's efforts to decrease its overall carbon dioxide emissions was recognised through the recent renewal of its ACI ACA Level-3 of the Airport Carbon Accreditation and the airport was awarded the ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems accreditation as a result

of effective implementation and full conformance to the ISO 14001:2015 requirements. The Global Sustainability Assessment System (GSAS) from Gulf Organisation for Research & Development (Gord) granted a 4-star rating for six of HIA's projects from its recent expansion plan which includes the Orchard, Oryx Garden Hotel and lounges at the North Plaza, Al Mourjan Business lounge - the Garden, the Remote Transfer Baggage Facility, Cargo Bridging Facility and the AVI Facility. HIA is constantly engaging with airport stakeholders and commercial partners to reduce energy by adopting environmental solutions introduced by the airport, and investing in the best and most reliable technologies in the world, to meet the business' environmental objectives, in line with Qatar's National Vision 2030.

PHCC launches pilot phase of Ejlal Home Oral Health Care Services Programme for elderly

The Primary Health Care Corporation's (PHCC) Preventive Health Directorate launched the pilot phase of Ejlal Home Oral Health Care Services Programme for Elderly from June in co-operation with the Home Health Care Services Department, under the supervision of Dr Hamad al-Mudahka, executive director of Preventive Health, and led by Dr Najat al-Yafei, manager of Oral Health Promotion and Prevention. Dr al-Mudahka explained that the programme offers special services to establish a system to screen home healthcare patients at their homes and determine their oral health status, to improve oral health awareness and knowledge among the elderly and their caregivers, and to refer patients in need for dental management to the appropriate level of care.

Through this programme, the senior's oral health is assessed, as some of them are in the advanced stage of the disease and cannot talk to others about their pain. Additionally, the assessment helps identify cases who need dental treatment or those who may be diagnosed to have various oral diseases, such as tooth decay, gingivitis, and mouth ulcers. The assessment also helps with early detection of oral cancer cases. Dr al-Mudahka noted these services will be provided at home for all seniors registered in PHCC's Home Health Care Services, where Ejlal staff will visit the senior's home with a mobile dental unit and dental instruments to conduct a comprehensive oral assessment. The oral assessment results will then be discussed with

the elderly, their families, or their caregivers, where the focus will be placed on enhancing oral hygiene skills and educating the elderly, their families, or their caregivers on how to maintain good oral and dental hygiene. He said that the nurse lead from Home Health Services will obtain the verbal consent from the elderly or their caregivers and the Ejlal team will review the patient's health condition, and call to confirm the appointment's date and time. On the day of the visit, a signature on consent will be obtained from the elderly or their caregivers. Dr al-Mudahka concluded: "The pilot phase is for a period of three weeks, then after discussing the results and identifying the obstacles, if any, the implementation phase will begin."



The service is offered to establish a system to screen home healthcare patients.

PHCC introduces cupping therapy

PHCC said the therapeutic programme is being implemented by a host of physicians trained in cupping technology and is allocated based on the needs of each patient



The Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) has introduced cupping therapy service to improve patients' health, speed up recovery process and ensure patients' safety. PHCC said the therapeutic programme is being implemented by a host of physicians trained in cupping technology and is allocated based on the needs of each patient. Regarding the method for accessing the therapeutic service, PHCC outlined that it can be obtained through the family physician who simply transfers the appropriate cases based on approved standards. In addition, patients who are included in this programme are primarily those diagnosed with chronic headache due to unknown causes, refractory migraine, carpal tunnel syndrome without indication for surgical intervention, muscle imbalance and postural dysfunction, refractory muscle spasms, neck

and upper or lower back pain, chronic diseases such as eczema and asthma and skin diseases like acne. Cupping therapy was launched last February as a pilot phase at the Umm Slal Health Centre to be eventually expanded in some health centres during the upcoming period, PHCC outlined, pointing out that such a step is intended to achieve its vision in providing a comprehensive and integrated health service by focusing on individuals, in addition to working steadfastly to meet all patients needs based on the highest global standards. It noted that cupping therapy is an alternative medicine and a form of traditional medicine that has been practised since ancient times and it is being used in several parts of the world, including China and Middle East to promote health, prevention and treatment, as well as being a tranquilliser for

chronic pain through using wet cupping. The corporation pointed out that cure through cupping is consistent with Islamic Shariah law and it was mentioned in many Islamic prophetic Hadiths. It has many advantages that include improvement of blood flow and reduction of the build-up of toxics in the human body, heading off pain and headache, strengthening the nervous system and increasing the scope of movement and flexibility. The PHCC indicated that cupping therapy leaves interim traces on skin, along with side effects associated with bruises and skin itching and patients eventually recover and return to normal condition in seven to 10 days followed by persistent skin colour change. Cupping therapy is a safe procedure, but it is not suitable for all people, PHCC said, explaining that pregnant women and patients with acute hepatitis, tuberculosis, heart disease, arrhythmia, pacemaker implantation, blood clotting diseases such as hereditary haemorrhagic disease, use of anticoagulants, severe anaemia, and kidney failure are not allowed to use this kind of therapy. (QNA)

QF experts highlight Qatar water conservation efforts

Experts from various entities under Qatar Foundation (QF) urged that populations in arid regions must pay extra attention to water consumption as World Environment Day is marked today. Dr Deema Almasri, a scientist at the Water Centre of Qatar Environment and Energy Research Institute (Qeeri), a part of Hamad Bin Khalifa University, highlighted steps that Qatar had taken to increase its water storage through implementing its water security mega reservoir project - which aims to increase the country's reserve of clean water to seven days in case of crisis - by 2026 in the first phase. She believes everyone has a role to play when it comes to managing water consumption. "We need to be aware that Qatar, as a country falls in an arid environment, is one of the world's most water stressed countries, since it has few natural freshwater sources. "The only natural freshwater source in Qatar is groundwater, which is over extracted. Hence, to avoid depleting its groundwater sources, Qatar employs seawater desalination as the major source for potable water production," Dr Almasri said. She explained that water desalination comes at a high cost for the environment for two reasons as separating salt from water is considered an energy-intensive process that emits huge amounts of CO2 and this is the reason why producing desalinated water is one of the highest contributors of CO2 emissions in Qatar.



Dr Deema Almasri



A desalination plant in Qatar.

However, it must be noted that currently the thermal desalination plants in Qatar generate clean water as a by-product of the electricity generation process from gas turbines; and hence it is difficult to estimate the contribution to CO2 emissions in isolation. The other reason is that desalination involves a large amount of salt generation as waste, along with chemicals necessary for seawater desalination - which needs to be disposed of somewhere. "Since seawater desalination is the main source that provides clean (drinkable) water in Qatar, Qeeri's Water Centre is carrying out a lot of research on modifying the technologies used in thermal desalination to use less heat and hence less energy. "Another area the Water Centre is looking to modify is, instead of direct brine disposal from desalination plants, studying the possibi-

ties of brine mining, which is separating the useful minerals from the brine such as: sodium chloride, magnesium and calcium and selling them or reusing them, which can alleviate the impacts of high salinity of water on the environment," said Dr Almasri. She also highlighted that to reduce water consumption in Qatar, Kahramaa has installed aerator retrofits in many facilities throughout Qatar which mix air with water. This mix gives the same feeling of using a high-pressure water tap while actually reduces the amount of water consumed by up to 60%. Dr Gonzalo Castro de la Mata, executive director of Earthna: Centre for a Sustainable Future, explained that "all humans need to understand that we are all part of one ecosystem, and our purposeful action is needed in all parts of the world to maintain water security.

"We need to really be aware of the importance of water for global sustainability. In any part of the world, when we open the water tap, we need to think about where this water is coming from. "In Qatar it comes from desalination, and in other countries, water starts on a watershed in forests that have captured this water. And if we don't protect our forests that capture this water, then we are not going to have water," he said. Dr Castro de la Mata noted that the current recommended policy is to use treated water instead of desalinated water in areas where possible, such as for landscaping - which is currently applied in Education City and widely across Qatar - and for cooling systems. And this is a direction that the government is aggressively moving towards in terms of policy making and raising awareness.

Mercedes-Benz model recalled

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in co-operation with Nasser Bin Khaled Automobiles, has announced the recall of Mercedes-Benz S-Class, 2022 model, as software of the driving assistance system control unit does not comply with the latest series production configuration, which causes random brake applications during vehicle operation. The MoCI said the recall campaign comes within the framework of its ongoing efforts to protect consumers and ensure that dealers follow up on vehicle defects and repairs. The MoCI has urged all customers to report any violations to its Consumer Protection and Anti-Commercial Fraud Department, which processes complaints, inquires and suggestions through the following channels: call centre: 16001, e-mail: info@moci.gov.qa, Twitter @MOCIQATAR, Instagram MOCIQATAR. MoCI's mobile application is available on iPhone and Android devices - MOCI QATAR

CCUS Forum hosts Women and Climate event



Women from around the world came together at the CCUS Forum, uniting at the Gulf's first Women and Climate event, recently in Doha. This global movement aims to harness the collective power of women to drive positive change and build a resilient future for all. The event was made possible through the support of Women and Climate (a New York-based not-for-profit), the US embassy in Qatar and Birba, an Omani event company supporting industries of the future. A US embassy statement issued yesterday about the event pointed out that climate change is a threat that requires immediate action.

"Women, particularly those in marginalised communities, are disproportionately affected by its impacts. However, they also possess unique knowledge, skills, and perspectives that can contribute to innovative solutions. Recognising this, Women and Climate seeks to amplify women's voices and leadership in tackling climate change," it was explained. US embassy's deputy chief of mission Natalie Baker told the event: "The US government realises that women are on the frontlines of the climate crisis worldwide, and women suffer disproportionately from its impacts. These challenges are not insurmountable, but to

beat them we need the innovation, creativity, and power that can only come from diverse teams. Women's perspectives and efforts are essential in this fight. We are proud to work with the women and men of the Arab Youth Climate Movement Qatar, of Earthna, of the Qatar Environment and Energy Research Institute, and other organisations in Qatar to tackle these challenges together." Doha's Women and Climate event united women from diverse backgrounds, including technology and policy experts, engineers, scientists, entrepreneurs, and community leaders from around the globe.



Fitness drill



Members of a fitness group of Palestinians from East Jerusalem work out on a beach in Tel Aviv.

Fighting escalates in Khartoum after ceasefire expires

■ Both sides violated Saudi/US-brokered truce
■ Rainy season could deepen humanitarian crisis

Reuters
Dubai

Fighting intensified in several areas of Khartoum yesterday, residents of Sudan's capital reported, a day after the expiry of a ceasefire deal between rival military factions brokered by Saudi Arabia and the US.

The ceasefire had started on May 22 and expired on Saturday evening. It calmed the fighting slightly and allowed limited humanitarian access, but like previous truces was repeatedly violated. Talks to extend the ceasefire broke down on Friday.

The deadly power struggle which erupted in Sudan on April 15 has triggered a major humanitarian crisis in which more than 1.2mn people have been displaced within the country and caused another 400,000 to flee into neighbouring states.

It also threatens to destabilise the region as a whole.

Live footage yesterday showed black smoke billowing above the capital. "In southern Khartoum we are living in terror of violent bombardment, the sound of anti-aircraft guns and power cuts," said 34-year-old resident Sara Hassan by phone. "We are in real hell."

Among the other areas where fighting was reported were central and southern Khartoum, and Bahri, across the Blue Nile to the north. Beyond the capital, deadly fighting has also broken



Smoke billows behind buildings in Khartoum, yesterday.

out in the remote western region of Darfur, already grappling with long-running unrest and huge humanitarian challenges.

Witnesses reported that heavy fighting on Friday and Saturday had brought chaos to Kutum, one of the main towns and a commercial hub in North Darfur.

The army denied claims that the RSF, which developed out of Darfur militias and has its power base in the region, had taken over the town. Witnesses said a military plane had crashed in Omdurman, one of three cities around the confluence of the Nile that make up the greater capital region.

There was no immediate comment from the army, which has been using warplanes to target the

paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) spread out across the capital. Separately Sudanese antiquities authorities said RSF fighters had withdrawn from the national museum in central Khartoum. On Saturday, the RSF released a video filmed inside the grounds of the museum, which houses ancient mummies and other precious artefacts, denying they had harmed the collection.

Fighting in the capital has led to widespread damage and looting, a collapse in health services, power and water cuts, and dwindling food supplies.

In recent days the first rains of the year have fallen, heralding the start of a rainy season that runs till around October and brings flooding and a heightened

risk of water-borne diseases.

The rains could complicate a relief effort already hampered by bureaucratic delays and logistical challenges. Aid workers have warned that dead bodies have been left in the streets and uncollected rubbish has been piling up. Saudi Arabia and the US said they were continuing to engage daily with delegations from the army and the RSF, which had remained in Jeddah even though talks to extend the ceasefire were suspended last week.

"Those discussions are focused on facilitating humanitarian assistance and reaching agreement on near-term steps the parties must take before the Jeddah talks resume," the two countries said in a statement.

Lebanon MPs nominate IMF official for vacant presidency

AFP
Beirut

Lebanese lawmakers yesterday nominated Jihad Azour, an International Monetary Fund regional director and former minister, for president, with the position still vacant for seven months because of political turmoil.

Former president Michel Aoun's term expired last October with no successor lined up. Since then, there have been 11 parliamentary votes to try to name a new president, but bitter divisions have prevented anyone from garnering enough support to succeed Aoun.

Crisis-hit Lebanon has been run by a caretaker government with limited powers since legislative elections in May 2022 resulted in no side with a clear majority. Yesterday, lawmaker

Mark Daou read a statement on behalf of a group of 32 legislators, endorsing Azour after weeks of negotiations "as a candidate that is not considered provocative by any political factor in the country".

The same MPs had previously backed another presidential candidate, parliamentarian Michel Moawad, who yesterday announced he was withdrawing his nomination and backing Azour. Azour, the IMF's Middle East and Central Asia director, served as Lebanon's finance minister from 2005 to 2008.

He has yet to officially announce a presidential bid.

The international community has urged Lebanese officials to fill the vacant presidency, which would allow the country, mired in a crippling economic crisis since 2019, to carry out reforms needed

to unlock much needed IMF loans. The Hezbollah movement, which has a huge hold over political life in Lebanon, has endorsed the pro-Syria Sleiman Frangieh for the presidency.

But opposition from the country's two main Christian parties meant Frangieh lacked a clear path to majority backing in the divided parliament.

Hezbollah lawmaker Hassan Fadlallah called Azour's nomination "a waste of time", according to remarks carried by local media, insisting that "the candidate of confrontation" will not be elected president. The movement's key Christian ally, the Free Patriotic Movement, said it would support Azour. With no clear majority for any candidate, it is unclear when parliament speaker Nabih Berri might call a new vote.

'Electoral Silence' period in Kuwait ahead of polls

Kuwait will enter today the 'electoral silence' period, a day ahead of its parliamentary elections due tomorrow.

The electoral silence, also called blackout period or campaign silence is a ban on political campaigning or media coverage of a general election, before or during the polling, according to Ministerial Reso-

lution No (17) of 2023. It comes to prevent disruption of the electoral process, in addition to giving voters the opportunity to select the nation's representatives objectively.

During the election silence, it's prohibited to display any statistics or opinion polls for licensed centres, while the role of the media is limited to spreading awareness, educa-

tional messages and urging male and female voters to participate positively, which creates a healthy and calm political climate before polling.

Kuwait organises its seventh legislative elections since 2012 tomorrow. A total of 207 candidates, including 13 women, are running in the elections after 40 individuals withdrew their nominations. (QNA)

Guinea-Bissau votes in bid to end instability

AFP
Bissau

Voters in Guinea-Bissau headed to the polls yesterday for legislative elections called by a president pushing constitutional change after years of instability in the small west African state.

Having recently revealed a coup attempt in February, 2022, President Umaro Sissoco Embalo dissolved the national assembly in May after falling out with lawmakers as the country became mired in political paralysis.

In the central district of Bairro Militar in the capital Bissau, 30 voters were up early to queue in the shade of trees before casting their ballots after the seven am (0700 GMT) opening.

Security forces looked on as the electoral process got under way with some 600 soldiers on hand to ensure smooth progress.

"There's usually trouble after the count. But this time I'm daring to hope there won't be.

May the best (candidate) win and may peace reign across the land," said Fode Malam Faty, 55, and standing for the Party for Social Renewal (PRS) after casting his vote.

Guinea-Bissau, population 2mn, has faced chronic instability in the shape of repeated coups ever since independence from Portugal in 1974.

Some 200 international observers are on hand to monitor this year's proceedings as the 884,000-strong electorate turn out for a single round vote based on proportional representation to elect 102 lawmakers. Results are expected some 48 hours after the close of polls at 5pm.

The changes Embalo intends to make are not clear. Critics accuse him of seeking to consolidate power following a disputed 2019 presidential election.

No fewer than 22 parties are in the mix, including Embalo's Madem G15 and The African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) which between them dominate parliament.

Gunmen kill dozens and kidnap children in Nigeria

Reuters
Bauchi, Nigeria

Gunmen in Nigeria have killed dozens of people and kidnapped a number of children in separate attacks in two northern states, police and residents said yesterday, the latest incidents in a region dogged by armed violence.

Armed gangs on motorbikes frequently take advantage of thinly stretched security forces in the region to kidnap villagers, motorists and students for ransom. Residents said armed men had attacked Janbako and Sakkida villages in north-western Zamfara state on Saturday, killing 24 people.

The gunmen also abducted several children who were collecting firewood in a forest in neighbouring Gora village. Hussaini Ahmadu and Abubakar Maradun, local residents in Janbako and Sakkida, told Reuters by phone that the gangs had earlier in the week demanded villagers pay a fee to enable them to farm their fields.

Zamfara police spokesman Yazid Abubakar confirmed the attacks but said only 13 people had been reported killed and nine young boys and girls kidnapped.

In north central Benue state, gunmen killed 25 people and set their houses on fire on Saturday on the Imande Mbakange community.

Huge fire breaks out at warehouse in Iranian city

A huge fire broke out yesterday at a home appliances warehouse in the northeast city of Mashhad in Iran, state media reported, Reuters reported. "Firefighters have been dispatched from different areas of the city," the official news agency IRNA said, without giving further details. The Mashhad fire department said no casualties had been reported, while dozens of fire fighters were still working to put out the fire.

Senegal govt cuts mobile Internet access amid deadly rioting

Reuters
Dakar

Senegal's government has cut access to mobile Internet services in certain areas because of deadly rioting in which "hateful and subversive" messages have been posted online, it said in a statement yesterday.

The West African country has been rocked by three days of violent protests in which 16 people have died, one of its deadliest bouts of civil unrest in decades.

Last week, the government limited access to certain messaging platforms, but many people were able to bypass the outage with the use of virtual private networks that mask the location of the user. It extended the outage yesterday to include all data on mobile Internet devices in certain areas and at certain times, the statement said.

It did not specify which ar-

reas were impacted or at what times, but residents across Dakar said they were unable to access the Internet without a Wi-Fi connection yesterday afternoon, a time of day when protests have generally started to gather steam.

"Because of the spread of hateful and subversive messages... mobile Internet is temporarily suspended at certain hours of the day," the statement said. The catalyst for the unrest was the sentencing on Thursday of popular opposition leader Ousmane Sonko to two years in jail, which could prevent him from running in the February presidential election. Protesters have also been angered by President Macky Sall's refusal to rule out running for a third term. Senegal has a two-term presidential limit.

Internet cuts to stifle dissent are common in Africa and date back to the 2011 Arab Spring when rulers in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya sought to control the spread of information. Since



Security forces look at supporters of opposition leader Ousmane Sonko during clashes after Sonko was sentenced to prison, in Dakar, yesterday.

then Gabon, Gambia, Democratic Republic of Congo and others have done the same at times of instability.

Rights groups say the move violates freedom of speech. It can also dent already fragile economies.

"These restrictions... constitute arbitrary measures contrary to international law and cannot be justified by security

imperatives," Amnesty International said in a statement on Friday during the first wave of outages in Senegal.

LAW AND ORDER

Activists held for marking Tiananmen anniversary

Hong Kong police yesterday detained over a dozen people, including key pro-democracy figures trying to commemorate the anniversary of the bloody Tiananmen Square crackdown, as hundreds in Taiwan mourned the dead with a vigil. For years, tens of thousands of Hong Kongers would converge on the city's Victoria Park and its surrounding neighbourhood to commemorate the events of June 4, 1989 – taking part in candlelight vigils. But since Beijing's imposition of a national security law on Hong Kong in 2020 to quell dissent, the annual vigil was banned and its organisers charged under the law.

CRISIS

UK business lobby head seeks members' support

The new head of Britain's leading business lobby group yesterday urged members to back her in a crunch vote this week as it confronts an existential crisis over alleged sexual misconduct. The Confederation of British Industry has been mired in scandal since the claims were made public this year, with reports last week claiming the CBI could collapse without major cuts. More than a dozen women say they were sexually harassed at the CBI and two others alleged they had been raped. Police have launched an investigation. The allegations have triggered an exodus of companies from the CBI, and new director general Rain Newton-Smith said they had been "absolutely devastating".

CONTROVERSY

North Korea flays UN in satellite response row

North Korea yesterday denounced the UN Security Council for discussing its recent satellite launch in response to a gangster-like US request, and it vowed to reject sanctions and take action to defend itself. The US called for a UNSC meeting last week to discuss North Korea's attempt to put its first spy satellite in orbit, which ended in failure with the booster and payload plunging into the sea. Kim Yo-jong, sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and a powerful ruling party official, said that in accepting Washington's "gangster-like request" and ignoring North Korea's right to space development, the Security Council was showing it was a US "political appendage".

AVIATION

Airbus 'heads towards 500-jet order from IndiGo'

Airbus is closing in on a potentially record deal to sell 500 narrowbody A320-family jets to India's largest carrier, IndiGo, industry sources said yesterday. The European planemaker has emerged as front-runner for an order eclipsing Air India's historic provisional purchase of 470 jets in February, the sources said on the sidelines of an airline industry meeting in Istanbul. Airbus and Boeing are also competing in talks to sell 25 wide-body jets to the same airline, they said. IndiGo, which is already a major Airbus customer with a large number of planes on order, and the Franco-British planemaker both declined comment. Boeing also declined to comment.

PROPOSAL

Australia to create huge marine park

Australia plans to create a marine park almost the size of Spain around remote islands off its southeast coast, the government announced yesterday. Under the proposals, the existing Macquarie Island Marine Park will be tripled in size, bringing a total of 475,465 square kilometres under protection. That is an area roughly the size of Spain or Cameroon and much larger than Vietnam or Japan. The protections mean the area will be "completely closed to fishing, mining and other extractive activities", according to Australia's Minister of Environment Tanya Plibersek. Existing fishery operations targeting the Patagonian toothfish will be allowed to continue.

Focus turns to cause of deadly India train crash

Reuters
Bahanaga, India

Indian rescue workers completed operations yesterday after the country's deadliest rail crash in more than two decades, with signal failure emerging as the likely cause of an accident that killed at least 275 people.

The death toll from Friday's crash was revised down from 288 after it was found that some bodies had been counted twice, said Pradeep Jena, chief secretary of the eastern state of Odisha.

The tally was unlikely to rise, he told reporters. "Now the rescue operation is complete."

Nearly 1,200 people were injured when a passenger train hit a stationary freight train, jumped the tracks and hit another passenger train passing in the opposite direction near the district of Balasore.

More than 900 people had been discharged from hospital while 260 were still being treated, with one patient in critical condition, the Odisha state government said.

State-run Indian Railways, which says it transports more than 13mn people every day, has been working to improve its patchy safety record, blamed on ageing infrastructure, and is conducting an initial inquiry to determine the cause of the crash.

India's railway board, the top executive body, has recommended that the case be handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who faces an election due next year, visited the scene on Saturday to talk to rescue workers, inspect the wreckage and meet some of the injured.

"Those found guilty will be punished stringently," Modi said.

Preliminary investigations indicated the Coromandel Express, heading to Chennai from Kolkata, moved out of the main

track and entered a loop track – a side track used to park trains – at 128kph, crashing into the freight train parked on the loop track, said railway board member Jaya Varma Sinha.

That crash caused the engine and first four or five coaches of the Coromandel Express to jump the tracks, topple and hit the last two coaches of the Yeshwantpur-Howrah train heading in the opposite direction at 126kph on the second main track, she told reporters.

This caused those two coaches to jump the tracks and result in the massive pileup, Sinha said.

The drivers of both passenger trains were injured but survived, she said.

The probe is now focused on the computer-controlled track management system, called the "interlocking system", which directs a train to an empty track at the point where two tracks meet.

The system is suspected to have malfunctioned and should not have allowed the Coromandel Express to take the loop track, Sinha said.

Workers with heavy machinery were clearing the damaged track, wrecked trains and electric cables, as distraught relatives looked on.

More than 1,000 people were involved in the rescue, the railway ministry said on Twitter.

"The target is by Wednesday morning the entire restoration work is complete and tracks should be working," Vaishnaw said.

At a business centre where bodies were being taken for identification, dozens of relatives waited, many weeping and clutching identification cards and pictures of missing loved ones.

Kanchan Choudhury, 49, was searching for her husband. Five people from her village were on the train, four of them being treated for injuries. Her husband was found dead, she said, weeping as she waited to claim compensation, carrying her and her husband's identity cards.

Australia prime minister in Hanoi

Vietnam's President Vo Van Thuong shakes hands with Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese during a meeting at the Presidential palace in Hanoi.

Conflict with US would be 'unbearable disaster': China

Reuters
Singapore

Chinese Defence Minister Li Shangfu told Asia's top security summit yesterday that conflict with the US would be an "unbearable disaster" but that his country sought dialogue over confrontation.

Speaking at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, Li said the world was big enough for China and the US to grow together – remarks made days after he refused to meet his US counterpart for direct talks. China and the US have different systems and are different in many other ways," he said in a

speech that marked his first significant international address since he was named China's minister of national defence in March.

"However, this should not keep the two sides from seeking common ground and common interests to grow bilateral ties and deepen co-operation," he said. "It is undeniable that a severe conflict or confrontation between China and the US will be an unbearable disaster for the world."

Wearing the general's uniform of the People's Liberation Army, Li made his address on the 34th anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown.

Ties between Washington and

Beijing are badly strained over a range of issues, including Taiwan, territorial disputes in the South China Sea and President Joe Biden's restrictions on semiconductor chip exports.

As delegates at the summit debated the risks of accidents and miscalculations amid those tensions, the US Navy said a Chinese destroyer made "unsafe" manoeuvres near a US warship in the Taiwan Straits on Saturday, highlighting the dangers.

China's military criticised the US and Canada for "deliberately provoking risk" after their warships staged a rare joint sailing through the sensitive Strait.

US Indo-Pacific Command said US and Canadian ships were

operating routinely and under high-seas freedoms.

Canadian Defence Minister Anita Anand said that Canada would continue to sail where international law allows, including the Strait, and that "actors in this region must engage responsibly".

In his speech, Li said China would not allow such freedom-of-navigation patrols by the US and its allies to be "a pretext to exercise hegemony of navigation".

After his remarks, regional scholars asked Li repeatedly about the incident as well as China's extensive maritime deployments in the disputed South China Sea. He did not answer them directly, saying moves by

countries outside the region were raising tensions.

Richard Marles, Australian deputy prime minister and defence minister, said his country's efforts to improve its military capabilities and presence in the region were aimed at "playing our part in contributing to the collective security of the Pacific and the maintenance of the rules-based order".

"It is a point I made that we have repeatedly made to the region and to the world since we announced the optimal pathway to acquiring nuclear powered submarine capability," he said on the sidelines of the security meeting, referring to the AUKUS pact with the US and Britain.

China landslide death toll rises to 19, rescue work ends

AFP
Beijing

All 19 people caught in a landslide in southwestern China's Sichuan province yesterday have been confirmed dead, state media reported, announcing the end of rescue efforts.

Part of a mountain collapsed at around 6am near a state-owned forestry station in Jinkouhe, near the city of Leshan, state broadcaster CCTV said.

The disaster sent mud and debris hurtling towards a construction site operated by a local mining company, where it "struck and buried parts of the production and living facilities at the mineshaft platform", CCTV reported.

Nineteen people were confirmed dead as of 8pm, the broadcaster said, adding that "search and rescue work has currently ended, and the cause of

the... collapse is under investigation".

Footage broadcast by CCTV showed rescuers and excavators picking through a tract of mud that had flattened a wooded hillside and strewn it with twisted metal and smashed masonry.

The Jinkouhe government earlier said the landslide had killed 14 people and left five missing.

An unspecified number of other mine workers "have been evacuated to a safe location", according to CCTV.

Authorities sent more than 180 people and over a dozen pieces of rescue and recovery equipment to the site, the broadcaster added.

Contacted earlier yesterday, an official in Jinkouhe's publicity department declined to give further details.

The settlement of around 40,000 people lies in a mountainous region about 240kms south of the provincial capital Chengdu.

Landslides are a frequent danger in rural and mountainous parts of China, particularly during the rainy summer months.

Remote and densely forested, much of Sichuan is particularly prone to disasters.

Extreme weather triggered a series of landslides in the province in 2017, including one that completely buried the mountain village of Xinmo, entombing more than 60 homes.

In 2019, massive rains again caused a slew of landslides, including one that buried a section of railway under repair and those working on it.

The province is also seismically active and periodically experiences deadly earthquakes.

A 7.9-magnitude quake in 2008 left more than 87,000 people dead or missing, including 5,335 school pupils.

Although China has strengthened safety protocols in its extractive industries in recent years, accidents still frequently occur.

Wedding anniversary

Bollywood actor Amitabh Bachchan greets fans outside his residence on the occasion of his golden jubilee wedding anniversary in Mumbai, India, yesterday.

Nepal urged to tighten Everest climbing rules

Reuters
Kathmandu

Weak climbers being led up Mount Everest by expedition operators with insufficient experience are causing problems, a veteran mountain guide said yesterday, after one of the deadliest climbing seasons in years on the world's highest mountain.

At least 12 climbers have died and five are missing and feared dead on the 29,032 foot Mount Everest during this year's main climbing season that has just ended, the deadliest since an earthquake triggered an avalanche that killed 18 people in 2015.

"Weakest clients with less experienced operators is part of the problem," Guy Cotter, 69, a noted guide from the New Zealand who has climbed Everest five times, said in the Nepali capital, Kathmandu.

"Clients should have minimum climbing standards with proven prior ascents before

coming to Everest," he said.

Three sherpa climbers were killed when ice came crashing down on them on the lower reaches of the mountain in April and the rest of those who died succumbed to illness or exhaustion, government and hiking officials said.

Nepal does regulate the climbing of Everest and its other Himalayan peak, insisting that everyone gets a permit, for example, but Cotter said the operators who guide clients up the mountain should meet minimum standards of equipment and staff.

"There are many operators who take clients to Everest but do not understand how to avoid incidents occurring and when things do go wrong they do not have processes in place to address the problems," Cotter said.

Bigyan Koirala, an official with the department of tourism that oversees climbing, said the government was considering more regulations but did not give details.



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How valid is the risk of extinction from AI?

The term 'risk of extinction' has been around for ages. If global warming, food scarcity and nuclear war were hitherto among the major threats to humanity, experts have now added artificial intelligence (AI) also to the list. The most recent warning in this regard came last Tuesday when scientists and tech industry leaders, including high-level executives at Microsoft and Google, issued a new warning about the perils that artificial intelligence poses to humankind. "Mitigating the risk of extinction from AI should be a global priority alongside other societal-scale risks such as pandemics and nuclear war," the statement said.

Sam Altman, CEO of ChatGPT maker OpenAI, and Geoffrey Hinton, a computer scientist known as the godfather of AI, were among the hundreds of leading figures who signed the statement, which was posted on the Center for AI Safety's website. Worries about AI systems outsmarting humans and running wild have intensified with the rise of a new generation of highly capable AI chatbots such as ChatGPT. It has sent countries around the world scrambling to come up with regulations for the developing technology, with the European Union blazing the trail with its AI Act expected to be approved later this year.

Mitigating the risk of extinction from AI should be a global priority, say scientists and tech industry leaders

The latest warning was intentionally succinct – just a single sentence – to encompass a broad coalition of scientists who might not agree on the most likely risks or the best solutions to prevent them, said Dan Hendrycks, executive director of the San Francisco-based nonprofit Center for AI Safety, which organised the move. "There's a variety of people from all top universities in various different fields who are concerned by this and think that this is a global priority," he explained. "So we had to get people to sort of come out of the closet, so to speak, on this issue because many were sort of silently speaking among each other."

More than 1,000 researchers and technologists, including Elon Musk, had signed a much longer letter earlier this year calling for a six-month pause on AI development, saying it poses "profound risks to society and humanity." That letter was a response to OpenAI's release of a new AI model, GPT-4, but leaders at OpenAI, its partner Microsoft and rival Google didn't sign on and rejected the call for a voluntary industry pause. By contrast, the latest statement was endorsed by Microsoft's chief technology and science officers, as well as Demis Hassabis, CEO of Google's AI research lab DeepMind, and two Google executives who lead its AI policy efforts. The statement doesn't propose specific remedies but some, including Altman, have proposed an international regulator along the lines of the UN nuclear agency.

The letter also was signed by experts in nuclear science, pandemics and climate change. Among the signatories is the writer Bill McKibben, who sounded the alarm on global warming in his 1989 book *The End of Nature* and warned about AI and companion technologies two decades ago in another book. "Given our failure to heed the early warnings about climate change 35 years ago, it feels to me as if it would be smart to actually think this one through before it's all a done deal," he was quoted as saying.

David Krueger, an assistant computer science professor at the University of Cambridge, who helped push for the letter said he used to be mocked for his concerns about AI existential risk, even as rapid advancements in machine-learning research over the past decade have exceeded many people's expectations. His statement makes a lot of sense. "I'm not wedded to some particular kind of risk. I think there's a lot of different ways for things to go badly. But I think the one that is historically the most controversial is risk of extinction, specifically by AI systems that get out of control." This is precisely, the risk that the world is facing from AI.

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Levelling the financial playing field for Africa

By Amadou Hott & Mark Malloch-Brown
New York

Africa bears virtually no responsibility for the greenhouse-gas emissions driving the climate crisis. It is not responsible for the conflicts or supply-chain disruptions that have driven global inflation. Nor did it trigger the spread of Covid-19, let alone cause the pandemic's economic fallout. And yet the long-term effects of this trio of crises are being felt perhaps more acutely in Africa than anywhere else.

The International Monetary Fund has estimated that Africa's additional financing needs resulting from the pandemic will amount to \$285bn over the four years ending in 2025. But with inflation, exchange-rate pressure, and unmanageable debt levels eroding the already-limited room governments have to make the needed short- and longer-term investments, Africa's real needs are likely much greater.

Despite the remarkable resilience that the continent has shown, anaemic economic growth is compounding the challenge. Sub-Saharan Africa endured recession in 2020 for the first time in 25 years. And, according to the African Development Bank (AfDB), the region's annual growth rate fell from 4.5% in 2021 to 3.5% in 2022. It is expected to amount to just 3.8% this year.

Behind these figures are countless ruined lives. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa reports that 18 million more Africans slipped into poverty last year. Hard-won progress toward the UN Sustainable Development Goals has been reversed. Conflicts and climate-related disasters – such as protracted droughts, extreme rains, and flooding – are contributing to East Africa's worst hunger crisis in decades. The human cost is horrifying, with one person predicted to die of hunger every 28 seconds from this crisis alone.

This ought to concern the international community – and not only for humanitarian reasons. The world needs Africa. There is no path to a green, just, and prosperous shared future that does not have Africa at its core. So, it is in the self-interest of the rest of the world to support the continent, not through charity or handouts, but by backing African-led solutions, especially those focused on levelling a playing field that is currently tilted to the continent's disadvantage.

The allocation of special drawing rights (SDRs), the IMF's reserve asset) exemplifies the problem. The IMF created SDRs to supplement governments' currency reserves. But, because SDRs are issued in proportion to countries' IMF quotas, poorer countries receive the smallest

allocations, despite having the greatest need. Wealthier countries – which have far less (or no) need – get the largest shares.

In 2021, the G20 countries promised to channel at least 20% of their SDRs toward Africa. But their promises have yet to be fully realised. Faster progress on this front would go a long way toward helping African governments in the near term, especially if the recycled SDRs are channelled through multilateral development banks such as the AfDB. These institutions could then leverage their own AAA ratings to scale up the capital mobilised by a factor of three to four, transforming, say, \$20bn in SDR-funded projects into \$60-80bn, with significantly better terms than those offered in commercial markets.

Of course, a more dynamic and expansive private sector would provide a longer-term solution. But, as it stands, African governments are at a grievous disadvantage in private markets, where they face higher capital costs, not least because of subjective, discriminatory considerations. Comparing the risk premia of African and non-African states with similar credit ratings, one finds differences ranging from 150 basis points to more than 650 bps, sometimes reflecting a lack of on-the-ground knowledge and subjective judgement.

A conference of credit-rating agencies, investors, and African governments is urgently needed to address this intolerable discrimination – which amounts to a powerful brake on progress – once and for all. Again, this would not amount to charity or special treatment; rather, it would be a step toward levelling the playing field, so that African-led solutions can succeed. Removing the "Africa risk premium" would unlock much-needed capital to invest in green development, including the clean-energy transition.

The Alliance for Green Infrastructure in Africa is one African-led initiative that would advance this goal. Unveiled by the AfDB, the African Union, Africa50, and other partners at last November's UN Climate Change Conference in Egypt (COP27), the AGIA seeks to raise \$500mn in grants, concessional resources, and blended and commercial finance to provide early-stage project preparation and development capital for green initiatives. By mitigating high interest rates and the lack of risk appetite for Africa, this would result in the rapid creation of a strong pipeline of bankable green projects. The AGIA aims to unlock at least \$10bn in green infrastructure investments.

Similar efforts are underway elsewhere. One notable example is the ambitious Bridgetown Initiative launched by Barbadian Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley to create additional fiscal space for development, as well as climate mitigation, adaptation, and loss and damage. Another is the V20 group of climate-vulnerable developing countries, currently chaired by Ghanaian Finance Minister Ken Ofori-Atta.

The coming months offer several opportunities for breakthroughs. The just-completed AfDB meetings in Sharm El-Sheikh last week were an important starting point. Next month comes the Summit for a New Global Financing Pact, a major international conference on funding for development and green investment. And September will bring the G20 Leaders' Summit in New Delhi, an event to which Africa still relies on an invitation, though its economic and demographic weight entitles it to permanent membership (represented by the chairs of the African Union and the African Union Commission, as with the European Union today).

These gatherings have the potential to put Africa on a new course. International support is crucial, but that course must be charted and led by the continent itself. – Project Syndicate

● Amadou Hott is Special Envoy of the President of the African Development Bank for the Alliance for Green Infrastructure in Africa.
● Mark Malloch-Brown, a former deputy United Nations secretary-general and co-chair of the UN Foundation, is President of the Open Society Foundations.



Military trying to destroy my party: Khan

By **Gibran Naiyyar Peshimam,**
Reuters
Lahore

Pakistan's embattled former prime minister Imran Khan has accused the powerful military and its intelligence agency of openly trying to destroy his political party, saying he had "no doubt" he would be tried in a military court and thrown in jail.

Khan has hinted previously at the military's hand in a crackdown on his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party but his comments in an interview at his Lahore home on Saturday night were the bluntest yet.

"It is completely the establishment," the former cricket hero told Reuters, when asked who was behind the crackdown. "Establishment obviously means the military establishment, because they are really now openly — I mean, it's not even hidden now — they're just out in the open."

A spokesman for the military, which has run the country directly or indirectly for its 75-year history, and has seldom faced the sort of public challenge to its power as it has from Khan, did not respond to a request for comment.

A bruising year-long standoff between Khan, Pakistan's most popular leader according to polls, and the army came to

■ **Former PM conjectures current army chief carrying a grudge because he was removed as ISI chief during his term**
■ **PTI chairman alleges violent protests a 'false flag operation' to target and imprison him through military court trial**

a head when military buildings and property were ransacked last month, allegedly by his supporters.

The political unrest has increased uncertainty in the nuclear-armed country of 220mn, which is also beset by financial turmoil. Its \$350bn economy is struggling to stave off default, control record inflation and deal with a plummeting currency.

Khan termed the violent protests, which erupted after he was briefly arrested, a "false flag operation" meant to target him.

Authorities have begun the process of trying dozens of people, including members of his party, suspected of involvement in the protests in military court — usually reserved for service members or those categorised as enemies of the state. "That's the only way they are going to get me into prison," Khan said, adding that the military wanted to stop him from returning to power in elections due by November. He said about 150 criminal cases filed



Former Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan speaks with Reuters during the interview in Lahore. (Reuters)

against him were frivolous and would get thrown out in any civilian court. "So their only hope, and because they are determined to get me out of the way, I think they will, their whole charade of military courts is to imprison me," he said.

"I have absolutely no doubt that the military courts are meant for me," said Khan, who is out on bail.

Amnesty International says Pakistan's military courts have previously shown disregard for due process, lack of transparency, coerced confessions and executions after unfair trials.

Khan said the country's most powerful spy agency, the military's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), was deeply involved in the crackdown.

He said two senior members of his party were called by the agency for talks. "And when they went there, just they shut them up and said 'You won't leave unless you renounce being part of PTI.'"

Khan said he has tried to contact the military for talks to find a way out of the current crisis but had got no response, and that he did not know why the army chief, General Asim Munir, was "fixated" on sidelining him.

Before becoming army chief in November 2022, Munir was the head of the ISI — a post from which he was suddenly removed in 2019 while Khan was prime

minister. Khan himself was ousted from office in a parliamentary vote last year that he says was orchestrated by Pakistan's top generals. The military denies this.

No official reason was given for Munir's premature removal, but Khan acknowledged in the interview, for the first time, that he had wanted him gone from the role.

"I think that maybe he has a grudge because I asked him to resign" as ISI chief, Khan said. "I don't know."

When asked why he had asked Munir to resign, Khan said: "You know, I, as prime minister, felt that how the intelligence agency was run... I had my issues with that." He did not elaborate.

Munir was later selected as the country's top general by Khan's successor and political rival, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

"He shouldn't have issues with that now because he is the army chief," Khan said, referring to Munir's removal as ISI head. "So why would he harbour that grudge?"

Khan said he was puzzled by the campaign against him.

"(I am) someone who's been known in this country for 50 years, who's probably won all the awards in this country and probably the most well-known Pakistani, and suddenly being treated as a sort of alien, as an enemy of the state."

Mexican president's party poised to capture key state in election

Mexicans were voting in a state election yesterday that looks poised to bolster President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador ahead of the race to succeed him, with his party forecast to capture the chief remaining bastion of the country's old rulers.

Lopez Obrador's leftist National Regeneration Movement (Morena) is expected to tighten its grip on power by adding the governorship of the State of Mexico to the 21 regional governments it already controls, two-thirds of the total. The most populous region of the country, the State of Mexico surrounds much of the capital and has been an economic and electoral bulwark of the centrist Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which has governed there since 1929. Lopez Obrador routed the PRI to win the presidency in 2018, and Morena has since absorbed most of the once-dominant party's strongholds, as well as many of its politicians.

Sunday's voting comes a year before Mexico's next presidential election, with polls indicating Morena will be hard to beat.

Decades of one-party rule made the PRI a byword for corruption among many Mexicans, and it has struggled to compete with Morena's message that it represents a vote for change.

A poll published Wednesday by newspaper *Reforma* had shown the race narrowing, but still gave Morena's candidate Delfina Gomez a 10 percentage point lead over Alejandra del Moral, a PRI politician fronting an opposition alliance.

"People are leaning toward Delfina because she seems like a new start, as with Lopez Obrador," said Jose Hernandez, a 64-year-old shopkeeper in Los Reyes Acaquilpan, a town in the eastern part of the state of 17 million people. "Because, in short, the whole of (the PRI) has been corrupt."

Nato chief urges Turkiye not to veto Sweden's bid

AFP
Istanbul

Nato chief Jens Stoltenberg yesterday called on Ankara to drop its opposition to Sweden's bid to join the US-led defence alliance, hoping Stockholm's accession would be finalised "as soon as possible".

Pressure is building on Erdogan to green-light Sweden's Nato membership ahead of a summit planned for July in the Lithuanian capital Vilnius.

"Membership will make Sweden safer but also make Nato and Turkiye stronger," Stoltenberg told journalists after meeting with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and newly appointed foreign minister Hakan Fidan, who was head of the intelligence agency, in Istanbul.

"I look forward to finalising Sweden's accession as soon as possible," he said.

On Saturday Stoltenberg attended the inauguration of Erdogan, who was re-elected to serve another five years, in a lavish ceremony joined by dozens of world leaders in the capital Ankara.

Nato member Turkiye has dragged its feet over admitting Sweden to the military alliance. It and Hungary are the only two Nato countries yet to ratify the membership bid.

Sweden and Finland dropped decades of military non-alignment and applied to join the alliance in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Finland formally joined Nato in April.

Erdogan has accused Sweden of being a haven for "terrorists", especially members of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a group blacklisted by Turkiye and its Western allies.

"Sweden has taken significant concrete steps to meet Turkiye's concerns," Stolten-



Nato Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg speaks during a press conference following his meeting with Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan in Istanbul yesterday. (Reuters)

berg said. "This includes amending the Swedish constitution, ending arms embargo, stepping up counter-terrorism operations including against the PKK," he said.

"Sweden has fulfilled its obligations"

Swedish Foreign Minister Tobias Billstrom also said Stockholm had fulfilled "all the commitments" to join Nato and urged Turkiye and Hungary to allow his country into the alliance.

Ankara is especially displeased with anti-Turkiye and anti-Erdogan protests in Stockholm. Swedish authorities allowed a "No to Nato, No Erdogan Laws in Sweden" demonstration to go ahead in the city centre yesterday.

"Freedom of assembly and expression

are core values in democratic societies. But we should remember why these are taking place," Stoltenberg said.

"Organisers of these demonstrations want to block Sweden's accession to Nato and undermine its collaboration with Turkiye against terrorism and weaken Nato," he added. "We should not allow them to succeed."

Stoltenberg said a joint working group established between Turkiye, Sweden and Finland at the alliance's summit in Madrid last year would meet in the week of June 12, without providing a location.

He also thanked Turkiye for deploying additional forces to the Nato-led peacekeeping force in Kosovo (KFOR).

Airlines ready to avoid repeat of last summer's travel chaos

Reuters
Istanbul

Airlines said yesterday they are ready to avoid a repeat of last year's travel chaos, but warned that some flights could still be disrupted by controller strikes and hit out at schemes that force them to pay compensation for unavoidable delays.

"I am reasonably confident that we'll be able to get through this peak summer without too much disruption," Willie Walsh, director general of the International Air Transport Association, (IATA) said in an interview yesterday.

Airline leaders attending IATA's annual meeting in Istanbul this week remain concerned about air traffic control disruption in Europe and the United States, however.

"But as far as they are concerned, they have fulfilled their obligation to get their resources in place for this summer. Most of the airports I think, will be okay, as well; I think they've learned the lessons from last year," Walsh told Reuters.

A faster-than-expected rebound in air travel coupled with labour shortages caused chaos at several airports in Europe and North America last summer and prompted a row between airlines and airports over passenger caps designed to ease the pressure. Rising numbers of disputes between travellers and airlines globally have led to calls for passenger compensation.

Legislation is under review in Canada, while the US government is writing new rules and the European Union is pushing for stronger enforcement of its existing "Regulation 261" which requires compensation for delays of more than three hours. "Ultimately it is the consumer who's paying because this is of course being borne by the industry, but the industry can't just absorb that," Walsh said. "The more expense that airlines have to incur because of problems outside of their control, the more that's going to be reflected in ticket prices, and it will drive ticket prices up. It is a very, very frustrating environment to be operating in."

Human extinction threat 'overblown': AI sage Marcus

Ever since the poem churning ChatGPT burst on the scene six months ago, expert Gary Marcus has voiced caution against artificial intelligence's ultra-fast development and adoption.

But against AI's apocalyptic doomsayers, the New York University emeritus professor told AFP in a recent interview that the technology's existential threats may currently be "overblown."

"I'm not personally that concerned about extinction risk, at least for now, because the scenarios are not that concrete," said Marcus in San Francisco.

"A more general problem that I am worried about... is that we're building AI systems that we don't have very good control over and I think that poses a lot of risks, (but) maybe not literally existential."

Long before the advent of ChatGPT, Marcus designed his first AI program in high school — software to translate Latin into English — and after years of studying child psychology, he

founded Geometric Intelligence, a machine learning company later acquired by Uber.

In March, alarmed that ChatGPT creator OpenAI was releasing its latest and more powerful AI model with Microsoft, Marcus signed an open letter with more than 1,000 people including Elon Musk calling for a global pause in AI development. But last week he did not sign the more succinct statement by business leaders and specialists — including OpenAI boss Sam Altman — that caused a stir. Global leaders should be working to reduce "the risk of extinction" from artificial intelligence technology, the signatories insisted.

The one-line statement said tackling the risks from AI should be "a global priority alongside other societal-scale risks such as pandemics and nuclear war". Signatories included those who are building systems with a view to achieving "general" AI, a technology that would hold the cognitive



abilities on par with those of humans. "If you really think there's existential risk, why are you working on this at all? That's a pretty fair question to ask," Marcus said. Instead of putting the focus on more far-fetched scenarios where no one

survives, society should be putting attention on where real dangers lie, Marcus surmised. "People might try to manipulate the markets by using AI to cause all kinds of mayhem and then we might, for example, blame the Russians and

say, 'look what they've done to our country' when the Russians actually weren't involved," he continued. "You (could) have this escalation that winds up in nuclear war or something like that. So I think there are scenarios where it was pretty serious. Extinction? I don't know." In the short term, the psychology expert is worried about democracy. Generative AI software produces increasingly convincing fake photographs, and soon videos, at little cost.

As a result, "elections are going to be won by people who are better at spreading disinformation, and those people may change the rules and make it really difficult to have democracy proceed."

Moreover, "democracy is premised on having reasonable information and making good decisions. If nobody knows what to believe, then how do you even proceed with democracy?" The author of the book "Rebooting AI" however doesn't think we should abandon hope, still seeing

"a lot of upside." There's definitely a chance AI not yet invented can "help with science, with medicine, with elder care," Marcus said.

"But in the short term, I feel like we're just not ready. There's going to be some harm along the way and we really need to up our game, we have to figure out serious regulation," he said.

At a US Senate hearing in May, seated beside OpenAI's Altman, Marcus argued for the creation of a national or international agency responsible for AI governance.

The idea is also backed by Altman, who has just returned from a European tour where he urged political leaders to find the "right balance" between safety and innovation.

But beware of leaving the power to corporations, warned Marcus.

"The last several months have been a real reminder that the big companies calling the shots here are not necessarily interested in the rest of us," he warned.



Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser attends first QF Schools Commencement Ceremony yesterday along with other dignitaries. **PICTURE:** Aisha al-Musallam

Left: Her Highness Sheikha Moza with other dignitaries. **PICTURE:** Alanood Aljaber



Abeer al-Khalifa addressing the gathering.

Sheikha Moza attends first QF Schools Commencement Ceremony



HE Sheikha Hind bint Hamad al-Thani delivering the keynote speech. **PICTURE:** Alanood Aljaber



A musical performance on the occasion.

Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation (QF), yesterday attended the first QF Schools Commencement Ceremony, which celebrated the achievements of 249 graduates from seven schools.

The students, representing 18 nationalities, including 202 Qataris, were honoured at the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC) yesterday.

HE Sheikha Hind bint Hamad al-Thani, Vice Chairperson and Chief Executive of Qatar Foundation, also attended the ceremony, and – as an alumna of Qatar Academy Doha, one of the schools under the QF's Pre-University Education (PUE) – delivered the keynote speech.

She was joined by HE the Minister of Education and Higher Education Buthaina bint Ali al-Jabr al-Nuaimi, as well as diplomats, QF teachers and faculty members, and families of graduating students.

HE Sheikha Hind said: "During your high school journey, you have proved that

you have the strength and determination to overcome challenges."

"You are now deservedly entering a new journey, in a world that is changing and developing at incredible speed, and that is characterised by innovation and unlimited potential, requiring flexibility and the ability to adapt," she said.

"I urge you to face the challenges that await you along your coming journey with determination and resolve, and to remember that failure is not an end point, but rather a starting point on the path to success," HE Sheikha Hind added. "This is why you must work hard, continue to achieve, and never stop learning."

Speaking at the ceremony, PUE president Abeer al-Khalifa said: "This unified ceremony signifies an important milestone in our journey."

"At the QF, we believe in the power of education to change the world, and we strive to advance knowledge and expertise that will help our students achieve their aspirations," she said. "Since its establishment, the QF has embraced the profound impact of education as a catalyst for transformation."

"Through its pioneering educational system, with a steadfast commitment to advancement, the QF strives to continually enhance its academic knowledge and expertise, ultimately benefiting our students and their parents, faculty members, and the community as a whole," al-Khalifa added.

She told the graduating students: "We are proud that you are part of an ecosystem shaping the bright future of our nation through education. You have the power to



Directors of the QF's PUE Schools at the event.

make a difference, motivate others, and be catalysts for change."

"Today, as you stand before us, filled with pride, your academic journey in our schools has been enriched with unique experiences," al-Khalifa continued. "Your achievements and continuous efforts have left an indelible mark, evident in your teamwork, voluntary activities, community engagement, and awareness of local and global issues."

"You have influenced us with your creative ideas, your determination, and your vision for humanity," she added. "Forge ahead on your path of excellence – graduation is the beginning of a new phase of seeking knowledge and contributing to a brighter future."

"Your heritage is your strength, an integral part of your identity, and preserving your roots is vital for future success," al-Khalifa concluded. "The doors of Education City will always remain open for you, to embrace you, and to celebrate your achievements."

During the event, each graduate took to the stage to receive their diplomas, with valedictorians from each school also receiving special recognition.



Students celebrating backstage.

Students from QF schools, including members of QF's Qatar Music Academy, performed *Danat Al Orbe*, a song produced by the QF's PUE in collaboration with Qatari artist and QF employee Fahad al-Hajjaji for Qatar National Day in 2022.

The commencement ceremony celebrated the achievements of students from Qatar Academy Doha, Qatar Academy Al Khor, Qatar Academy Sidra, Qatar Academy for Science and Technology, Qatar Leadership Academy, Qatar Academy Al Wakra, and Awsaj Academy.



A moment from the ceremony.



The achievers on stage.

Shafallah Centre unveils range of summer activities



The Shafallah Centre for Persons With Disabilities, one of the affiliates of Qatar Foundation for Social Work, has initiated its summer activities that target all affiliates with persons with mild disabilities and autism whose ages range from 3-21. The event will run until June 26.

The activities of summer season will start during the weekdays from Sunday to Thursday at the premises of Shafallah Centre in Lusail from 8am until 12pm, the centre said in a statement yesterday.

Shafallah Centre executive director Laalei Abu Alfain said the summer activities aim to promote the centre's initiatives dedicated to persons with disabilities in providing educational, training and rehabilitative services to its affiliates.

The activities also aim to help them move from routine and normal atmospheres, through multiple activities within an appropriate recreational framework that best suit their abilities and needs.

Alfain said that the centre has co-ordinated with several entities concerned with these activities.

She expressed appreciation for all institutions and companies that have supported the summer activity's events. - QNA

