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PM holds phone conversation with Iranian FM

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani held yesterday a telephone conversation with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran Hossein Amir-Abdollahian. The call tackled bilateral relations between the two countries in addition to a host of regional and international issues of common concern. During the call, Iran's Foreign Minister extended thanks to Qatar for its part in facilitating the Iranian-US prisoners exchange deal. For his part, HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs voiced Qatar's commitment to support all regional and international efforts aimed at achieving security and stability in the region. **(QNA)**

Palestinian fighters agree new truce

Palestinian fighters agreed a new ceasefire yesterday after more than a week of deadly violence in Lebanon's largest refugee camp. At least 17 people have been killed and around 100 wounded in the fighting in Ain al-Helweh refugee camp, on the outskirts of the port city of Sidon. The clashes have pitted fighters of President Mahmud Abbas's Fatah movement, which controls the camp, against hardline Islamist militants. "The two parties agreed to implement a ceasefire... starting today at 6pm," Palestinian camp official Fuad Othman told AFP.

Libyans join hands for flood aid

Libyans from across the fragmented country have driven through old front lines regardless of bitter enmities to deliver aid to flood-stricken Derna this week, putting aside years of conflict between their divided leaders. Inside Derna, where a torrent washed away whole districts on Sunday night after two dams collapsed under storm floods, volunteers from Misrata, Tripoli and Benghazi were distributing clothes and food packages on Wednesday and Thursday.

Biden's son hit with criminal gun charge

US President Joe Biden's son Hunter Biden was criminally charged yesterday, after efforts to reach a plea deal failed, leading to the first-ever prosecution of a sitting president's child. The indictment filed at District Court in Delaware with three criminal counts related to making false statements in connection with the purchase of a firearm and illegally possessing the firearm as a drug addict. **Page 7**

Putin accepts Kim invite to visit

Russian President Vladimir Putin accepted Kim Jong-un's invitation to visit North Korea, stoking US concerns that a revived Moscow-Pyongyang axis could bolster Russia's military in Ukraine and provide Kim sensitive missile technology. The invite was made during a summit in eastern Russia at which they discussed military matters, the war in Ukraine and helping North Korea's satellite programme. **Page 9**



Her Highness Sheikhha Moza participates in the EAA event on International Day to Protect Education from Attack. **Page 2**

Protect education from attacks: Sheikhha Moza

QNA
New York

Her Highness the Chairperson of Education Above All and UN Sustainable Development Goal Advocate Sheikhha Moza bint Nasser spoke on Wednesday at a high-level event to mark the 4th observance of the International Day to Protect Education from Attack, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City.

During her speech Her Highness Sheikhha Moza lamented the anguish and challenges faced by children and young people in conflict-afflicted regions, saying: "Universities should be places of learning and joy, where young people gather and discover their purpose. They should be places where dreams are realised, not destroyed."

She reaffirmed the importance of protecting education from violence, and the need for the international community to intervene to cease attacks on education. She said, "We must not forget the victims: those suffering in war zones or forced to become refugees. Many of them are children and young people who have never known stability nor peace. These children and young people have a right to education."

Her Highness Sheikhha Moza called upon technology companies to help bring education to the most vulnerable children, saying "We can break the cycle and redesign education to make learning more accessible, and use technology to bring accelerated learning to millions."

During the event, the creation of a new Youth Advisory Group to Protect Edu-

cation from Attack (YAGPEA) was announced. This diverse group of young people will advise the UN, and global decision-makers to ensure that those directly impacted by attacks on education can influence policies and decisions designed to protect education in times of conflict and crisis. This group is a result of a partnership between the UN and EAA foundation.

"Universities should be places of learning and joy, where young people gather and discover their purpose. They should be places where dreams are realised, not destroyed"

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said: "Together we must work to end attacks on education. And that begins with all countries endorsing the safe schools declaration which details concrete measures and practices, to ensure that places of learning and the people inside them are protected at all times."

Other speakers included the UN General Assembly President Dennis Francis, and President of the Republic of Sierra Leone Dr Julius Maada Bio.

Later, Her Highness Sheikhha Moza toured "Unbreakable Dreams: Protecting Education in Times of Conflict", an exhibition held on the margins of the event. The photography exhibition documents the devastating impact that attacks on education continues to have on the lives of children, young people and educators in conflict-affected regions.

Qatargas renamed QatarEnergy LNG

Emphasising a future vision for Qatar's liquefied natural gas (LNG) industry, QatarEnergy has announced that Qatargas has changed its name to 'QatarEnergy LNG'.

With a new name and logo, QatarEnergy LNG will continue to deliver on its commitment to safety, environmental protection, flawless project delivery and the reliability and efficiency of its production facilities.

The "exciting landmark" comes as part of the increasing international recognition of Qatar's role in meeting the world's growing need for energy, particularly natural gas – the cleanest of all fossil fuels.

It also reflects QatarEnergy's continued commitment to LNG as a critical source of energy for decades to come and a vital enabler of the energy transition.

Commenting on the announcement, HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs, Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi, also the President and CEO of QatarEnergy, highlighted the importance of this transformation as part of a historic evolution that is reshaping Qatar's energy industry, particularly through the flagship LNG sector.

Al-Kaabi also hailed the leading role Qatargas has played over the past four decades and said: "Over the course of 39 years,



Qatargas has been a pioneer of the LNG industry helping place the State of Qatar firmly on the global LNG map and enhancing its leading position as a safe, reliable and trustworthy LNG supplier.

"Today, 'QatarEnergy LNG' carries this legacy forward well into the 21st century helping meet the world's growing energy demand, placing LNG at the centre of a realistic energy transition, and playing a critical role in safeguarding energy security and eliminating energy poverty." **To Page 4**

SC wins 'Best Communication Strategy Utilising Sports' award in Sharjah



The Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy (SC), an apex body for organising FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, won the "Best Communication Strategy Utilising Sports" category at the 10th Sharjah Government Communication Award (SGCA), organised by the Sharjah Government Media Bureau (SGMB) yesterday. Sheikh Sultan bin Ahmed al-Qasimi, Deputy Ruler of Sharjah and Chairman of the Sharjah Media Council (SMC) honoured the winners. The award was received by Nasser al-Khater, CEO of SC. Khalid al-Mawlawi, Deputy Director General, Marketing, Communications & Event Experience, was also present.

Former president calls for new Iraqi constitution

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

Highlighting that 'the system has run its course' for 20 years after the Iraq War, the former president of Iraq, Dr Barham Salih, stressed that Iraq needs a new constitutional and political contract for good governance and redefine the relationship between the government and the people.

Dr Salih was delivering the keynote address yesterday at the opening session of the 'Hiwaraat' conference series organised by Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q). "The Invasion of Iraq: Regional Reflections" conference marks the 20th anniversary of Iraq War and explores its repercussions on the country and the region.

The three-day conference aims



Dr Barham Salih in conversation with Peter Harling, founder and director, Synaps Network. **PICTURE:** Shaji Kayamkulam

to amplify new knowledge and a deeper understanding of the enduring impacts of the 2003 Iraq invasion while charting possible future pathways for the country.

Among the distinguished guests at the opening session were prominent officials, ambassadors, and members of the Georgetown community.

"As I stated repeatedly during my time as Iraq's president, the country needs a new constitutional and political contract that should enshrine good governance and redefine the relationship between the government and the people. The 2005 constitution, historic when it was introduced, needs to be amended to reflect the lessons of the past 20 years and hopes for the next 20," explained Dr Salih.

He continued: "While we need to address these political challenges and reforms in the country, I have to also point to a looming environmental disaster afflicting our country. The country is one of the most at risk from climate change impacts, according to the United Nations environmental programme. Iraq is among the 35 most vulnerable globally to decreased water and food availability and extreme temperatures."

As for the Iraq War, the former president said: "For sure war is never a good option, and for many Iraqis who fought relentlessly for decades to bring down the dictatorial regime, the removal of the regime by outside powers was definitely not a good or a preferred option. But it was a moment of salvation for many Iraqis from that brutal dictatorship and the long nightmare of tyranny. This is a fundamental fact that should not be overlooked."

"With dictatorship gone, Iraq had a chance to heal its wounds and forge a new path based on co-existence and security. However, I have to admit and acknowledge painfully that those expectations and hopes have not been fully realised. The transition has been anything but easy or smooth. The legacy inherited was far more difficult than anticipated," he commented. **To Page 4**



Qatar guest of honour at Amman Book Fair

The 22nd Amman International Book Fair will kick off on Sept 21, under the theme 'Jerusalem is the Capital of Palestine', with the participation of 400 publishing houses from 22 countries.

Qatar has been selected as the guest of honour for this year's edition. The State will be represented by an official delegation of writers, intellectuals and publishers, and will present a cultural programme that reflects the country, its cultural message and the development of its publishing industry.

The fair's cultural programme, which continues until Sept 30 in the Amman International Motor Show (AIMS), will include 65

events ranging from seminars, poetry and story evenings, entertainment activities and book signings.

Speaking at a press conference, Minister of Culture of Jordan Haifa al-Najjar said that despite the difficulty facing writers in current times, and technological-related challenges, the publishing industry in Jordan is "resilient and present".

Al-Najjar said that through the 22nd Amman International Book Fair, a translation movement will be launched for the whole world, as well as a writing movement directed at children.

She noted that books in early childhood are the basis for creativity and innovation.

Qatar all set for distinguished participation in UNGA meeting

Adviser to Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Official Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Majed bin Mohamed al-Ansari (pictured) affirmed that Qatar has completed its preparations for broad and distinguished participation in the meetings of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 78) which is being held this September at the UN Headquarters in New York City. In a statement to Qatar News Agency (QNA), Dr al-Ansari said that Qatar, an active and influential partner in the UN, will seek to strengthen international multilateral co-operation and enrich constructive debate and international planning aimed at achieving sustainable development and enhancing international peace and security, through the upcoming meetings of Qatari officials with their counterparts from various countries and representatives of international and regional organisations, and through its participation with a number of countries, institutions, and entities in organising and sponsoring a number of high-level events on the sidelines of the general



debate of the UNGA 78. The Official Spokesperson explained that the Qatari participation this year will focus on several vital topics, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), security and stability in the region, protection of education from attacks, climate change, and global health. Dr al-Ansari indicated that Qatar will participate at a high level of representation in the ministerial meetings that will be held on the sidelines of the General Assembly, such as the ministerial meeting on the situation in Sudan, and the high-level ministerial event of the Group of Friends of Solidarity for Global Health Security on co-ordinating and strengthening efforts to mitigate the impact and protect future generations from global health security issues.



PHCC meets QU students from health, medical specialities

A special introductory meeting was held at Qatar University (QU), bringing together the Primary Health Care Corporation's (PHCC) Workforce Training and Development Directorate, and QU students from health and medical specialities.

The event represented a unique opportunity to shed light on PHCC's role and significance in the field of healthcare in Qatar, a PHCC statement said.

The meeting was marked by a high student turnout, as many students attended with enthusiasm and curiosity to learn more about training and career opportunities in the field of health and medical sciences.

Dr Mariam al-Rashid, head of the Academic Affairs at PHCC, welcomed the visitors and pointed to the fruitful co-operation between PHCC and QU in promoting health education and developing national competencies. Additionally, PHCC's activities,

programmes, and strategies were highlighted, including advanced training and qualification programmes for both health and administrative cadres to develop national skills and strengthen strategic ties and partnerships between universities, PHCC, and Qatar's labour market.

PHCC's strategies reflect the spirit of innovation and development in the field of healthcare to achieve the best results by adopting the latest international technologies and practices. This meeting also comes as part of the corporation's efforts to improve healthcare and guide the youth towards a promising future in the field of health and medical sciences, reflecting the close collaboration between PHCC and QU and the shared dedication to achieving Qatar Vision 2030 within the healthcare setting and supporting educational outcomes in the country, the statement added.

Sheikha Moza tours exhibition on protecting education in NY



Her Highness the Chairperson of Education Above All and UN Sustainable Development Goal Advocate Sheikha Moza bint Nasser spoke at a high-level event to mark the 4th observance of the International Day to Protect Education from Attacks, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City. As part of the event, Her Highness Sheikha Moza toured 'Unbreakable Dreams: Protecting Education in Times of Conflict', an exhibition held on the sidelines of the event. The photography exhibition documents the devastating impact that attacks on education continue to have on the lives of children, young people and educators in conflict-affected regions. **PICTURE:** Aisha Al-Musallam

Qatar marks World Sepsis Day at HMC

The Qatar National Sepsis Programme marked World Sepsis Day with an educational symposium for healthcare professionals and a poster display activity engaging hospital staff across Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC).

The aim is to instil greater awareness of important clinical protocols relating to sepsis prevention, diagnosis and treatment. Sepsis is a critical medical condition that occurs when the body's response to an infection spirals out of control, leading to organ dysfunction and failure. It is a silent but deadly killer, claiming millions of lives each year around the world. However, with increased awareness, early detection, and prompt treatment, many of these lives can be saved.

Dr Abdulsalam Saif, national sepsis lead, and division head of the Medical Intensive Care Unit at HMC, explained that anyone with an infection can get sepsis, but that there are some at more risk.

"Some people are more likely to get an infection that could lead to sepsis, for instance those who have recently had surgery or a serious illness, women who have just given birth, had a miscarriage, premature babies or older adults, and people with chronic diseases such as diabetes, as well as people with a weakened immune system, such as those having chemotherapy treatment or who recently had an organ transplant. It is vital that good



Dr Abdulsalam Saif

medical systems are in place to monitor these patients in hospitals – but also family members looking after a patient at home should not ignore the symptoms of sepsis."

The signs and symptoms of sepsis include slurred speech or confusion, extreme shivering or muscle pain/fever, passing no urine all day, severe breathlessness, mottled or discoloured skin and a feeling that one is going to die, a statement explained.

Dr Abdulla al-Ansari, chief medical officer at HMC explained that the Qatar National Sepsis Programme is a collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health, Sidra Medicine, Primary Health Care Corporation.

"The national sepsis prevention efforts, guided by the Qatar National Sepsis Programme, are essential to the comprehensive approach to reduce the risks of sepsis. We have significant changes in implementing prevention and management strategies to reduce the risks of hospitalised patients getting sepsis and ensure timely intervention for patients who become septic. By working together we ensure a more unified, evidence-based approach to help those people more at risk."

Mariam al-Mutawa, acting chief nursing officer at HMC, said that nurses play a significant role in identifying patients with sepsis: "Because nurses generally spend a longer time with their patients, their unique role lends itself well to monitoring patients. We have invested a lot in training, particularly front-line nurses, in understanding the pathology of this condition, and targeted screening is already integrated as part of routine patient assessments and patient care rounds. This ultimately resulted in



Mariam al-Mutawa

well-trained nurses across the system being able to competently apply the sepsis six bundle within the targeted golden hour.

The Sepsis Six Care Bundle, originally developed by the UK Sepsis Trust, refers to a set of six critical tasks (including oxygen, cultures, antibiotics, fluids, lactate measurement and urine output monitoring) that should be instituted for the patient within one hour by frontline staff. The Sepsis Six Care Bundle has been shown to significantly reduce the relative risk of death when delivered to patients with severe sepsis within one hour.

"Apart from imbedding the updated Sepsis Six bundle within our clinical practice, we have also arranged for the modification of alert notification for staff to be more specific and therefore more efficient. We continue our staff and public education efforts with the aim that more knowledge will help ensure better patient care and outcomes," added Dr. Abdulsalam.

World Sepsis Day is observed on September 13 to raise awareness about the life-threatening condition that affects millions of people worldwide. In 2023, this important global health initiative continues to shed light on sepsis, its prevention, early recognition, and treatment, under the theme "Stop Sepsis Save Lives". This effort is supported by practical education and awareness programmes.

QS concludes workshop on Gulf conformity procedures for tyres, bikes

The Qatar General Organisation for Standards and Metrology (QS), in collaboration with the GCC Standardisation Organisation (GSO), concluded a workshop on Gulf conformity procedures for tyres and motorcycles, in the presence of Assistant to QS Chairman Eng Nawaf Ibrahim al-Hamad al-Mana. The workshop was attended by representatives of the General Directorate of Traffic of the Ministry of Interior, merchants and agents investing in the sector, as well as QS's employees who specialise in the goods registered at state ports. The workshop aimed at implementing the initiative of improving certificate authentication services that stem from the GSO Strategic Plan 2021-2025, contributing to the development of technical cadres working in national standardisation bodies and relevant authorities in member states, enhancing the exchange of experiences, ensuring the achievement of the desired goals of standardisation, in addition to enhancing the quality of outputs and professional excellence in this field. A conforming system concerned with approving Gulf conformity certificates for vehicles, tyres and motorcycles was also discussed in the workshop. **(QNA)**

QNA

Doha

Qatar National Library (QNL) has successfully concluded the 3-day Second Doha Workshop on Countering the Trafficking of Cultural Property with a Focus on Documentary Heritage.

The workshop addressed the importance of the urgent need to protect the Arab and Middle Eastern region's rich history from illicit trafficking.

HE the Minister of State and President of Qatar National Library Dr Hamad bin Abdulaziz al-Kuwari said: "Preserving our cultural property goes beyond protection; it signifies our deep commitment to the essence and identity of our region.

These treasures encapsulate the stories, traditions, and shared memories that shape us. Through this workshop, we not only highlight Qatar's proactive role but also invite the global community to collaborate with us. Together, we can ensure our collective history is cherished and preserved for generations to come."

For his part, Director of Customs Training and Regional Center



The workshop addressed the importance of the urgent need to protect the Arab and Middle Eastern region's rich history from illicit trafficking.

Mubarak Ibrahim al-Boainin indicated that the General Authority of Customs is committed to strengthening partnerships and fostering knowledge exchange with national, regional, and international institutions. Combatting the illicit trafficking of cultural heritage remains at the forefront of the authority's agenda, stressing that this dedication is underscored by our sustained alliance with the World Customs Organisation,

through our regional capacity-building endeavours.

The Second Doha Workshop on Countering the Trafficking of Cultural Property reinforced the QNL's unwavering commitment to preserving cultural heritage and preventing the illegal trade of valuable artefacts. QNL aims to make significant strides in protecting the region's rich cultural history, through collaboration with experts and organisations worldwide.

Maserati eyes new chapter in the history of motorsport

Maserati is eyeing a new chapter in motorsport history while celebrating the 70th anniversary of Juan Manuel Fangio's victory at the Italian Grand Prix, a statement from Alfardan Sports Motors Company said yesterday.

It was on September 13, 1953, that Fangio celebrated his first and only victory of the season in the final race at Monza, at the wheel of his Maserati A6GCM.

The Argentine ace, one of the greatest of all time together with colleagues of the calibre of Senna and Schumacher – Fangio ceded the crown of the most titled Formula 1 driver to the latter after almost 50 years, took the Trident to the Olympus of the brands in the highest class of motorsport in 1954 and 1957, the year of El Chueco's fifth and final world championship.

Seventy years ago, on the Brian-

za circuit, the curves of the temple of speed lit up for one final race, to wipe away a subdued season for the Argentine world champion, who would go on from that victory to win his second world title the following year.

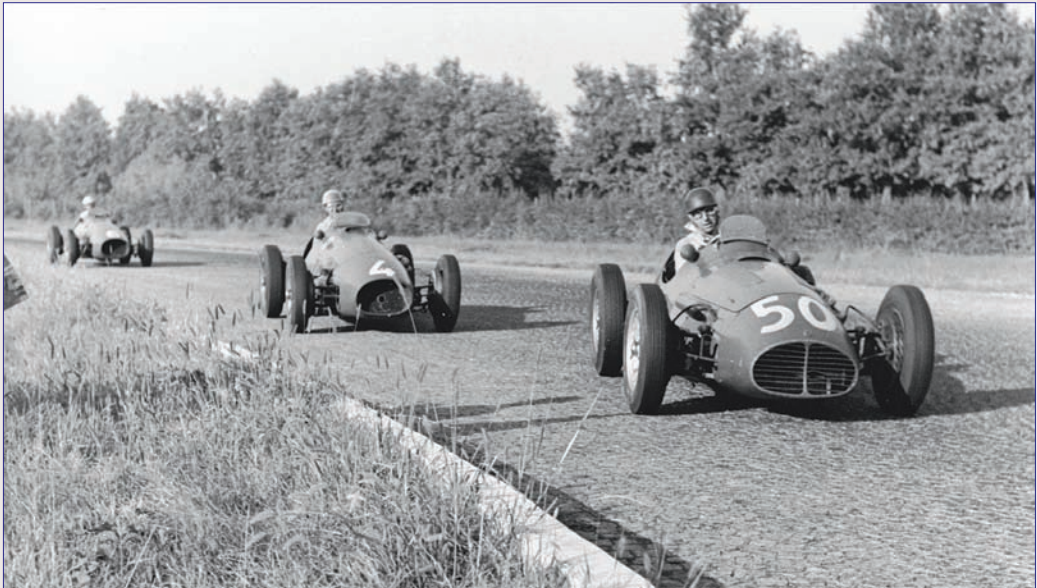
An anniversary to remember for Maserati, in the year in which it has once again become a big name in the annals of international motorsport, as a result of the significance of its return to the track and of the announcement of a major, carefully thought-out racing strategy.

After its first year in Formula E, where Maserati took three podiums and one victory in the 100% electric series, the Modena-based brand announced its return to GT competitions: in July, at the 24 Hours of Spa, it unveiled its latest disruptive 621-hp creation, dedicated to private teams and gentleman drivers, due to take part in

the Fanatec GT2 European Series from the 2024 season.

With its constant longing for kerbs and laurels, in summer Maserati also unveiled the surprising MCXtrema, a car for a select few – 62 to be precise – fans of uncompromising performance and outstanding design, made to channel unique emotions exclusively on the racetrack.

Since its debut in the racing world – back in 1926, with Alfieri Maserati first in class at the Targa Florio in his Tipo 26, excellence in motorsport has been the hallmark of Maserati's DNA. Its history is repeating itself, in its aspiration to write major new chapters in the greatest classes in motorsport, where the Italian brand has been confirmed as one of the prestigious brands that can guarantee the most distinctive performance, in its road cars and those designed for the track, the statement added.



Italian Grand Prix, Monza, 13 September 1953. Juan Manuel Fangio in his Maserati A6GCM (No. 50) chased by Ascari (No. 4) and Farina (No. 6), both in Ferrari 500 F2.



Some of the dignitaries at the event.

QU Health holds induction day to greet academic staff

Qatar University (QU) Health and Medical Sciences organised an induction day event to greet the academic staff in clinical education who have joined various colleges within QU Health.

The event brought together approximately 70 academics dedicated to clinical education within QU Health. Dr Asma al-Thani, vice-president, Medical and Health Sciences at QU welcomed the attendees.

She emphasised the event represented the partnership between QU Health and Medical Sciences and key healthcare institutions in Qatar, including Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), the Primary Health Care Corporation, Sidra Medicine, Aspetar, and others.

Dr Abdullatif al-Khal, director of the Medical Education Department, HMC, stated: "We highly appreciate the significant

efforts, investment, and continuous support for the future generation. We are impressed by the educational quality received by graduates from this sector, and we look forward to attracting more graduates from the sector.

"I would like to take this opportunity to emphasise that HMC is dedicated to supporting the clinical training of students in our facilities. We will ensure that students' clinical training experience is as smooth as possible to meet their specific requirements. We will work closely with our leadership and faculty to create the appropriate educational environment efficiently, helping students and the university achieve the necessary competencies using the highest possible standards."

From the perspective of research collaboration between HMC and QU, Dr Abdullah Ali al-

Ansari, head of Medical Services, HMC, emphasised the importance of enhancing communication between the two institutions and increasing opportunities for co-operation in research and innovations.

It also aims to establish a strong professional network connecting all stakeholders in the medical academic field to raise the level of services provided to patients using the latest research and technological approaches.

Dr al-Ansari highlighted the opportunities arising from this collaboration, as faculty members have the opportunity to explore different specialties in the field of health and medicine, understand the role of each specialisation, and understand the methods of work in this diverse academic context.

Women's Circle event on sustainability and fashion

The Women's Circle will hold an event on Sustainability & Fashion, in partnership with Tidy Vibes, Ohlala Qatar, and Qatar Charity, on September 19 from 5pm to 7pm at the Sheraton Grand Doha.

"The event offers a unique opportunity to engage in a conversation led by Anahi and Samantha from Tidy Vibes, providing attendees with insights and fresh perspectives on our pivotal roles in nurturing positive change within the fashion industry," a statement said.

Following the discussion, attendees can look forward to a one-of-a-kind fashion swap experience. They can breathe new life into their 'preloved and cherished clothing' and discover something.

The Women's Circle is also open to receiving clothing donations that will be given to Qatar Charity. The event costs QR100 per person, which includes light snacks and beverages. Registration is still open: <https://bit.ly/WomensCircle-Sustainabilityand-Fashion>, the statement added.



Samantha and Anahi

QU College of Law hosts introductory meet for doctoral programme students

The College of Law at Qatar University (QU) organised a welcome meeting for the 2025 and 2026 batch of master's and doctoral programme students.

Dr Faisal Misfer al-Hababi, assistant dean, Research and Graduate Studies, and Dr Mohsin al-Adba al-Marri, co-ordinator, Graduate Studies and Prof Abdelnaser Hayajneh, a professor at the College of Law, were present.

Dr al-Hababi highlighted the research opportunities provided by the College of Law for new students and emphasised the college's current standing, the quality of its programmes, the reputation of its graduates, and their contributions to society.

Dr al-Adba, presented the curriculum plans for the programmes and their graduation requirements.



Prof Hayajneh, offered advice to new students on transitioning from one academic stage to another and the methods of learning therein. The meeting also featured a presentation by Reem Shahdad, research and instruction librarian

at QU's library, who provided an overview of the legal sources and references available at the library, such as the East Laws website, West Law, Dar Al-Ma'arif, and other online resources, in addition to electronic and printed books.

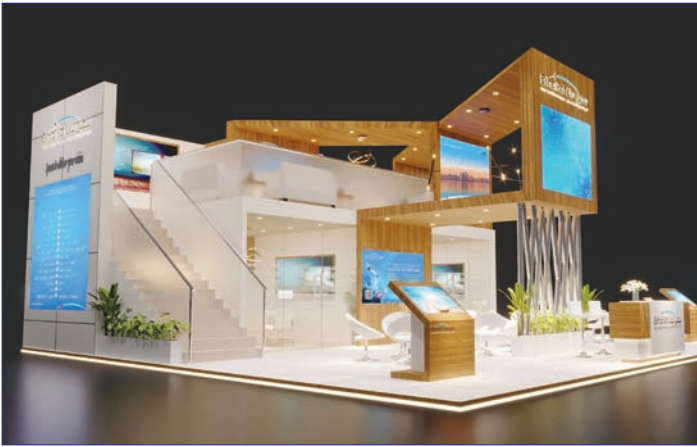
Es'hailSat showcases range of new services at IBC exhibition in Amsterdam

QNA
Doha

Es'hailSat – Qatar Satellite Company – is exhibiting at the annual IBC exhibition in Amsterdam, the leading platform for the broadcast, content delivery, digital media and satellite sectors across the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

EshailSat will be showcasing the launch of its newest services 'Playout' and 'Media', together with services of satellites Eshail-1, Eshail-2 and its state-of-the-art 50,000sq m teleport in Doha.

Eshail-1 and Eshail-2 are currently transmitting high-quality, premium DTH television content from the 25.5/26 East hotspot. EshailSats 50,000sq m teleport provide customers with secure and independent satellite transmission. The facility supports satellite TT&C and capacity management together with a wide range of services including uplink, downlink, multiplexing, encoding, playout, VSAT and other value-added services.



The high-tech teleport will also provide back-up studios for TV channels and serve as a disaster recovery facility for customers.

President and CEO of EshailSat Ali al-Kuwari said: "We have been expanding upon our gamut of services since the launch of Eshail-1 and Eshail-2 to grow beyond our local market, and now with the newly launched Playout and Media services together with

our 50,000sq m Teleport, a global event such as IBC gives us the right platform to engage with customers and partners and showcase our capabilities and achievements."

"We see this exhibition an integral part of our business development efforts to attract international customers who seek optimal coverage while valuing broadcasting independence and quality of service," al-Kuwari added.

Earthna Center to launch Qatar Sustainability Week in Nov

Earthna Center (Our legacy), an affiliate of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, announced the 8th edition of Qatar Sustainability Week that will be organised during Nov 4-11, 2023.

Organised in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC), in collaboration with public and private sectors, civil institutions, schools, universities and socially active groups nationwide, this year's edition abounds with bulk of activities and an array of workshops that aim to spur individuals to engage in green initiatives, the centre's statement read.

In addition, the activities intend to encourage the community in-

dividuals to pursue lifestyles that essentially observe multi-faceted aspects of environmental sustainability. The activities will focus on multiple environmental topics ranging from rationalisation of water and energy consumption to waste reduction, recycling, promotion of public health, as well as a myriad of environmentally relevant topics.

HE the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Sheikh Dr Faleh bin Nasser bin Ahmed bin Ali al-Thani said Qatar Sustainability Week bolsters co-operation and knowledge share among sectors that primarily contribute to achieving the sustainable development goals based on Qatar National Vision 2030.

He outlined that the event is the best initiative and is reminiscent of the societal responsibilities towards conserving the environment for posterity. Over the past years, Qatar Sustainability Week has consolidated its status as a unique event to promote Qatar's vision on environmental sustainability given the substantial number of activities that encourage the Qatari individuals to pursue more sustainable lifestyles, said Executive director of Earthna, Dr Gonzalo Castro de la Mata.

He added that last year's edition featured over 400 events in which more than 100,000 individuals participated. He wished the same success would continue during the upcoming edition. (QNA)



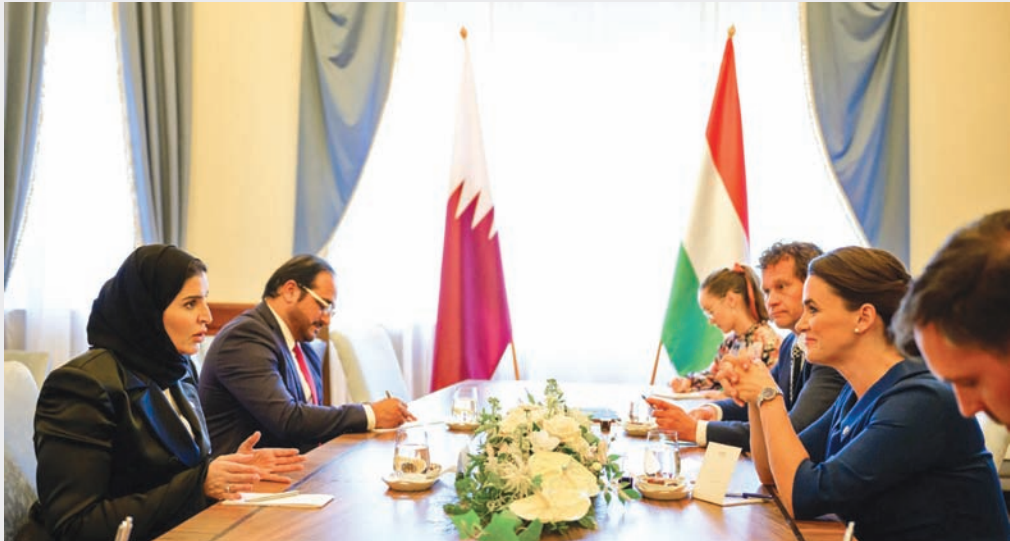
Rwanda National Day celebrations



Ambassador of Rwanda, Igor Marara, is joined by Qatar's Minister of Communications and Information Technology HE Mohamed bin Ali bin Mohamed al-Mannai and other dignitaries yesterday at Rwanda's National Day celebrations, being held for the first time in Qatar. The occasion also saw a cultural performance. **PICTURES:** Thajudheen



Hungary president meets minister of social development and family



Hungarian President Katalin Novak yesterday met with HE the Minister of Social Development and Family Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad on the sidelines of the Fifth Budapest Demographic Summit. During the meeting, the two sides touched base on aspects of Qatar-Hungary joint co-operation in the fields of family and social developments. **(QNA)**

Qatar attends Budapest Demographic Summit

Qatar is participating the The Fifth Budapest Demographic Summit which started yesterday under the theme 'Family is the key to security'. HE the Minister of Social Development and Family Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad is heading the delegation of Qatar to the two-day summit. Attended by a number of heads of states and governments and representatives of concerned international organisations, the opening session of the 5th Budapest Demographic Summit discussed how policymakers contribute to introducing and supporting the established family policies, being the most important nucleus of all societal and national security frameworks and strategies for countries to counter negative behavioural phenomena, especially in organised crime, terrorism, instability, economic decline, illegal immigration, loss of national identity, and other current challenges. The Fifth Budapest Demographic Summit is a major meeting point and a showcase for international pro-family forces, providing a unique opportunity for shared reflection on the role of families in reversing the negative demographic trends. **(QNA)**



Qaddumi Foundation signs MoU with DI

The Doha Institute for Graduate Studies (DI) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Qaddumi Foundation to launch "Shafik Al Gabra Scholarship for Political Sciences" in tribute to the memory of the late academic and researcher who dedicated his life to defending the national issues of the Arab region.

The foundation has chosen the DI because of al-Gabra's relationship with the Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies, a statement explained.

The scholarship grants master's studies at the DI in political sciences and related programmes starting from the academic year 2024/2025. Attended by a number of officials from both institutions, the MoU was signed at the DI by president and provost Dr Abdelwahab El-Affendi and the Qaddumi Foundation chairman Dr Nabil Hani AlQaddumi.



Dr Nabil Hani AlQaddumi and Dr Abdelwahab El-Affendi at the MoU signing.

The MoU states that the Qaddumi Foundation will provide one full scholarship every year to a Palestinian DI applicant accepted in a master's programme as a full-

time student in political studies or related majors such as Conflict Management and Humanitarian Action, Critical Security Studies and Human Rights.

Abandoned vehicles removed at Al Shamal

Al Shamal Municipality's General Control Section at the Municipal Control Department has conducted a campaign to remove the abandoned vehicles and equipment within its jurisdiction in co-operation with the Committee for Removing Abandoned Vehicles. The campaign which ran for a week from September 3, resulted in the removal of a total of 70 abandoned cars, cabins, and equipment in the areas of Industrial Area at Al Shamal, Al Ghariya, Al Thaqaq, and Abu Zhalouf. Besides, 26 violations related to occupying roads, streets, and sidewalks with abandoned vehicles and equipment were issued.

Former president calls for new Iraqi constitution

From Page 1

"God has endowed us with huge resources. Instead of these being squandered on wars and conflict, we need to invest these in terms of creating markets, for Iraq's security, and our future. We have a vital stake in making sure that there is regional integration and creating infrastructure that binds this region together," he added.

Dr Safwan Masri, dean of GU-Q, in his opening remarks at the session, said: "Twenty years onward, it is almost impossible to find an Iraqi town or family that has not been devastated as a result of the invasion and its ensuing occupation. Over the next two days, we will explore what the invasion meant for Iraq and for the region. We will examine the implications for global policy and for US foreign policy toward the region. We will also discuss how attitudes toward the US, in the region and beyond, may have shifted as a result."

About GU-Q's new Hiwaraat series, dean Masri pointed out that 'Hiwaraat' the Arabic word for dialogues, is about bringing together scholars, practitioners, and the public for an exploration of important, relevant, and timely questions and offering an inclusive, engaged space in search of innovative solutions to present and future challenges.

Georgetown University provost Dr Robert Groves highlighted that the university stands for seeking truth and one way to seek truth is through dialogue which needs taking different perspectives. Zahra Babar, associate director for research at Centre for International and Regional Studies at GU-Q welcomed the participants.



Former president of Iraq, Dr Barham Salih, interacting on the stage after his address.



A section of the audience at the opening session. **PICTURES:** Shaji Kayamkulam

Qatargas renamed QatarEnergy LNG

From Page 1

Minister al-Kaabi noted, "While we recognise the tremendous value that the Qatargas brand has accumulated over time, we believe that this evolution will further strengthen Qatar's global position by creating and leveraging a stronger salient link to the QatarEnergy brand to deliver even more value to the State of Qatar, its customers and the broader stakeholders' ecosystem."

"In this context, we are reaffirming our belief in the future of LNG as a primary source of energy for decades to come and placing greater emphasis on the central position LNG occupies in our strategic priorities, development efforts, and energy investments."

Concluding his remarks, al-Kaabi said, "We are very proud of Qatargas, its people and its legacy and achievements over the past 39 years and we look forward to a new era under the new name and brand that will herald new achievements and greater gains for the LNG industry and for our stakeholders across the globe."

Established in 1984 as Qatargas, 'QatarEnergy LNG' is a unique global energy operator in terms of size, service and reliability.

It currently operates some 14 LNG production trains and is at the centre of QatarEnergy's efforts to raise Qatar's LNG production capacity to 126mn tonnes per year.



Dr Safwan Masri, dean of GU-Q, addressing the gathering yesterday.



A dove cools off after quenching its thirst from a Doha backyard birdbath shortly before sunset. **PICTURE:** Gulf Times news editor Bonnie James.

MES teachers honoured



In a special cultural evening organised by the Indian Cultural Centre (ICC), under the aegis of the Indian embassy to mark 'Teachers' Day' celebrations, five teachers of MES Indian School along with teachers of various other Indian schools in Qatar were honoured for their significant contribution to the field of education.

The recipients of the 'Best Teachers' award from MES Indian School were Thithaymu Abdul Azeez, Noorjahan Mushtaq Ahmed, Mary Cynthia, Bijji Paul and Ramalingam Gangadharan in the K.G, Primary, Secondary and Senior Secondary categories.

The criteria for the selection included excellence in academic achievements, contribution to students' growth, and innovative activities initiated by the teachers.

Inaugurating the ceremony, Indian ambassador Vipul lauded the efforts of the teachers in playing a pivotal role in shaping the destiny of students, and gave away the awards.

MES Indian School principal Dr Hameeda Kadar was presented with a memento on the occasion.

More than 150 teachers and principals from various Indian schools in Qatar participated in the ceremony.



New forum gets ICBF affiliation

Outreach Qatar, 'on a mission to support differently-abled children and their parents' has received the letter of affiliation with the Indian Community Benevolent Forum (ICBF) under the aegis of the embassy of India, from first secretary and ICBF co-ordinating officer Dr Vaibhav Tandale and ICBF president Shanavas Bava. The letter was received by Outreach Qatar president Avinash Gaikwad, and committee members Mahesh Gowda and Subramanya Hebbagelu. Outreach Qatar plans to provide counselling support, orientation workshops, special camps for special children to interact with others, a special base for parents for their mental strength and stability, and arrange schooling for education in possible and feasible ways, a statement added.

What's the theme of International Day of Democracy 2023?

By Shafqat Nabi

N11. The sixth International Conferences on New and Restored Democracies or ICNRD-6 that took place in Doha in 2006 concluded with a declaration and Plan of Action which reaffirmed the fundamental principles and values of democracy. An advisory board set up by the chair of the process - Qatar - decided to promote an International Day of Democracy. In 2007 the United Nations General Assembly resolved to observe September 15 each year as the International Day of Democracy. What is its theme for 2023?

N12. Novak Djokovic has been ranked No. 1 for a record total of 390 weeks in a record how many different years?

N13. Fresh Kills was an area covering 2,200 acres in the New York City borough of Staten Island in the US. After the September 11, 2001 attacks, thousands of detectives and forensic evidence specialists worked for over 17mn hours for a massive operation. What is its claim to fame?

N14. This software was developed by Robert Gaskins and Dennis Austin for the American computer software company Forethought Inc. The program, initially named Presenter, was released for the Apple Macintosh in 1987. Later that year, the Microsoft Corporation, in its first significant software acquisition, purchased its rights for \$14mn, resulting in it having a new business unit for itself in Silicon Valley. How is this software known now?

N15. What is the name given to a type of cognitive bias that causes people to overestimate their knowledge or ability, particularly in areas with which they have little to no experience?

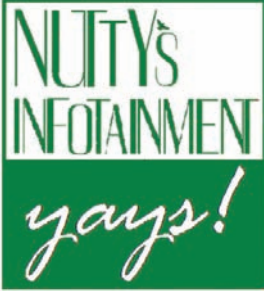
N16. Which country had its squad announcement for the upcoming ICC Cricket World Cup by having family members call out the names of the respective team members?

N17. It all began way back in 1969 when Neil Armstrong became the first man to walk on the Moon and immortalised himself with the phrase "one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind." Who was the most recent person to walk on the moon? It happened more than 50 years ago.

N18. March 14 and July 22 are geek holidays celebrating what number?

N19. In volleyball, what is the maximum number of touches you can have before hitting the ball over the net to the other team?

N110. The lady on the left, in the clip below from a newspaper, disappeared mysteriously in December, 1926 only to be found 11 days later in a hotel in Harrogate, England. "Beagles were used yesterday in a renewed hunt around Newlands Corner for (name withheld), the vanished novelist, the latest portrait of whom appears above. On the right is Rosalind, her seven-year-old daughter, photographed in the grounds of her home at Sunningdale," the news read. Identify the novelist whose birthday is being celebrated today.



HOUNDS SEARCH FOR NOVELIST



Answers

- N11.** "Empowering the next generation".
N12. 12. He has finished as the year-end No. 1 a record seven times. Pete Sampras held the year-end No. 1 ranking for a record six consecutive years.
N13. It was a landfill and after the September 11, 2001 attacks, it was temporarily reopened as a sorting ground for roughly a third of the rubble from Ground Zero.
N14. Microsoft PowerPoint. Its co-developer, Dennis Austin, passed away recently.
N15. The Dunning-Kruger effect. Some researchers also include the opposite effect for high performers: their tendency to underestimate their skills.
N16. New Zealand.
N17. Eugene Cernan. The 12-day mission, which took place from December 7 to December 19 in 1972, sets records for the longest spacewalk, the longest lunar landing, and the biggest lunar samples returned to Earth. On December 14, 1972, Cernan took his final steps on the moon.
N18. Pi, the mathematical constant that is the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter, approximately equal to 3.14159.
N19. Three.
N110. Agatha Christie.

Tribe Nlyays

What is the name of the fictional white terrier dog who is a companion to Obelix in the Asterix comics?

Dogmatix. It is a pun on the words dog and dogmatic.

(Muqeem Mahesar, Al Wakra)

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



Indian consular camp held at Industrial Area

The Indian embassy, in collaboration with Indian Community Benevolent Forum (ICBF), hosted a consular camp at Imara Healthcare, Asian Town, on September 8. More than 160 community members attended. Indian embassy first secretary and ICBF co-ordinating officer Dr Vaibhav Tandale was the chief guest. About 10 grievances were resolved at the camp. The ICBF Insurance Desk provided support to numerous families.

Passport services, document attestation, and PCC (Police Clearance Certificate) services were made available to the community at the camp. Jaseela, who visited for document attestation, praised the ICBF and the embassy for organising such camps, making it convenient for individuals who face weekday challenges in visiting the embassy. ICBF president Shanavas Bava reiterated the community's positive feedback about the camp and announced plans for organising similar

camps in different areas of Qatar in the future. Vice-president Deepak Shetty, general secretary Varkey Boban, treasurer Kuldeep Kour, secretary Mohamed Kunhi, along with Zareena Ahad, Abdul Raoof Kondotty, Shankar Goud, Hamid Raza and advisory member Shashidar Hebbal co-ordinated the camp activities along with Imara Healthcare's staff. During the earlier week, a consular camp at Dukhan distributed passports to applicants in the Dukhan area, facilitated by ICBF staff.



ONAM Celebrations



Indian nurses mark festival

Indian nurses at the Women's and Wellness Research Center of Hamad Medical Corporation celebrated Onam with various programmes. Titled 'Onanilav', the event was attended by a large number of people. Malayalam playback and Mappilapatu singer, Kannur Sherif inaugurated the programme by rendering a song written and composed by him about the selfless services of nurses. Overseas Indian Cultural Congress committee member John Gilbert and Kerala Muslim Cultural Centre vice-president Mohamed Eassa were among those who spoke on the occasion. The event concluded with a traditional Onamsadhya and a number of cultural performances and games.



Hundreds attend KBF function



The Kerala Business Forum (KBF) recently celebrated Onam, the harvest festival of the southern Indian state of Kerala, in Doha. Indian ambassador Vipul was the chief guest for the event attended by close to 600 people. Presidents of Indian Business and Professionals Council (Jaffar Sadiq), Indian Cultural Centre (Manikandan A P), Indian Community Benevolent Forum (Shanavas Bava) and Indian Sports Centre (E P Abdul Rahman) were present. The day-long event, which began with a flower carpet contest at 8am, culminated with songs and dances on stage. The previous committee, along

with the main sponsors City Exchange and Silver Storm Water Park based in Kerala were also recognised and felicitated by the ambassador. KBF president Aji Kuriakose gave the Onam message, mentioned the milestones of the new committee and laid out future plans including a business help desk for members, KBF round table, a mobile app for members, and a privilege card. Surya from Kalakshethra Chennai in India, choreographed and performed a special fusion dance which was a highlight of the event. The traditional percussion ensemble chendamalam,

thiruvathira dance, vallappaattu and kaikkottikali added festive mood to the event. The flower carpet contest winners were Shimna & team, Tina & team and Sinil George & team, in the first, second and third positions, respectively. In the Tug-of-War, Sony Abraham and team were first, and Kuriakose & team second. Naseem Al Rabeeh Medical Center offered a free medical check up for all KBF members. The event was co-ordinated by KBF Onam convenor Noorulhack, and general secretary Manzoor Moideen along the organising team.

Kodaca holds various programmes



The Kottayam District Arts and Cultural Association (Kodaca) celebrated Onam with various programmes at the Indian Cultural Centre. The event included a number of cultural programmes and other activities. At the event, Kodaca members were enrolled in the insurance programme by Indian Community Benevolent Forum. The event also honoured Steeson Mathew, a Kodaca member, who won a gold medal at the Asian Senior Athletic Meet.



Cultural, music events organised



Changanacherry NSS College Alumni Association Qatar chapter (CHANSS-Qatar) celebrated Onam 2023 with traditional pomp and fervour recently in Doha. Established in 1947, NSS College, Changanacherry, is one of the oldest educational institutions in Central Travancore, Kerala, and several hundreds of its former students are working in Qatar, living with their families. This year's Onam festivities included cultural and music programmes including traditional performances such as Thiruvathirakali, Vanchipattu and Nadanpattu. The celebrations ended with a traditional vegetarian feast served on banana leaf. CHANSS-Qatar president Ajith Powathil welcomed the gathering and delivered the Onam message while general secretary Amritha Sudheesh proposed a vote of thanks.



Celebrations galore at Olive International School



Olive International School marked Teachers' Day, Foundation Day, and the Onam programme with a grand celebration, saluting both its teaching and non-teaching staff. Principal Jacob Mathew congratulated and emphasised the collective role of every Olive member in maintaining the school's prestige. Juttas Paul praised the entire staff as the institution's backbone. Academic Board director Pratheesh Ben stressed the school's vision to provide outcome-based education. Special commendations and awards were presented to Afzal Kattali, Karis Sebastain, and Thesneema Parveen

clinched the "Best Teacher Award", while Subhasis Nath received the "Best Outcome Based Education Champion" accolade. All staff were rewarded school's souvenirs by the management to appreciate their efforts and commitment to the institution. The day witnessed vibrant staff performances and team-building competitions, concluding with a traditional Onamsadhya. Vice-principal (operations) Shalini Rawat observed that "Every Olive member, teaching or non-teaching, is essential in crafting our legacy of educational excellence."

Biden's son Hunter hit with gun charge

Reuters
Washington

US President Joe Biden's son Hunter Biden was criminally charged yesterday with deceiving a gun dealer into selling him a firearm, in the latest sign of how the younger Biden's legal woes may weigh on his father's re-election bid next year.

The first-ever indictment of a sitting president's child, filed in US District Court in Delaware, charged Hunter Biden with three criminal counts related to lying about the fact he was using illegal drugs at that time, which would have banned him under the law from owning a firearm.

The charges ensure that courtroom drama will play an outsized role in the 2024 US presidential campaign as Joe Biden, 80, seeks re-election in a likely rematch with his Republican predecessor Donald Trump, 77, who faces four upcoming criminal trials of his own.

The new charges against Hunter Biden brought by recently elevated US Special Counsel David Weiss say nothing about any violations of US tax law. A prior deal under which Hunter Biden, 53, would have pleaded guilty to two misdemeanour tax charges and enrol in a programme to avoid prosecution on the gun charge collapsed in a stunning turn in a July hearing.

The tax investigation into Biden remains ongoing, after Weiss previously said any possible charges would need to be brought in either the District of Columbia or the Los Angeles-based Central District of California.

Prosecutors accused the younger Biden of lying about his use of narcotics when he purchased a Colt Cobra handgun in October 2018.

The move comes two days after House of Representatives Republicans opened an impeachment inquiry of Joe Biden related to Hunter Biden's foreign business dealings. The White House has denounced that step, made without a vote by the full House, as unsubstantiated and politically motivated.

"As expected, prosecutors filed charges today that they deemed were not warranted just six weeks ago following a five-year investigation into this case," Hunter Biden at-



File photo of Hunter Biden.

torney Abbe Lowell said in a statement. "The evidence in this matter has not changed in the last six weeks, but the law has and so has MAGA Republicans' improper and partisan interference in this process." The White House declined to comment. A spokesperson for Weiss declined to comment.

Some legal experts have said that any firearms-related charges against Biden could be vulnerable to a constitutional challenge, after the US Supreme Court last year in a landmark ruling expanded gun rights under the US Constitution's Second Amendment, which protects the right to bear arms.

Lowell referred to that dispute in his statement, noting "the recent rulings by several federal courts that this statute is unconstitutional." Weiss was elevated to special counsel status in August after investigating Hunter Biden's business dealings for years as the US attorney in the Democratic president's home state of Delaware. Weiss was originally nominated by Trump.

The younger Biden for years has been the focus of unrelenting attacks by Trump and his Republican allies who have accused him

of wrongdoing relating to Ukraine and China, among other matters.

Hunter Biden has worked as a lobbyist, lawyer, investment banker and artist, and has publicly detailed his struggles with substance abuse.

While Republican lawmakers have collected testimony that Joe Biden at times joined calls with his son's business associates, they have yet to produce evidence that the president personally benefited.

"Today's charges against Hunter Biden are a very small start, but unless US Attorney Weiss investigates everyone involved in the fraud schemes and influence peddling, it will be clear President Biden's DoJ is protecting Hunter Biden and the big guy," said Republican Representative James Comer, chairman of the House Oversight Committee, one of the three committees leading the impeachment inquiry kicked off this week.

Hunter Biden disclosed in December 2020 that Weiss's office was investigating his tax affairs. He has denied wrongdoing.

While most US attorneys appointed by Trump were asked to step down when Biden took office in January 2021, as is routine, the Justice Department asked Weiss to stay on.

Hunter Biden never held a position in the White House or on his father's campaign. The president has said he has not discussed foreign business dealings with his son and has said his Justice Department would have independence in any investigation of a member of his family.

Trump and other Republicans have alleged what they called conflicts of interest from Hunter Biden's position on the board of the Ukrainian energy company Burisma at the time his father was vice president to Democratic President Barack Obama. Trump in a July 2019 phone call with Ukraine's president asked him to have his government open an investigation into Joe and Hunter Biden in the lead-up to the US presidential election.

The Democratic-led House of Representatives later voted to impeach Trump on charges of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress stemming from these efforts, though the Senate ultimately voted to keep Trump in office.

Octopus sighting in Galapagos



Handout picture released by the Schmidt Ocean Institute yesterday, shows a cirrate octopus (Octopus in the Cirrothauma genus) at Iguanas Vent Field, Ecuador's Galapagos archipelago.

Nasa names chief of UFO research; panel sees no alien evidence

Reuters
Washington

Nasa yesterday said it has named a new director of research into what the government calls "unidentified anomalous phenomenon," or UAP, while the US space agency's chief said an expert panel that urged deeper fact-finding on the matter found no evidence of an extraterrestrial origin for these objects.

Administrator Bill Nelson made the announcement about the new research chief — without disclosing the person's identity — after the independent panel of experts recommended in a new report that Nasa increase its efforts to gather information on UAP and play a larger role in helping the Pentagon detect them.

UAP are better known to the public as unidentified flying objects, or UFOs.

Nelson during a news conference also gave his personal opinion that life exists beyond Earth.

"There's a global fascination with UAP. On my travels, one of the first questions I often get is about these sightings. And much of that fascination is due to the unknown nature of it," Nelson said.

"If you ask me do I believe there's life in a universe that's so vast that it's hard for me to comprehend how big it is, my personal answer is, 'Yes,'" Nelson added.

But Nelson said the chances that otherworldly beings have visited Earth are low.

The Nasa panel, comprising experts in fields ranging from physics to astrobiology, was formed last year and held its first public meeting in June.

"The Nasa independent study team did not find any evidence that UAP have an extraterrestrial origin, but we don't know what these UAP are," Nelson said, adding that a goal of the agency is to "shift the conversation about UAP from sensationalism to science."

The US government in the past few years has made several disclosures of information it has gathered regarding a subject that once was met by virtual official silence. It issued a watershed report in 2021 compiled by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence in conjunction with a Navy-led task force encompassing numerous observations — mostly from military personnel — of UAP.

"The mission of Nasa is to find out the unknown," Nelson said. "Whatever we find, we're going to tell you," Nelson added, promising

ising transparency on any discoveries.

The new UAP research director will handle "centralised communications, resources and data analytical capabilities to establish a robust database for the evaluation of future UAP," Nasa said.

Nelson told Reuters he does not know the name of the new director. Dan Evans, a senior research official in Nasa's science unit and a member of the study team, said harassment that other panel members had received from the public during their work was "in part" why the new director's identity was being kept secret.

"Nasa has a variety of existing and planned Earth- and space-observing assets, together with an extensive archive of historic and current data sets, which should be directly leveraged to understand UAP," the panel's report said.

"Although Nasa's fleet of Earth-observing satellites typically lack the spatial resolution to detect relatively small objects such as UAP, their state-of-the-art sensors can be directly utilised to probe the state of the local earth, oceanic and atmospheric conditions that are spatially and temporally coincident with UAPs initially detected via other methods," the report said.

Nasa's science chief Nicky Fox declined to say how much funding the agency would like to allocate toward the continued UAP-tracking effort.

The 2021 government report included some UAP cases that previously came to light in the Pentagon's release of video from naval aviators showing enigmatic aircraft off the US East and West Coasts exhibiting speed and manoeuvrability exceeding known aviation technologies and lacking any visible means of propulsion or flight-control surfaces.

That report said defence and intelligence analysts lacked sufficient data to determine the nature of some of the objects, while some could possibly be explained as atmospheric phenomena, advanced aircraft from another country or innocuous objects such as weather balloons.

The new report called UAP "one of our planet's greatest mysteries." "Observations of objects in our skies that cannot be identified as balloons, aircraft or natural known phenomena have been spotted worldwide, yet there are limited high-quality observations. The nature of science is to explore the unknown, and data is the language scientists use to discover our universe's secrets," the report stated.

Body of Ecuadorean crime boss stolen from Colombian cemetery

The body of Ecuadorean fugitive Junior Roldan was illegally exhumed from a Colombian graveyard, police said, months after the former Los Choneros drug gang boss was buried, AFP reported from Bogota.

Roldan, who went by the alias JR, was accused of several attacks and murders in Ecuador's prisons. More than 430 inmates have died violently since 2021, dozens of them dismembered and incinerated in disputes between rival gangs linked to Colombian and Mexican cartels. Roldan's body disappeared from the vault where he was buried in May, local police told AFP on Wednesday. Roldan was released from a prison in the Ecuadorean port city of Guayaquil — a hub for several drug gangs — in February 2023 and was granted parole, a decision criticised by President Guillermo Lasso. He was wounded in an armed attack in March, after which prison authorities lost track of him. Colombian authorities found his body shot in the head in a rural area in the country's north-west two months later.

After no one claimed the body, it was buried in a cemetery in Envigado on the outskirts of Medellin, Colombia's second city, on May 18. There are more than 13 organised crime groups operating in Ecuador, officials say.

Brazil court sentences first defendant in pro-Bolsonaro riots to 17 years

AFP
Brasilia

Brazil's Supreme Court announced a 17-year jail term yesterday for the first defendant tried and convicted over the storming of the seats of power by supporters of far-right ex-president Jair Bolsonaro.

After a trial that began only Wednesday, the court's 11 justices ruled unanimously to convict 51-year-old Aécio Pereira, with a majority finding he had committed serious crimes including an attempted coup when he stormed the floor of the Senate on January 8, as thousands of Bolsonaro supporters rioted in a bid to oust leftist President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. Overwhelming security, the mob also invaded the presidential palace and the high court itself, smashing windows, throwing furniture into fountains, vandalising artwork and turning the Senate's central dais into a slide.

It was the first verdict over the riots, which deeply shook a nation still divided by Lula's



Judge Cristiano Zanin (right) looks on during a session of trial for the storming of government buildings at the Supreme Court, in Brasilia, Brazil, yesterday.

narrow win over Bolsonaro in Brazil's October 2022 presidential race. The violence, which came a week after Lula's inauguration, drew inevitable comparisons to the invasion of the US Capitol on January 6, 2021 by supporters of then-president Donald Trump — Bolsonaro's political role model.

"The (rioters') objective was to violently seize Brasilia and spread a criminal attack against the rule of law across the country," Justice Cristiano Zanin said yesterday in delivering his ruling. Three of the court's

judges ruled to convict Pereira on only some of the five charges he faced, including lesser counts such as destruction of property. Eight ruled to convict him on all five counts, including violent uprising against the rule of law and an attempted coup.

Pereira, who denied wrongdoing, made an obscenity-laced cell-phone video of himself at the Senate president's table during the riots, wearing a T-shirt marked "Military Intervention" and urging fellow Bolsonaro supporters to "take to the streets."

Romney to retire from US Senate after wild ride through Republican politics

Reuters
Washington

US Senator Mitt Romney will not seek re-election in 2024, capping a roller-coaster ride through Republican politics from the height of his party's 2012 presidential nomination to the depths of tribal warfare in the age of Donald Trump.

Casting aside the hopes and appeals of colleagues, including Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell, the 76-year-old Utah Republican said on Wednesday he would retire as a one-term senator when his term ends in early 2025, rather than seek another six years among a dwindling number of Republican moderates in Congress.

Romney stood out within his caucus as a rare critic of former president Trump, but his decision to retire effectively surrenders his Utah Senate seat to a successor who could be more closely aligned

with Trump and the hardline conservative politics of the state's other US senator, fellow Republican Mike Lee.

Romney nonetheless said he believed it was time to go.

"At the end of another term I'd be in my mid-80s. Frankly it's time for a new generation of leaders," Romney said in a video statement. "While I'm not running for reelection, I'm not retiring from the fight." The son of a former Michigan governor, auto industry executive and 1968 Republican presidential candidate, Romney became a multimillionaire in the private equity business and served as Massachusetts' governor before mounting an unsuccessful challenge against President Barack Obama as the Republican party presidential nominee in 2012.

As a US senator since 2019, he has been an outspoken critic of Democratic President Joe Biden, but willing to work with the White House and Democrats on issues

including infrastructure and gun control.

With Trump dominating the 2024 Republican presidential field, Romney has faced powerful headwinds at home in solidly Republican Utah. A Deseret News poll in June showed 47% of Republicans saying that Trump best represented them, compared with 39% who favoured Romney.

Romney was the only Republican senator to vote to convict Trump at both his Senate impeachment trials. Trump called the senator's retirement "fantastic news for America" in a social media post on Wednesday.

For his part, McConnell said in a statement that he was sorry to see Romney go, applauding him for making "remarkably efficient use of his brief tenure in the Senate."

Romney said his post-Senate life will focus on bringing young people into politics.

"My party is only going to be successful getting young people



Senator Mitt Romney (R-UT) answers questions in his office after announcing he will not seek re-election, in Washington, DC.

to vote for us if we're talking about the future," he said, adding that he wished both Biden, 80, and Trump, 77, would step back from their presidential campaigns and let younger candidates run.

A poll in April from Reuters/Ipsos found that 61% of regis-

tered Democrats thought Biden was too old to run for re-election, versus 35% of registered Republicans who thought the same about Trump. "President Biden said when he was running that he was a transitional figure to the next generation. Well, time to transition,"

Romney said on Wednesday.

Romney's departure contrasts with other leaders of the Senate, whose advanced age and ailing health have become concerns for their parties.

McConnell, 81, has struggled to fully recover from a concussion suffered in a fall and from other falls earlier this year. Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein, 90, took weeks to recover from a bout of shingles in February and has repeatedly appeared confused during votes and hearings.

Retirement spares Romney from joining in what would have been a competitive primary if he had run again.

Although Brad Wilson, the Utah state House of Representatives speaker, has not declared his candidacy for Romney's seat, he has raised \$2.2mn through an exploratory committee, including more than \$1mn from individual donors, and boasts a slew of endorsements from state lawmakers.



DECISION

Australia toughens ban on training ‘foreign militaries’

Australia will toughen laws stopping former defence staff from training “certain foreign militaries”, introducing a penalty of 20 years prison and widening the ban to stop any Australians offering military training to countries seen as a national security risk. A series of cases where former military pilots living in Australia had worked for a South African flight school training Chinese pilots, which the US alleges are Chinese military pilots, has prompted the crackdown. Australia’s “Five Eyes” intelligence partners of Britain, United States, New Zealand and Canada will be exempt from the new law, officials said.

INDUSTRIAL ACTION

S Korea rail workers launch first strike in four years

About 13,000 unionised rail workers in South Korea launched a four-day strike yesterday, their first such action in four years, which could cut passenger and cargo train operations by up to 60% amid soaring seasonal demand. The Korean Railway Workers’ Union is seeking improved pay and working conditions and an expansion of the KTX bullet train services to include lucrative routes to southern Seoul, which are only allotted to the other high-speed railway, called SRT. The strike, the first since November 2019, came after a collapse of negotiations between the union, the transport ministry and Korea Railroad Corporation, the state-run train operator.

MILITANCY

Seven killed in Kashmir gun battles

Five Indian officers and two suspected rebels were killed in separate gun battles this week in Kashmir, with clashes ongoing, officials said yesterday. On Wednesday, two Indian army officers and a senior policeman carrying out a security sweep in a forested area of the southern Kashmir valley were ambushed and killed, with the two suspected gunmen holed up and firing at soldiers encircling their position. Police said their force had surrounded two men they said belonged to the Lashkar-e-Taiba militant group. Four people were killed on Tuesday – an Indian soldier, a police officer and two suspected rebels – during a firefight in the mountainous Rajouri area.

PEOPLE

Junta depriving Suu Kyi of medical care, says party

Myanmar’s junta is endangering the life of jailed democracy figurehead Aung San Suu Kyi, her political party said yesterday, accusing the military of depriving her of medical care and food. Suu Kyi has been detained since the generals seized power in February 2021. In recent days, local media have reported the Nobel laureate, 78, was suffering dizzy spells, vomiting and unable to eat because of a tooth infection. During her 19-month trial in a junta court that rights groups denounced as a sham, Suu Kyi regularly skipped hearings on health grounds. That trial ended last year, with Suu Kyi jailed for a total of 33 years in prison.

Royals visit forest school



Prince William, Prince of Wales and Catherine, Princess of Wales visit Madley Primary School's Forest School which prioritises outdoor learning, in Vowchurch, Herefordshire, Britain, yesterday.

Bangladesh court jails top rights activists for two years

AFP
Dhaka

A Bangladesh court yesterday sentenced two leading human rights activists to two years each in jail, after a trial critics say is part of a government crackdown ahead of elections. Adilur Rahman Khan, 63, and Nasiruddin Elan, 57, have led the Odhikar organisation for decades, working to document thousands of alleged extrajudicial killings, enforced disappear-

ances of opposition activists, and police brutalities. They “were sentenced to two years in prison”, judge Zulfiker Hayat told the court. The criminal charges against Khan and Elan related to a fact-finding report they compiled 10 years ago on extrajudicial killings. “They were sentenced to two years in jail for publishing and circulating false information, hurting religious sentiments and undermining the image of the state,” prosecutor Nazrul Islam Shamim said.

Both men were in the court in Dhaka for their sentencing, as well as several foreign diplomats. As police took them from the court to Dhaka Central Jail, Khan was seen thrusting his clenched fist in defiance from the door of a security van. The pair’s lawyers plan to appeal. Several Western governments have expressed concern over the political climate in Bangladesh ahead of general elections due before the end of January, where the ruling party dominates the leg-

islature and runs it virtually as a rubber stamp. “This verdict will send a chilling message to the human rights defenders in the country and make their work enormously difficult,” Nur Khan Liton, a former head of another of the country’s leading human rights organisations, said. Odhikar has been documenting human rights violations in Bangladesh since 1994. It has worked closely with United Nations bodies and global human rights groups.

China trying to headhunt top UK nationals: govt

Chinese spies are targeting British officials in sensitive positions in politics, defence and business as part of an increasingly sophisticated spying operation to gain access to secrets, the British government said yesterday. The government, responding to a parliamentary report in July that found the government’s approach to the threat posed by China was inadequate, highlighted the “prolific” scale of Chinese espionage. “Chinese recruitment schemes have tried to headhunt British and allied nationals in key positions and with sensitive knowledge and experience,” the government said. There has been growing anxiety about Chinese activity in Britain, exacerbated since it was revealed at the weekend that a parliamentary researcher was arrested in March on suspicion of spying for China.

Hundreds of shops gutted in market fire



A huge fire gutted several hundreds shops at a market in Bangladesh’s capital Dhaka, but there were no casualties as the blaze swept through the area in the early hours of yesterday, before stores opened. It took six hours for military forces and firefighters to contain the blaze, which spread quickly in the Mohammadpur market due to the large amount of flammable items such as cooking oil and plastics, officials said.

US ‘may get access to more Philippine bases’

Reuters
Manila

The US military could be granted access to more bases in the Philippines under a joint defence agreement between the two countries, the chief of the US Indo-Pacific command said yesterday after meeting the head of the Philippines armed forces. China is likely to react negatively, having earlier this year accused Washington of “stoking the fire” when the Philippines increased the number of bases the US military could use to nine. The four additional sites approved were located close to potential flashpoints for China, as three faced north towards Taiwan and one was near the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, where Manila and Beijing recent-

ly sparred over a disputed atoll. US Admiral John Aquilino said he and the Philippines’ military chief, lieutenant general Romeo Brawner, discussed further expanding the number of bases US forces could access under the Enhanced Defence Co-operation Agreement (EDCA) and had made “recommendations to our senior leaders”. The closer US defence ties with the Philippines after a period of decline has caused concern in China. The US says it intends to bolster an already strong alliance and improve the defence capability of the Philippines. Brawner said the purpose of EDCA was training exercises and humanitarian and disaster response, key planks of a decades-old alliance between the two countries, and was unrelated to regional security threats.

Taiwan says 68 Chinese warplanes, 10 vessels detected near island

AFP
Taipei

Dozens of Chinese warplanes and 10 navy ships were detected around Taiwan, authorities in Taipei said yesterday after warning that Beijing was conducting air and sea drills in the Western Pacific. China claims Taiwan as its territory and relations have soured since the island’s independence-leaning President Tsai Ing-wen came to power in 2016. Beijing has in recent years ratcheted up diplomatic and military pressure on Taiwan and the

number of warplane flights around the island increased dramatically following last August’s visit by Nancy Pelosi, then-speaker of the US House of Representatives. Taiwan’s defence ministry said in a statement that 68 Chinese aircraft and 10 naval vessels were detected near the island between Wednesday morning and yesterday morning. Taipei had already said some of those planes and warships were heading to an unspecified area of the Western Pacific to “conduct joint sea and air training” with China’s Shandong aircraft carrier. The Shandong, one of two operational aircraft carriers in the Chinese fleet, was detected Mon-

day around 110kms southeast of Taiwan heading into the Western Pacific, Taipei authorities said. Japan’s defence ministry also said on Wednesday its navy had detected six ships – including frigates, destroyers, one fast combat support ship and the Shandong – sailing through waters some 650kms south of Miyakojima island, east of Taiwan. It also confirmed that jets and helicopters had been detected taking off and landing from the Shandong. China’s military “has been tasked to develop capabilities to take over Taiwan”, one expert said. “Those military exercises are aimed at developing and practis-

ing those capabilities,” said Bonnie Glaser, a China expert at Washington DC’s German Marshall Fund. “We should expect its trend to continue, with growing pressure on Taiwan.” James Char, a research fellow at Singapore’s Nanyang Technological University, said China’s military activities around Taiwan – particularly aerial incursions into the island’s air defence identification zone – had become a “regular occurrence”. But the activities were “all, without exception, operations below the threshold of war and occurring outside Taiwanese territorial airspace”, he said.

China has not commented officially on any drills being conducted in the Western Pacific. And in contrast with the sabre-rattling, Beijing this week dangled the prospect of preferential treatment for people from Taiwan seeking to live, work, study and do business in mainland China. The series of “opinions” announced by two top Communist Party bodies on Tuesday also urged the coastal city of Xiamen to “speed up” its integration with the Taiwan-administered Kinmen and Matsu islands located a few miles offshore. At a press conference yesterday, Pan Xianzhang, vice director of the

Taiwan Affairs Office of the party’s Central Committee, said the goal of the policy was to create a “demonstration zone for cross-strait integrated development”. “The focus is on... taking the lead in implementing equal treatment for Taiwan compatriots and businesses so as to make Taiwan compatriots fully experience the benefits of integration”, Pan said. Cong Liang, vice director of China’s National Development and Reform Commission, said at the same briefing that a high-speed rail line should be built across the Taiwan Strait in order to achieve “direct infrastructure connectivity” with the mainland.

Pakistan caretaker govt ‘appears to favour foes of Imran Khan’

Reuters
Islamabad

Pakistan’s election commission has questioned the neutrality of the country’s caretaker government tasked with holding national elections, saying it appears to be aligned with the opponents of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan.

The caretaker government, which took over last month on the five year expiry of parliament, is meant to ensure impartiality in the run up to the election, but

Khan’s continued incarceration and ban from contesting elections has raised concerns.

“It is a general perception that the caretaker government is a continuation of the previous government,” says a letter seen by Reuters written by the Election Commission to the office of caretaker Prime Minister Anwar ul Haq Kakar.

Kakar, whose party was an ally in the outgoing anti-Khan coalition government, took over from Shehbaz Sharif who comes from Khan’s biggest rival party, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz

(PML-N), which with the alliance of nearly a dozen parties removed Khan from power.

The letter, dated Wednesday, is a rare official rebuke of the government. Election results are rarely accepted across the board in Pakistan and perceptions of bias could cast a further shadow over the credibility of the process.

An almost certain delay in the national election, which is due in November, has stoked more political uncertainty amid the worst economic crisis in the nation of 241mn.

No date has so far been given for

the voting, and analysts fear that the caretaker government led by Kakar, who comes from a pro-military political party, could remain in power for a longer period.

Caretaker Information Minister Murtaza Solangi dispelled the suggestion of bias.

“We have no favourite horses in this race,” he told Reuters in a message yesterday, saying his government will assist the commission in providing a level-playing field to all parties.

Asked about the commission’s suggestions he said, the “Prime Minister and myself have not ut-

tered a word against the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party and Imran Khan after assuming our new role.” Election Commission spokesman Haroon Khan did not respond.

The letter came within hours of Kakar inducting in his cabinet a longtime loyalist of former three-time Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, Khan’s main opponent. It said that “due care” should be exercised to avoid people of “known political allegiance” being added to the government.

The cabinet also has other loyalists to Sharif’s party and its al-



File photo of former Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan.

lies, as well as vocal critics of Khan, some of whom say they were victimised during his rule from 2018 to 2022.

Khan, ousted in April 2022 in a parliament vote of confidence, blames the military for his removal after he fell out with the generals, who mostly decide who will rule.

EU blames Kosovo over stalled normalisation pact with Serbia

Reuters
Brussels

European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell blamed Kosovo yesterday for a failure to implement a deal with Serbia on normalising relations between the two former wartime foes.

Borrell spoke after talks in Brussels with Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti and Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic on the plan, which was agreed earlier this year but soon stalled.

“It was not possible to bridge the difference today,” Borrell said after the meeting.

He said Kurti “was not ready to move forward” with setting up an association of Serb-majority municipalities, which would give them more autonomy and to which Pristina committed during a 10-year-long EU-sponsored dialogue with Belgrade.

Ethnic Albanians form more than 90% of the population in Kosovo, with Serbs only the majority in its northern region where the majority municipalities association is envisaged.

Tensions between the two sides spiked in May, when more than 90



European Union Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell.

Nato peacekeeping soldiers and some 50 Serb protesters were injured in disturbances in northern Kosovo.

The clashes erupted after ethnic Albanian mayors took office in the north, with the backing of Kosovo special police units, following local elections in which turnout was just 3.5% due to a boycott by Serbs.

Borrell said Kurti had insisted that the first step in implementing the plan should be “formalising de facto recognition” of Kosovo, which declared independence from Serbia in 2008 but which

Belgrade still regards as its province. Borrell said he had proposed to Kurti and Vucic that the two steps — launching a municipalities association and de facto recognition of Kosovo — be taken “in parallel”. Vucic had accepted the proposal, but Kurti rejected it, Borrell told reporters.

He warned that the stalemate affected the Balkan neighbours’ aspirations to move closer to the EU and join the bloc one day.

“Without normalisation there will be no European future for either Kosovo nor Serbia,” he said.

Kurti accused the EU of being biased, saying the bloc had adopted Serbia’s position as its own.

“Serbia’s conditions have turned into the position of the European mediator (Miroslav Lajcak, and to move forward this must be overcome,” Kurti told reporters.

Serbs in northern Kosovo do not accept the 2008 declaration of independence from Serbia, which came almost a decade after an uprising against repressive Serbian rule, and still see Belgrade as their capital.

Vucic told reporters that the talks will have to continue. “We will have to talk and find the way forward,” he said.

Ukraine attacks Russian air defences in western Crimea

Reuters
Kyiv

Ukraine struck Russian air defence systems near the town of Yevpatoriya in the west of occupied Crimea in a long-range overnight attack yesterday, the Ukrainian military said.

Russia’s defence ministry said in a statement that its air defences had shot down 11 drones overnight over the peninsula, which Russia seized from Ukraine in 2014. It made no mention of any damage.

A video circulated on social media showed powerful explosions and a plume of smoke rising in the night sky illuminated by a blaze. Reuters could not immedi-

ately verify the video. A Ukrainian intelligence source told Reuters the attack destroyed a “Triumf” air defence system in a joint operation of the Security Service of Ukraine and navy. First, the source said, drones blinded the air defence system by attacking its radar and antenna, before two Ukrainian-made Neptune cruise missiles were fired at the system’s launchers. Ukraine has modified the Neptune anti-ship missile to attack ground targets, military analysts say.

Reuters was unable to independently verify the account.

The attack comes a day after Ukraine launched missiles at the Crimean port of Sevastopol, home to the Russian navy’s Black Sea Fleet, in an attack that signalled Ukraine’s growing missile capabilities.



View of the *Ocean Explorer*, a luxury cruise ship carrying 206 people that ran aground, in Alpefjord, Greenland.

Cruise ship stuck in Greenland fjord refloated, says owner

AFP
Copenhagen

A cruise ship carrying 200 passengers that was stuck in a remote Greenland fjord for three days after running aground was refloated yesterday, the Danish navy and shipowner said.

“The *Ocean Explorer* was pulled free,” the Danish navy’s Joint Arctic Command in Greenland said.

A Greenlandic fisheries research vessel was able to help

tug the ship free, said the ship’s owner, SunStone.

“There have not been any injuries to any person onboard, no pollution of the environment and no breach of the hull,” SunStone said.

The ship, carrying 206 passengers and crew, ran aground on Monday afternoon in the Alpefjord, in the Northeast Greenland National Park.

The Joint Arctic Command said on Wednesday the ship had run aground on sand and mud, not rocks, and tried unsuccessfully to refloat during several

high tides. According to Australian media reports, three people on board have tested positive for Covid. Most of the tourists were from Australia, Britain, New Zealand, South Korea and the US. The cause of the accident was not immediately known.

There are few hydrological surveys of the area where the cruise ship ran aground, making it difficult to assess the sea depths.

Danish police have opened a preliminary investigation into the grounding to determine if there was any wrongdoing.

Putin, Kim gifted each other rifles; Russian leader to visit North Korea

Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong-un gifted each other rifles when they met in Far Eastern Russia, the Kremlin said yesterday, confirming the isolated Russian leader will visit North Korea as Moscow woos another pariah state, AFP reported from Moscow. The Russian president, who has sought to strengthen alliances with other headline leaders ostracised by the West, met with Kim on Wednesday amid speculation they would agree on an arms deal. Russia is eager for ammunition to continue fighting in Ukraine, while North Korea wants Moscow’s help to develop its missile programme. Putin “gave (Kim) a rifle from our production of the highest quality. In return, he also received a North Korean-made rifle,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. Putin also gifted the North Korean leader a “glove from a space suit that has been to space several times.” Kim, who seldom leaves his country, held talks with Putin at the Vostochny cosmodrome. The Kremlin said his visit to Russia’s Far East would last “a few more days.” Moscow also confirmed that Putin “gratefully accepted Kim’s invitation” to visit Pyongyang, which North Korean state television earlier announced.

Peskov said Moscow will first “quickly prepare” to send Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to Pyongyang, with his trip expected in October, before a Putin visit can be arranged.

It would be Putin’s second trip to the world’s most reclusive state, with which Russia shares a short border. He visited Pyongyang in July 2000 to meet Kim’s father Kim Jong-il, just months after being

elected to the presidency. More than two decades later, Russia is facing unprecedented isolation from the West over Moscow’s Ukraine offensive, with Putin seeking to boost Soviet-era alliances. In Pyongyang, North Korea’s Central News Agency praised Kim’s summit with Putin, saying the pair held “historic” talks. Kim’s visit to Russia is his first foreign trip since the Covid-19 pandemic broke out. Both countries are under a raft of sanctions, and Kim’s visit has sparked widespread concern over illicit arms agreements. After the summit, Putin told reporters that he saw “possibilities” for military co-operation. The head of South Korea’s ruling party slammed what he called “a devil’s deal” while Japan warned against any violations of UN bans on arms deals with the North after the Putin-Kim summit. “We are watching (the talks) with concerns including the possibility that it could lead to violations of the Security Council’s ban on all arms-related material transactions with North Korea,” Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa told reporters. After waving goodbye to Kim at the Vostochny cosmodrome, Putin told Russian television that Kim would oversee a display of Russian warships in the far eastern city of Vladivostok to “demonstrate the capabilities of the Pacific Fleet.” He also said Kim will visit a university in Vladivostok. Colleges in Russia’s Far East have historically accepted North Korean students. Kim crossed into Russia in his bulletproof train. Both leaders vowed on Wednesday to strengthen their relationship, heavily referencing the two countries’ 20th century ties.

Carrefour sticks price warnings on food to shame suppliers

Reuters
Paris

French supermarket chain Carrefour has slapped price warnings on products from Lindt chocolates to Lipton Ice Tea to pressure top consumer goods suppliers Nestle, PepsiCo and Unilever to reduce inflation ahead of much-anticipated contract talks.

Carrefour is putting stickers on products that have shrunk in size but cost more even after raw materials prices have eased, to rally consumer support as retailers prepare to face the world’s biggest brands in negotiations due to start soon and end by Oct. 15.

“Obviously, the aim is stigmatising these products is to be able to tell manufacturers to rethink their pricing policy,” Stefen Bom-

pais, director of client communications at Carrefour, said in an interview.

Carrefour CEO Alexandre Bompard, who also heads retail industry lobby group FDC, has repeatedly said consumer goods companies are not co-operating in efforts to cut the price of thousands of staples despite a fall in the cost of raw materials.

In this he is backed by Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire, who in June summoned 75 big retailers and consumer groups to his ministry urging them to cut prices. After a new round of meetings last month, Le Maire said Unilever, Nestle and PepsiCo were among companies not toeing the line on prices.

Since Monday, Carrefour has marked 26 products in its stores in France with labels reading, “This product has seen its volume or



A sign reading “Shrinkflation, this product has seen its litre decrease and the price charged by our supplier increase” as a customer shops at a Carrefour supermarket in Montesson near Paris, France.

weight fall and the effective price by the supplier rise.” For example, Carrefour said a bottle of sugar-free peach-flavoured Lipton Ice Tea, produced by PepsiCo, shrank to 1.25 litres (0.33 gallon) from 1.5

litres, resulting in a 40% effective increase in the price per litre.

Guigoz infant formula produced by Nestle went from 900 grams (31.75 oz) to 830 grams, while Unilever’s Viennetta ice-cream cake

shrank to 320 grams from 350 grams.

Lindt’s “chocolat au lait extra fin” was one of three of the Swiss chocolatier’s products named in the list.

“Lindt & Sprüngli increased its prices group wide on average by 9.3% in line with local cost structures,” a company spokesperson told Reuters.

“We have made a concerted effort to compensate for increased costs by increasing efficiency as much as possible. Therefore, we have only passed on the costs we could not absorb ourselves in the form of price increases to our customers.”

PepsiCo did not respond to a request for comment. Nestle and Unilever declined to comment.

Consumer groups say “shrinkflation” is a widespread practice, which supermarkets like Carre-

four are also guilty of in their private label products.

France, like other European countries, has been trying for months to ease consumer pain in the face of a surge in the cost of living, strong-arming big business to freeze or cut food and transport prices — with mixed results.

The shrinkflation warnings are in all French Carrefour stores, and will last until the targeted suppliers agree to price cuts, Bompais said. The retailer could extend warnings to other goods, but does not plan to extend the initiative to other countries.

Le Maire said last month consumer goods companies and retailers had agreed to bring forward annual price negotiations — which would normally have taken place next year — to September. The talks will result in price cuts from January, he said.

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GULF TIMES

Hungary seen as stumbling block for Ukraine’s EU prospects

EU chief Ursula von der Leyen set out a vision on Wednesday of an enlarged European Union that would include Ukraine – but Kyiv still has a way to go to get the green light for membership talks, with Hungary seen as a potential block. EU countries are due to decide in December whether to allow Ukraine to begin accession negotiations – a move that would require unanimous backing of all the 27 countries in the bloc.

European Commission President von der Leyen told the European Parliament that Ukraine had already made “great strides” since being designated a membership candidate last year, even as it fights to repel Russia’s invasion.

But candidate countries have to meet a string of political and economic criteria to begin membership talks – and must fulfil more stringent conditions on democracy, the rule of law and economic standards – before they can actually join the EU.

The European Commission said in June Kyiv had completed two of seven steps on the path to talks but needed to do more on court reform, fighting corruption and money laundering, curbing oligarchs, and improving the treatment of minorities. EU diplomats and officials say the bloc’s two heavyweights, France and Germany, will likely back the start of talks if the Commission gives a positive assessment. Its report is expected in October but may be delayed to November, officials say.

But Hungary will be a tougher nut for Kyiv to crack, diplomats and officials say, particularly when it comes to the treatment of ethnic Hungarians inside Ukraine.

“For Ukraine, the biggest obstacle is Hungary and the discussion around national minorities,” a senior EU diplomat said on condition of anonymity. “Politically, that will be the most important obstacle.”

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban cultivates warmer ties with Moscow than many of his EU peers and has repeatedly locked horns with Kyiv, including over the right of ethnic Hungarians to learn in their native language after Ukraine passed a 2017 law restricting the use of minority languages in schools.

Budapest has also clashed with Kyiv over the inclusion of Hungary’s OTP Bank on a Ukrainian blacklist of companies accused of financially supporting Russia’s war – an accusation that both Hungary and the bank deny.

Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto said in July that the next assessment of Ukraine’s accession process must include an examination of whether the rights of the Hungarian community were being upheld, according to a media report.

Hungarian officials did not respond to requests for comment for this story.

Getting the go-ahead for EU membership talks would be widely seen as a victory for Kyiv in its conflict with Moscow as it seeks not only to repel Russian forces but also to free itself from Russian geopolitical influence and bind itself into the West.

Membership talks usually take many years and would be particularly complex with Ukraine, as a relatively poor country still at war and with a population of more than 40mn that would upend the economic and political balances within the EU.

On Wednesday, von der Leyen outlined a vision of a European Union that would include not only Ukraine, but also Moldova and countries of the Western Balkans.

“In a world where size and weight matter, it is clearly in Europe’s strategic and security interests to complete our Union,” she said.

Some officials expect the Commission to give a positive recommendation on membership talks for Ukraine but possibly add conditions, for example to push for tighter asset declaration rules for public officials as part of a crackdown on corruption.

On Tuesday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky vetoed an asset declaration law passed by his parliament, demanding lawmakers redo it to ensure broader and quicker transparency. — Reuters

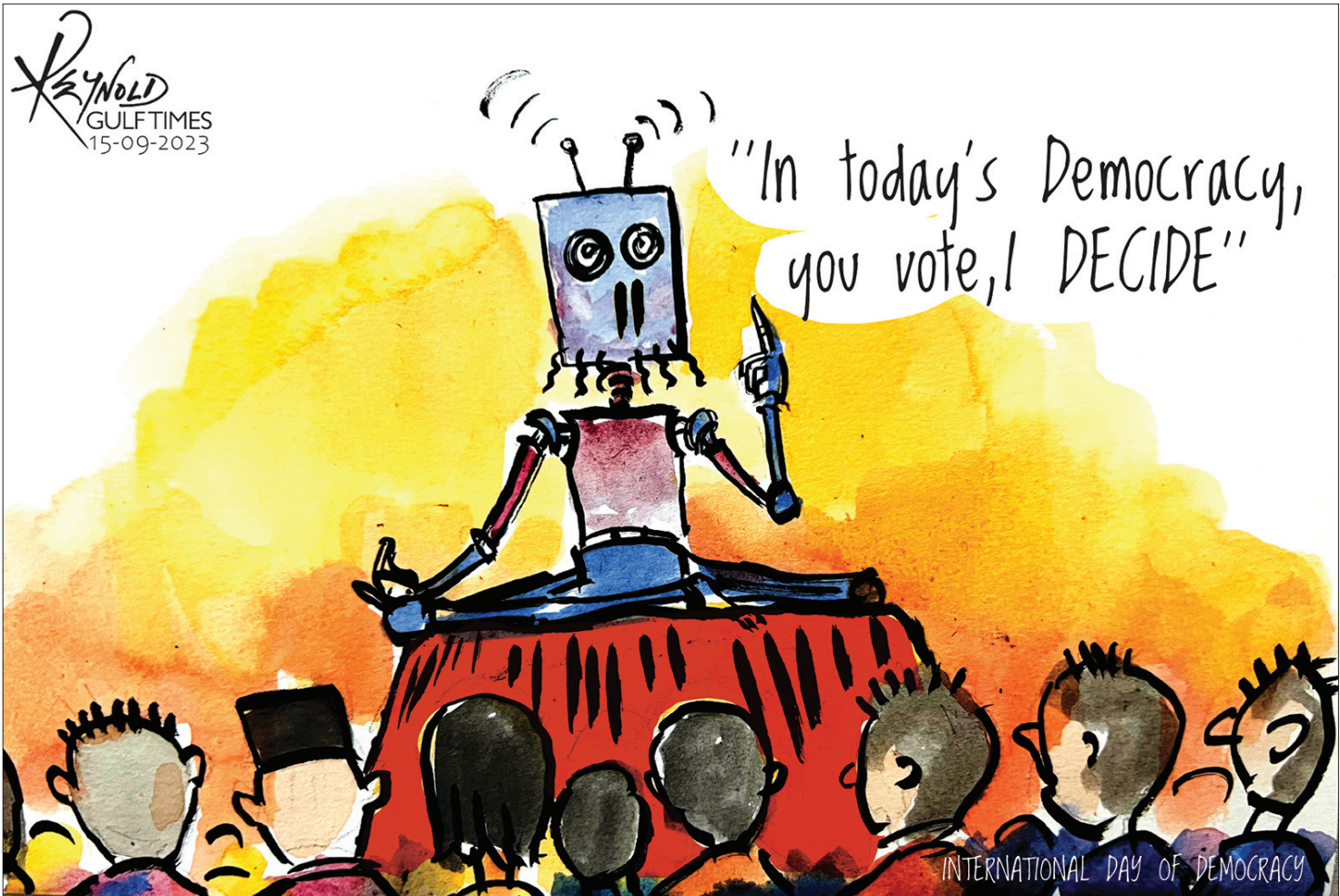
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Europe’s mining quest faces a hurdle: angry locals

By Catarina Demony, Pietro Lombardi and Simon Johnson
Covas Do Barroso (Portugal)

In Portugal’s northern Barroso region, Maria Loureiro weeps at the prospect of losing her family’s land to a mine that could become one of Europe’s biggest producers of lithium, used in electric vehicle batteries and other clean technologies.

“I don’t want them to take away what has been left to me by my parents and grandparents,” 55-year-old Loureiro said. “I don’t want the mine ... I will fight it to the death.”

She is among local activists in Portugal and elsewhere whose determination to halt mine developments – via protests, legal challenges or simply refusing to sell or rent the land needed – threatens to slow the European Union’s green transition.

Their opposition could also frustrate plans for the EU to reduce its dependence on China by producing more itself of the raw materials needed for technology like EVs.

With 60,000 tonnes of known reserves, Portugal is already Europe’s biggest producer of lithium, traditionally mined for ceramics. Barroso, whose lush mountain pastures are a Food and Agriculture Organisation heritage site, contains one of its richest deposits.

London-based Savannah Resources wants to build four open-pit mines there, producing enough lithium each year for around half a million EV batteries.

“All eyes are on a project like this,” Martin Jackson, head of battery raw materials at consultancy CRU, said of Savannah’s plans, which got a favourable assessment from Portugal’s APA environment agency in May.

“It is a key test for Portugal and Europe as a whole.”

The European Commission’s planned Critical Raw Materials Act would see the EU mine at least 10% of the lithium, cobalt and similar materials it uses by 2030 and refine and recycle more as global competition grows for those resources.

Michael Schmidt, senior analyst at Germany’s DERA mineral resources agency said current and planned mining projects could cover 25-35% of EU lithium demand by 2030, although meeting the 10% target for materials like nickel and cobalt would be harder.

Referring to the Barroso project and another in France, he said it would be “a disaster if either ... doesn’t succeed”.

“While Europe would be able to procure the minerals elsewhere, what would be the costs? Suppliers would be able to dictate prices and conditions,” Schmidt said.

Portugal’s lithium reserves have “an important role to play” in meeting the EU’s target, the environment ministry said, adding that new mines would bring money and jobs for local communities. In a statement, it also pledged “the highest social and environmental standards”.

But Barroso farmer Nelson Gomes, 47, part of the UDCB movement campaigning against mining expansion, is sceptical.

“They (governments) are trying to clean up cities by polluting villages,” he said.

Opposition to mining projects elsewhere in Europe has also focused on environmental damage.

Last month, climate activist Greta Thunberg protested against plans to develop a huge rare earth metals deposit at Kiruna, in Sweden’s far north, which the area’s indigenous Sami people have decried as “colonialism”.

“Are we to be sacrificed so that people in big cities can have electric cars?” Sami community representative Karin Kvarfordt Niia said.

State-owned miner LKAB’s spokesperson Anders Lindberg said it could minimise the effects on the Sami, who without new mines to hasten electrification would face threats from accelerated climate change to their traditional way of life.

Savannah described as a “major milestone” the APA’s green light in May for its Barroso project, subject to conditions regarding the removal of vegetation and use of river water.

Last week, APA also approved a new mine in nearby Montalegre for local operator Lusorecursos.

But with only 15 of 916 submissions in a public consultation supporting the project, Savannah faces a struggle to win over locals who have said they will fight it and the APA in court. The company, which aims to start production at Barroso in 2026, has earmarked \$40mn for community projects and stressed other benefits including a new road.

“It’s like they are telling us that they’re going to cut off one of our arms or legs and then offer one of the best doctors in the world to heal us,” said

UDCB’s Catarina Alves Scarrott.

Savannah expects to pay about €15mn (\$16mn) to secure the 840 hectares it needs, about 75% of which is traditional “baldios”, or common land.

It is offering an annual 335 euros per hectare to rent the baldios and €2-2.5 per square metre to buy private plots – at least twice their market value, according to Scarrott and Savannah. So far it has secured just 93 hectares.

“Most of the population ... will not accept any money because people know what is at stake: their home,” said Aida Fernandes, head of Barroso’s baldios association, which has rejected the company’s offer.

Savannah’s CEO Dale Ferguson told Reuters the land issue is “certainly something we need to resolve ... via dialogue” but that the process was going well.

Ferguson – who will be succeeded this month by Portuguese Emanuel Proenca – said a 30-year mining lease “safeguards Savannah’s access” to the necessary land, and that it “will use the mechanisms provided in Portuguese law but only when it is not possible to reach an agreement”.

The Portuguese government could authorise a compulsory purchase in the public interest but no such request has been received, the environment ministry said, noting that such an order would require the payment of fair compensation.

An annual camp-out against the mine organised by UDCB in August brought together locals and more than 200 activists from Portugal and countries including France and lithium-rich Chile.

Shouting “Barroso is not for sale” and “Savannah, get off our mountains”, they marched around the village of Covas with its rustic stone houses. Some carried animal skulls to highlight what they say are threats to the region’s fauna.

“This is a Europe-wide problem, as multinationals dig all over the continent,” said Teresa Camille, 54, whose group Stop Mine 03 is campaigning against plans for a mine in France that could supply lithium for around 700,000 EV batteries a year.

Gunilla Hogberg Bjorck, who represents opponents of southern Sweden’s Norra Karr rare earths project, held up since 2009 by concerns it could pollute drinking water, fears the EU’s push for mining independence will be a “catastrophe” for environmental law. “Politicians listen to those who shout loudest and have most money – and that’s the mining industry,” she said. — Reuters



People carrying a banner saying “No to the mine. Yes to life” take part in a anti-lithium protest in Covas do Barroso, Portugal, last month. (Reuters)

Living in harmony with our surroundings

I could understand “do not drink the water.” Or even “no swimming - polluted water.” But “do not touch the water”!? Something about that sign, and the reality it pointed to seemed deeply, irrevocably wrong. The fact that it was the nearest campground to Disneyland somehow made the whole situation even creepier.

The memory of that toxic waste dump campground remained with me for years. I gradually realised that the place was not just the perfect anti-campground, but also an image of anti-paradise: a place where the flowing water is too filthy to be used to purify ourselves before prayer, and where the natural plants and creatures are poisoned and dying.

The Qur'an tells us that the Paradise promised to believers is a garden with rivers flowing beneath. It is filled with fruits and flowers and growing things, offering nectar better than the finest earthly wine, and beauties and pleasures beyond earthly imagination. While we can never create such a perfect paradise on earth, Muslim architects, land-use planners and artists have sometimes used this image as a model for their efforts to preserve and celebrate the natural beauty of creation. Why not? The Qur'an tells us that all of nature is a sign of Allah, reflecting some of His mercy and magnificence.

Indeed, all of nature, in the Islamic view, is in a state of continuous worship. Trees and grasses, fish and animals, are all bending in a sweet, invisible breeze that wafts their worship back toward their Creator. Human beings can learn from this process and seek harmony with it by joining creation in worship of the Lord of all worlds and creation. Or else, they can obstinately rebel, imagining themselves cut off and self-suffi-

cient, and persist in transgressing the bounds that Allah has set for them until the inevitable payment comes due.

Islam insists that nature is respected and invites humans to learn from it and join it in harmonious coexistence.

The polluted-campground experience awakened me to the fact that something is very wrong with the way of life that produced such a place, and that Islam holds the keys to understanding the root causes and solutions of our current environmental dilemma. It convinced me that we Muslims should be putting Islamic environmental activism at the very top of our social and personal agenda. Our planet is in a state of environmental crisis, and as Muslims we are the custodians of Allah's last revelation, a revelation that gives humanity the knowledge and inspiration it needs to live in peace and harmony - in this life and the next.

The Qur'anic solution to the problem of environment is, in a word, holistic and comprehensive. Living a truly Islamic life requires avoiding the evils of extravagance and the insanity of materialism, and that we attain harmony with our surroundings and have compassion for other creatures.

It all begins, however, with the right orientation towards life: complete submission to Allah, The One Creator of all, and that this submission should be marked by pious awe, loving gratitude, inner peace, the struggle to do good, and the constant awareness that Allah is greater than any aspect of His creation. The Qur'anic orientation provides the key to restoring the lost balance between humans, nature, and The One who created both (i.e. Allah)

Materialists and atheists say that nothing is sacred, which implies that there are no limits



to what humans can do to gratify their material desires. Materialist culture, as my wise humanities professor once said, has two distinguishing characteristics: A tremendous drive to achieve more, and more control over the natural world, and an equally energetic drive to re-make and perfect human society.

Humans as trustees and keepers of the Earth

Islam teaches that we are the successors and trustees of Allah on this beautiful earth, not prisoners in a flawed world that needs to be radically re-made. As successors, our task is to preserve and appreciate the beauty and goodness we find, in grateful submission to its Creator. All of our planet's scientists are needed for a more obvious and simple task: Taking care of the planet Allah has given us, and taking care of our fellow human beings. This means finding ways to live, and live well, while expending far

less physical energy, and making far less obtrusive changes to our physical environment, than is customary today. It means finding ways to redistribute the planet's wealth more equitably, in the environment of zero economic growth or even negative growth that will surely be upon us in just a few short years, when oil production peaks and starts to decline.

“Allah loves not the wasters”

So, too, is the Islamic injunction: “Waste not!” Both the Qur'an and Sunnah make it absolutely clear that avoiding waste and prodigality is a matter of the highest importance. For example, Allah says (what means): “Do not be extravagant, for Allah does not love the wasteful” [Qur'an, 96:141].

And He Says (what means): “But waste not by excess, for Allah loves not the wasters” [Qur'an, 7:31]. And (what means): “Squander not in the manner of a spendthrift.

For wasters are the brothers of the Satan, and the Satan is to his Lord ungrateful” [Qur'an, 17:26-27]. Here we see that the root of wasting is ingratitude: those who respond to the marvellous beauty and bounty of Allah with gratitude and amazement are happy with a little, while the ungrateful one is never satisfied no matter how much he has, so he abandons himself to an ever-increasing cycle of consumption and waste. If humanity is to survive, it will have to move from the spiritual state of ingratitude to gratitude and give up its wasteful ways, as the Qur'an urges.

Conserving food and water

Along with this Qur'anic teaching, the *Sunnah* (prophetic tradition) provides us with the best example of living in a state of gratitude and avoiding waste. The Prophet Muhammad, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, was famous for his attention to conserving and avoiding waste. He was careful not to waste a crumb of food, licking

the last morsel from the utensils so that nothing would go to waste. He urged believers to avoid using more water than necessary when performing an act of worship like ablution. If we must be careful not to waste a drop of water in our ablutions, how much more necessary must it be to avoid waste in less-important activities.

Unfortunately the dominant way of life among well-off people everywhere, especially in the West, is marked by unbelievable waste and extravagance. We eat more than what is good for us, buy things we do not really need, throw away things that either still work or could be repaired, buy over-sized large vehicles and drive short distances instead of walking or bicycling, build larger houses than we need and heat and cool them far beyond minimal comfort standards, waste huge amounts of water maintaining herbicide-sprinkled lawns and golf courses, and so on.

This lunatic way of life, whose seductive pleasures and comforts disguise its utter madness, its complete lack of sustainability, was not developed by Muslims.

To be true to our religion, we must change our ways, and make an effort to conserve, educate, and build alternative institutions to mitigate and help cope with the coming economic and environmental meltdown, preserve and strengthen our Islamic communities and institutions, and think about how they can be of service in the struggle to help humanity exercise responsible stewardship over our corner of creation. **(This article was written by an American Muslim)**

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



Lessons from calamities

Have fear and consciousness of Allah, *subhanahu wa ta'ala*, and ponder over events that happen around you. Learn lessons from them and remember, for the intelligent one is he who remembers and takes admonition.

Earthquakes cause thousands of people to die, cause loss of wealth and properties, and force people to seek refuge outside of their dwellings, being without their home and their wealth, and without food and drink. They turned security into fear, richness into poverty, cause families to depart, and turn life into death. Without doubt, in it is a lesson for those who take lessons and a reminder for those who remember, so that they may return to their Lord and their Creator.

The Truthful, the Chosen one (*as-Saadiq al-Mustafa*), *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, has informed us that a multitude of earthquakes is a sign of the proximity of the Hour. He informed us that they would be many at the end of the time.

Ahmad relates in a **hadith** narrated by Abu Hurairah, *radhiallahu 'anhu*, that the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam* said, “The Hour will not happen until knowledge is taken out, time passes quickly, earthquakes increase in number, tribulations (*fitan*) appear, and *al-Harj* increases in number.” It was said, “What is *al-Harj*, O Rasoolullah?” He said, “*Al Qatl*, *al Qatl* (Killing)”.

A lot of what is mentioned in this hadith has already materialised.

Happenings of earthquakes and the like from other destructive and disastrous events are the greatest evidence of the astonishing power of Allah, *subhanahu wa ta'ala*. Earthquakes are from among the soldiers of Allah, *subhanahu wa ta'ala*, subjected to His order. He, *subhanahu wa ta'ala*, causes fear in the hearts of those whom He wills, teaches lessons whom He wills and punishes whom He wills.

“And none can know the Forces of your Lord, except He.” (74:31) “For to Allah belong the Forces of the heavens and the earth.” (48:7)

If the *Ummah* leaves Allah's *Shari'ah*, ignores the Deen of Allah and follows its enemies, Allah will subjugate it to His armies, which no one knows except He. From among these armies are the earthquakes.

“Such is the Seizure of your Lord when He seizes the towns while they are doing wrong. Verily, His Seizure is painful and severe.” (11:102)

“When We decide to destroy a town, We (first) send a definite order (to obey Allah and be righteous) to those among them who are given the good things of this



A general view of damage following a powerful earthquake in Amizmiz, Morocco, this week.



life. Then, they transgress therein, and thus the word (of torment) is justified against (them). Then we destroy it with complete destruction.” (17:16)

Allah, *subhanahu wa ta'ala*, with this earthquake makes clear to His servants a plain reality, that the kingdom of the heavens and the earth is in His Hands, *subhanahu wa ta'ala*, and that He is the Irresistible and Dominant over His servants.

Everything is in Allah's Hands, He has power over all things, and no one in the Heavens and the Earth can weaken Him, *subhanahu wa ta'ala*. Appearance of the earthquakes therefore points us to a different reality that may be absent in the minds of some people, those who are busy with this world and who are servants of materialism.

Earthquakes also remind us of the Day of Judgment. The Day when all of the earth will shake, and not only one part of it. Allah, *subhanahu wa ta'ala*, says,

“O mankind! Fear your Lord and be dutiful to Him! Verily, the earthquake of the Hour is a terrible thing. The Day you shall see it, every nursing mother will forget

her nursing, and every pregnant one shall drop her load, and you shall see mankind as in a drunken state. Yet they will not be drunken, but the Torment of Allah will be severe.” (22:1-2)

Look what is left after the earthquake from destroyed buildings and houses, deaths of thousands, and families seeking refuge outside of their homes. What state is that in which everyone is running away, caring about nothing? So what do you think of the Day of Judgment?

“That Day shall a man flee from his own brother, and from his mother and his father, and from his wife and his children.” (80:34-36)

“One the day (when the first blowing of the Trumpet is blown), the earth and the mountains will shake violently.” (79:6)

Allah warns His servants with this earthquake to learn a lesson and be admonished, and to be ready and prepare themselves for the Day of sorting out, the day of the great earthquake, that will shake all of the earth.

Allah has placed in this universe *Sunan*, fixed and manifest laws, neither do they change nor are they replaceable. He does not have any kinship with anyone, He is the

sole Creator and Ruler, and He will question and hold accountable everyone, including prophets and messengers. “Then surely, We shall question those to whom it (the Book) was sent and We shall question the Messengers.” (7:6)

From among the established *Sunan* of Allah is that He does not send punishment except due to sin and He does not remove it except after repentance. Allah says, “Whatever misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned.” (42:30)

Allah the Mighty and Majestic says: “Evil and mischief have appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of men have earned, that Allah may make them taste a part of that which they have done, in order that they may return (by repenting to Allah)” [30:41]

Every disaster and every calamity that befalls the servants is due to their sins and wrongdoing. So know, servants of Allah, what wrongdoing does to its doers.

What has taken Adam and Eve from the *Jannah* except wrongdoing, and what has drowned all of the people on the earth at the time of Nuh, to the point that water reached the peak of mountains, except wrongdoing?

Who is it who sent the furious violent wind upon the people of 'Aad, so that they were seen lying overthrown and destroyed, as if they were hollow trunks of palm-trees? Who is it who sent the awful cry upon the people of Thamud until it cut their hearts inside their bodies, and they all fell dead without exception? Who lifted the villages of the people of Lut till the angels heard barking of their dogs, then turned them upside down, and then rained upon them a rain of stones?

That is the immediate punishment for wrongdoing: drowning, fire, earthquakes, destruction, famine, raging wind... “And the torment of the hereafter is far more severe and more lasting.” (20:127)

Do we not take admonition and lesson? Allah says, “Did We not destroy the ancients? So shall We make the later generations to follow them. Thus do We deal with the Mujrimoon (criminals, disbelievers, sinners.). Woe that Day to the deniers (of the Day of Resurrection)!” [77:16-19]

Earthquakes are just a warning from Allah, *subhanahu wa ta'ala* – not only to the people of one particular quake-hit country alone, but rather to the people in general, in all lands – that they may return to their Lord and their Deen. Otherwise a punishment will come upon them. Allah says, “So We seized each of them for his sins.” (29:40)

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

Islamic solution to eco-problems

Islam expresses great concern for the environment. A number of verses in the Qur'an and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, have addressed this issue. Islam's solution to environmental problems lies in man's adaptation of its guidance. Allah has stated that He made all the material objects on earth for man's use, not for his abuse.

Allah Almighty has not prevented humankind from enjoying a luxurious standard of living, but this should not be maintained by damaging and abusing natural resources. This is clearly stated in a number of verses in the Qur'an. Allah says (what means): “But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and (yet), do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corruptors.” [Qur'an 28:77]

The Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, contain instructions for Muslims to preserve the environment, which includes not cutting down trees unnecessarily. In this respect, Prophet Muhammad, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, pointed out that there are benefits in planting trees, which will last until the Day of Judgment. This is illustrated in the saying of the Noble Prophet: “If the Hour is imminent and anyone of you has a palm shoot (to plant) in his hand and is able to plant it before the Hour strikes, then he should do so and he will be rewarded for that action.”

Allah has ordained severe punishments for those who damage and abuse natural resources. He says (what means): “Eat and drink from the provision of Allah, and do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption!” [Qur'an 2:60]

“Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by (reason of) what the hands of people have earned, so He (i.e. Allah) may let them taste part of (the consequences of) what they have done that perhaps they will return (to righteousness).” [Qur'an 30:41]

Ibn Mas'ood, *radhiallahu 'anhu*, reports, “While we were on a journey with Allah's Messenger he went a short distance from where we had encamped. There we saw a small bird with two of its chicks and caught them. The bird was fluttering when the Prophet came back, so he asked, ‘Who has distressed it by taking its chicks?’ Then he asked us to return the chicks. There we also saw an anthill

and burnt it out. When the Prophet saw that, he asked, ‘Who has burnt it?’ When we informed him that we had done it, he said, ‘Only the Lord of fire has the right to punish with fire!’”

Allah says in the Qur'an (what means): “And there is no creature on (or within) the earth or a bird that flies with its wings except that they are nations (communities) like you.” [Qur'an 6:38]

We infer from the Prophet's statement and this Qur'anic verse that all living things are partners to man in existence and they deserve our respect. We must be merciful toward animals and strive to ensure the preservation of different species.

Islam forbids wasting water and using it without benefit. The preservation of water for the nourishment of humankind, animal life, bird life and vegetation is a practice that gains Allah's pleasure.

In his article *Islam and the Environment*, Arafat El Ashi, director of the Muslim World League in

Islam forbids wasting water and using it without benefit. The preservation of water for the nourishment of humankind, animal life, bird life and vegetation is a practice that gains Allah's pleasure

Canada, [www.al-muslim.org] writes, “Human life is sacred in the sight of Islam. No one is permitted to take the life of another person except as life-for-life.”

Under Islam, El Ashi states, “It [is] incumbent on every Muslim to contribute his/her share in improving greenery. Muslims should be active in growing more trees for the benefit of all people.” Even during battle, Muslims are required to avoid cutting down trees that are useful to people.

Humankind's stewardship of the earth entails a profound responsibility. Other living species, as mentioned above, are also considered by Allah to be “communities”. Creation itself, in its boundless diversity and complexity, may be thought of as a vast universe of “signs” of Allah's Power, Wisdom, Beneficence and Majesty. The responsibility of humankind is to keep Allah's creation undistorted. The environment is a trust presented by Allah to humankind and its abuse is a misuse of Allah's trust.

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

Mowasalat kiosk launched at Villaggio Mall



Mowasalat (Karwa) yesterday opened its permanent kiosk at Villaggio Mall. "Through this dedicated kiosk, we aim to establish direct and engaging connections with the public, offering valuable insights into our Karwa Public Transport, Karwa Taxi, Doha Limousine and Karwa Academy services," a statement said.

Call for breaking barriers linked to people with disabilities

Awsaj Academy alumna Maryam al-Ibrahim has stressed that inclusion and acceptance are not just ideals, but paths to empowerment

A graduate of Qatar Foundation's (QF) Awsaj Academy has used her participation in the second National Forum for Human Rights to encourage the audience to think about how societies can value the potential of people with disabilities.

Speaking at the forum, Mariam al-Ibrahim conveyed a message of resilience, inclusivity, power of self-belief, and the limitless potential within each person. "I've strived to demonstrate that my disability should not be a hindrance to participation and inspiring others with unique abilities," she said.

"Our presence at such events holds significant importance. It's imperative to focus not on the disability itself but on the individual – granting them the opportunity to speak and express themselves and their experiences."

Al-Ibrahim appealed for recognition of the skills and potential possessed by people with different abilities.

She said that her disability should not be viewed as an obstacle. "It is a reminder that my strength goes beyond what meets the eye. I may have physical limitations, but within, I possess the same human spirit and potential as anyone else, ready to serve and contribute to society."

At the forum, al-Ibrahim emphasised the importance of spreading awareness about people with disabilities and stressed on the need to provide opportunities for these individuals. She noted that everyone, regardless of their abilities, possesses ambitions and goals that need support in order to be achieved.

Her journey was not without its challenges, particularly in her early years, when finding an inclusive school was a daunting task. How-



Mariam al-Ibrahim has conveyed a message of resilience, inclusivity, power of self-belief, and the limitless potential within each person.

ever, her life took a transformative turn when her mother enrolled her in Awsaj Academy at the age of six.

Al-Ibrahim's journey at Awsaj Academy served as proof of her resilience and unwavering self-confidence.

At the forum, al-Ibrahim revealed that Awsaj Academy – which is part of QF's Pre-University Education – transcends its role as an educational institution, and became where she discovered her inner strength and potential. Her involvement in events like Doha Debates allowed her to champion inclusivity and acceptance, reshaping her disability into a source of strength, and not a limitation.

Al-Ibrahim expressed her appreciation for the school, saying: "I am eternally grateful for this

school, which embraces inclusivity and welcomes all without discrimination." She also recognised the invaluable support and guidance provided by her teachers and her mother, both of whom played crucial roles in shaping her journey.

Al-Ibrahim has demonstrated how individuals with disabilities can overcome challenges and make a profound impact on the world.

"I consistently encourage my friends with special needs to take pride in who they are, including their disability and everything that defines them. It's these distinctive qualities that make them unique and extraordinary. Doing so can greatly enhance their prospects for success and integration within our community."



Thailand showcases Halal innovation at seminar in Qatar

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

A seminar, organised by the Thailand embassy in Doha yesterday, provided in-depth insights into Halal practices and technological innovation, highlighting the pioneering work of the Halal Science Centre (HSC) at Chulalongkorn University.

The event, titled "Thailand's Shariah-Compliant Advancement," shed light on the importance of science, technology, and ground-breaking developments in Halal authentication.

Speaking at the event, Thai ambassador Sira Swangsilpa said the seminar carries a significant weight for both Qatar and Thailand, marking the start of a series of initiatives aimed at disseminating Thailand's exemplary practices and facilitating networking opportunities with diverse institutions and diplomatic entities in Qatar.

"This initiative seeks to unlock untapped collaborative potential between Qatar and Thailand, simultaneously offering prospects for trilateral co-operation with your respective countries," he told attendees, which included a number of ambassadors and diplomats from different embassies in the country.

Beyond Thailand's renowned cultural diversity and tourist destinations, the envoy underlined the vibrant Islamic culture ingrained in Thai society with around 7mn Muslims, constituting 10% of its population.

He noted that this community played a vital role in Thai society for centuries, dating back to the 17th century when Arab and Persian merchants served as advisers in the Royal Court.

"In contemporary times, the Royal Thai government has made significant strides to accommodate the religious values of this cherished population, fostering initiatives to ensure top-notch services and spiritual consumer protection for Muslims," Swangsilpa said.

Established in 2004 under Thailand's leading university, he added that HSC is recognised as the world's first Halal Science Institution and operates as a state-of-the-art laboratory utilising advanced scientific methodologies to detect forbidden components and ensure the production of Halal food and services.

In addition, Swangsilpa said HSC offers extensive training for food technology profession-



(From left) Dr Winai Dahlan, Dr Anat Denyingyhot, and Thai ambassador Sira Swangsilpa at the seminar, held in Doha yesterday. PICTURES: Joey Aguilar

als and has received recognition and awards for science and innovation, both domestically and internationally.

In his presentation, Associate Prof Dr Winai Dahlan, founding director of HSC and vice chairman of the Central Islamic Council of Thailand, underlined Thailand's strategies on Halal integrity with science and technology.

Citing a scandal involving intricate Haram contamination in Halal food within a prominent Muslim nation like Indonesia, he stressed that Thailand's National Economic and Social Development Council recognised the critical role of science and technology in the production and certification of Halal food. This, he added, also extends to safeguarding the interests of Muslim consumers, a focus that had previously been advanced at the Faculty of Allied Health and Sciences, Chulalongkorn University.

Following Dr Dahlan's keynote address, Dr Anat Denyingyhot, assistant director at HSC, conducted a live demonstration of the Rapid Test Kit for contaminating non-Halal animals in Halal food products. Highlighting the key role that the Halal Forensic Laboratory plays, he explored how Halal sciences ensure consumer protection through a combination of science and Shariah principles.

Dr Denyingyhot said that such innovation, which was awarded a gold medal at the 34th International Invention, Innovation & Technology Exhibition (ITEX 2023) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in May this year, showcased the centre's commitment to ensuring the highest Halal certification standards.

The seminar also highlight-



Dr Anat Denyingyhot conducts a demo of the Rapid Test Kit.

ed Thailand's National Strategy Framework, which aims to strengthen the economy and promote sustainable investments that address food security, climate change, and demographic shifts.

According to Swangsilpa, the emphasis on balanced development and environmental responsibility aligns with Qatar's National Vision 2030, creating potential avenues for collaboration.

"I firmly believe that this seminar aligns seamlessly with the Qatar National Vision 2030, which revolves around four interconnected pillars of development: Human, Social, Economic and Environmental. It sets a clear roadmap for the country's future while addressing societal needs and maintaining a delicate balance between modernisation and tradition preservation.

"This alignment is a perfect match with Thailand's national development goals and several national agendas from your respective countries. By combining our countries' development objective, we can chart a promising path to collaboration and a brighter future," the envoy said.

NCSA participates in QU Career Fair

The National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) concluded yesterday, its participation in the Qatar University (QU) Career Fair. The fair attracted a large turnout of students. The participation of NCSA in the four-day event comes with its aim of introducing students to training and job opportunities available at the agency. The NCSA pavilion provided advice and guidance to students and graduates as well as answering professional and technical inquiries. Latifa al-Ameri, director of support services at NCSA, added that the agency aims to attract distinguished students and graduates, to train and hire them in order to localise national competencies. The Agency emphasises its continuous support for students and graduates through its constant participation in career fairs, as attracting national cadres is considered one of its top priorities, a statement added.

