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Qatar completes genome sequencing of 30,000 citizens

● **Database to help revolutionise precision medicine healthcare**

QNA
Doha

Director of the Qatar Genome Programme (QGP) Dr Said Ismail has revealed that QGP has conducted genome sequencing for 30,000 citizens and 3,000 Arab residents, with the objective of creating the first comprehensive Qatari reference genome.

QGP is an affiliate of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development.

In special remarks to Qatar News Agency (QNA), Dr Ismail said the genome term is used to describe a combination of genes that exist in human body, as a genome can be considered a very detailed code that provides accurate information about individuals, such as human appearance and how his body functions, as well as the genetic mutations he/she carries making him/her susceptible to certain diseases.

He outlined that the genome science



is meant for studying all genes that form the organism giving the opportunity to predict diseases and accurately diagnose and treat them individually, adding that when precision healthcare is used, the first step in identifying individuals' genome sequencing is to figure out the arrangement of over 3bn base pairs that constitute together the human genome, while differences in those base pairs are considered vital in explaining variation between individuals.

The genomic information is one of the most important components of precision healthcare, which supports the transition from traditional healthcare approaches to customised personal care, underlin-



ing that Qatar witnesses the real application of the precision healthcare on the ground, especially in pharmacogenomics and oncology dedicated to the diagnosis, treatment and study of cancer, whether through utilising genome sequencing to identify persons who are most susceptible to cancer, early detection or with the aim of choosing the most appropriate cures for cancer for a certain individual to be customised based on his/her genetic structure, Dr Ismail said.

Precision medicine is being applied in Qatar to attain a more proficient diagnosis of rare diseases that are commonly caused by genetic mutations, he added.

Director of the Qatar Genome Pro-

gramme pointed out that any mature person (18-year-old at least) whether he or she is a citizen or a resident living in Qatar for a period not less than 15 years can have his/her genomic sequencing through engaging in the study carried out by Qatar Biobank, member of Qatar Foundation, by filling the participation form.

He noted that the first step towards benefiting from precision healthcare is to identify their genome sequencing and this is what Qatar Biobank and QGP has been focusing on for the five past years, which has been tirelessly working on not only on behalf of Qatar, but for the region and the Arab world as well, to add the information that is not available in the global genome database.

The key components of Qatari referential genome are identified and there is best understanding of genetic risk factors of Qatari and Arab inhabitants which play a tremendous role in diagnosing some diseases and deal with them at the early stages, Dr Said Ismail said.

Over 50% of rare diseases affect children and 30% of them die before the age of five due to lack of diagnosis and cure options, while genome medicine is a fundamental factor in detecting causes of rare diseases with the subsequent description

of their appropriate cure in the future, he outlined.

Dr Said Ismail indicated that precision healthcare goes beyond the realm of traditional concept of medicine that cures any emerging diseases, whose significance is predicated on predicting the protection and cure, outlining that the major objective of precision healthcare is to promote and maintain health to the greatest extent possible.

He pointed out that the most applied medical treatments and healthcare protocols have been precisely designed for all people without focusing on individual needs, explaining that such an approach with the benefits it provides is not entirely beneficial for all people, since there are many factors that affect the individual's health, including the place they live in, genes, medical history of family, lifestyles, and environment.

In concluding his remarks, Dr Said Ismail affirmed that precision healthcare reimagines the medicine and focuses on prediction of diseases with accurate prevention and cure, adding that it aspires to optimise well-being and health through pursuing strategies that are dedicated to each individual and identifying the most efficient cures.

Qatar highlights role of stable families

Qatar stressed the importance of concerted international efforts in supporting established family policies, stressing that it places maintaining family cohesion at the top of its crucial priorities, especially at a time when the family system faces many challenges. HE the Minister of Social Development and Family Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad voiced pride to represent the State of Qatar at the 5th Budapest Demographic Summit, praising the Hungarian initiative in pursuit of the desired goal of creating healthy, safe and productive societies. **Page 2**

Mali, Niger, Burkina sign security pact

Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, three West African Sahel nations ruled by military juntas, signed a security pact yesterday promising to come to the aid of each other in case of any rebellion or external aggression. The latest coup in Niger drove a further wedge between the three and countries of the regional bloc, the Economic Community of West African States. **Page 6**

Iran defends move to bar N-inspectors

Iran yesterday defended its move to bar some UN nuclear inspectors, and accused the United States, Britain, France and Germany of politicising the IAEA watchdog, state media reported. "Unfortunately, despite Iran's positive, constructive and continuous interaction with the agency, the three European countries and the United States abused the (IAEA's) Board of Governors for their own political purposes."

EU to address Italy island migrant surge

The European Union said yesterday that its top official Ursula von der Leyen will head for the Italian island of Lampedusa, after Rome called on Brussels for help after a surge in migrant arrivals. The president of the European Commission, the EU's executive arm, will visit the island today.

'Moon' artwork depicts Palestinian crisis



UK artist Luke Jerram's touring artwork entitled 'the Museum of the Moon' is displayed at the Aida camp for Palestinian refugees near Bethlehem in the occupied West Bank, next to Israel's controversial separation barrier, yesterday.

New medicine offers fresh hope for cancer patients

In a boost for the treatment of patients with cancer in Qatar, Hamad Medical Corporation's National Center for Cancer Care and Research (NCCCR) is set to use a new targeted breast cancer medicine.

Senior Consultant in Hematology and Oncology, Chairperson of Medical Oncology and Palliative Care Medicine Dr Salha Bujassoum al-Bader, who is also Clinical Lead of Breast Cancer at NCCCR, and Director of Cancer Genetics said: "Breast cancer is the most common cancer and is one of the leading causes of cancer-related deaths worldwide."

"The new cancer medicine, ENHERTU, will provide an innovative treatment option for patients with HER2-positive metastatic breast cancer, which can be used earlier in the treatment plan to delay disease progression. This is an important paradigm-shifting medicine for treating aggressive breast cancer."

She explained that through rigorous clinical trials, ENHERTU has demonstrated exceptional efficacy, offering new avenues of treatment for patients who may have exhausted conventional options.

The introduction of ENHERTU underscores the unwavering commitment of Qatar's healthcare sector to delivering patient-centric healthcare. By precisely targeting and minimising side effects, ENHERTU aims to alleviate breast cancer's physical and emotional burdens, supporting patients and their families on their treatment journey.

Dr al-Bader was the opening expert speaker at the ENHERTU Gulf Launch event, which was hosted at the Doha Fairmont Hotel on Friday. The event attracted leading medical professionals from across the Gulf region, all working together to advance breast cancer care for patients. **(QNA)**

Doha a major regional player, conference told

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

The centres of gravity in the region have changed dramatically over the decades with the older ones yielding way to new players, noted the dean of Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q) at the closing ceremony of the inaugural Hiwaraat Conference, "The Invasion of Iraq: Regional Reflections".

"What has happened in the last several decades in the region is that the centres of gravity in the region have been evolving and changing. In the 1950s, 60s and 70s they used to be Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus among others but now they are Doha, Abu Dhabi and Riyadh," said, Dr Safwan Masri, dean of GU-Q at the closing cere-

mony of the conference yesterday. Dr Masri noted that several transnational issues were taken up in the conference and intensely discussed.

"The dialogue doesn't end here but begins now and starts all over. The objective of the conference is to provide a platform for these kind of conversations which otherwise may not take place. So the conference has made conversations such as these happen effectively and successfully," he explained.

He noted that the conference has been successful because it could connect with one another and connect the ideas very well. According to the dean what happened in Iraq is important not only for Iraq but for the region and the world at large.

Bridging global and regional perspectives, the GU-Q conference marked the 2003 invasion of Iraq



Dr Safwan Masri speaking at the concluding session of the conference.

with reflections on the prospects of shaping a better future for the country, its society, and its youth.

The conference was convened by Dr Masri in collaboration with the Centre for International and Regional Studies (CIRS) at GU-Q. Conceived as a platform for diverse voices and community engagement on shared global challenges, the conference encouraged collective and individual perspectives on lessons learned over the past two decades.

Current and former Iraqi ministers, officials, and government advisers, senior diplomats, journalists, authors, and academics from the region, joined international experts in sharing first-hand experience and knowledge, spanning historical retrospectives and analyses of Iraq's progress and the complex challenges ahead. **To Page 12**



Environment minister meets Wali of Algerian province of El Bayadh



HE the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Sheikh Dr Faleh bin Nasser bin Ahmed bin Ali al-Thani met with Wali of El Bayadh province in Algeria Belaribi Nouredine, during his visit to Algeria. During the meeting, which was attended by Qatar's ambassador in Algiers Abdulaziz Ali al-Naama, the Wali of El Bayadh praised the co-operation between the two brotherly countries in protecting and breeding endangered birds and animals. In the meantime, HE the Minister of Environment and Climate Change paid an inspection visit to the Qatari centre for the breeding of Houbara in El Bayadh to learn about the latest developments in the final stages of the project established by the ministry to preserve wildlife in all its forms. Through its centres in a number of countries, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change aims at breeding animals and birds threatened with extinction in its reserves and in internal and external production centres. **(QNA)**



Amir congratulates presidents of Mexico, Nicaragua

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani and HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent cables of congratulations to Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador and Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega Saavedra on the anniversaries of their countries' independence days. **(QNA)**

Amir sends greetings to governor-general of Papua New Guinea

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent cables of congratulations to Governor-General of Papua New Guinea Sir Bob Dadae on the anniversary of his country's independence day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a similar cable of congratulations to Prime Minister James Marabe. **(QNA)**

Qatar stresses on supporting established family policies to achieve societal security

QNA
Budapest

Qatar has stressed the importance of concerted international efforts in supporting established family policies, stressing that it places maintaining family cohesion at the top of its crucial priorities, especially at a time when the family system faces many challenges.

In a statement during her participation in a ministerial discussion session held on the sidelines of the 5th Budapest Demographic Summit, HE the Minister of Social Development and Family Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad voiced pride to represent Qatar at the summit, praising the Hungarian initiative in pursuit of the desired goal of creating healthy, safe and productive societies.

She stressed Qatar's genuine keenness to preserve the family



HE the Minister of Social Development and Family Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad expressed pride to represent Qatar at the Budapest summit, praising the Hungarian initiative in pursuit of the desired goal of creating healthy, safe and productive societies.

system in the country, which was embodied in the enactment of various state laws regarding the family as a social institution, in order to increase its support and organisation, noting that the first official family policies were approved in the 1960s.

Those laws focused on imple-

menting government housing laws, providing housing loans, and policies for working mothers to ensure families are encouraged to engage in the institution of marriage, childbirth, and stability, she explained. HE al-Misnad also highlighted Qatar's efforts to enable working mothers to obtain

the opportunities of working and raising a family at the same time.

She pointed out that the keen attention of the wise leadership in Qatar to the family was strengthened in 2021 through the establishment of the Ministry of Social Development and Family, with the aim of strengthening the

family institution at the national, regional and international levels.

The participants in the 5th Budapest Demographic Summit, including heads of states and governments and representatives of relevant international organisations, sought to contribute to proposing and supporting estab-

lished family policies as the most important nucleus of all societal and national security frameworks and strategies for countries towards negative behavioural phenomena, especially organised crime, terrorism, instability, loss of national identity, and other current challenges.



Qatar highlights challenges posed by armed conflicts, natural disasters

QNA
New York

Qatar has highlighted the various, mounting, and unprecedented challenges facing the world, arising from armed conflicts and natural disasters such as climate change, earthquakes, floods, and coronavirus which spawn full dimensional catastrophic humanitarian crises in various world territories, pointing to the tremendous amount of humanitarian needs the international community must respond to.

This came in a statement delivered by HE the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the UN Sheikhha Alya Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani before the Security Council's open debate on advancing public-private humanitarian partnerships within the framework of the item: Maintenance of international peace and security at the UN headquarters in New York.

HE Sheikhha Alya touched on Qatar's role in providing humanitarian assistance to those affected by disasters and crises, as well as development assistance to consolidate peace, stability and achieve sustainable development, especially in developed countries, least developed countries, countries affected by crises and countries that are emerging from crises, in consistent with its role as a responsible and active member of the international community.

She pointed out that, in the past week, Qatar was the first country that airlifted hundreds of tonnes of urgent humanitarian aid to flood-affected Libya, and a few days before that, it sent aid the earthquake victims in Morocco. Relief shipments were sent to the people in Sudan this year, as well as support was provided to quake-hit people in Syria and Türkiye.

She said that Qatar exerted tremendous efforts during the past two years to improve the humani-



HE Sheikhha Alya Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani

tarian situations in Afghanistan. This includes the rapid establishment of air bridges to transport tens of thousands of Afghan people and foreign nationals through Doha and ensuring their hosting, and providing special education opportunities for Afghan girls, as well as rehabilitating the airport in

Kabul to facilitate the movement of persons and humanitarian assistance.

HE Sheikhha Alya affirmed that in light of countering a multitude of global challenges, the joint responsibility for the UN and member states is to explore and take advantage of all available means to

bridge the gap in the level of humanitarian response and strengthen its efficiency. Therefore, the inherent transformative abilities of private sector cannot be reduced since private sector is one of the fundamental stakeholders to provide urgent humanitarian assistance or development assistance, in addition to advancing the communities that face disasters, crises and social, economic, and environmental challenges.

She asserted that Qatar realised the added benefit private sector can provide in multiple fields, mainly the humanitarian and development fields, hence the State has given priority to partnerships with this sector at the national level and in many fields, such as co-operation in projects that contribute to reducing carbon emissions and subsequently mitigate climate crisis.

With respect to the contribution of private sector, she outlined that Qatar has contributed to numer-

ous relief campaigns, such as Al Fakhroora campaign for Gaza Strip and engaged with the civil society and private sector in providing financial contribution, adding that trade institutions have much to offer alongside funds, for instance technical and logistical expertise in the areas of digital and cutting-edge technology, communications, data analysis and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

HE Sheikhha Alya highlighted the partnership between the international organisation and private sector. In recognition of this, Qatar's support for the Innovation Unit of the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs was part of the contribution agreement signed by the two parties this year. Qatar announced its generous multi-year and non-earmarked support totalling \$500mn for core resources to the UN bodies and agencies, that contribute to the UN efforts, including partnership with private sector.

In brief

QSFA organises three Padel tournaments in September

Qatar Sports For All Federation (QSFA) announced the organisation of three padel tournaments in Al Khor courts in co-operation with Al Thakkira Youth Center. In a statement, QSFA said that the three-day tournament will be from Sept 28 to 30. QSFA Director of Events and Activities Abdullah al-Dosari explained that the first tournament will be for the age group from 15 to 18 years, the second is open to the age group from 18 to 39 years, and the third will be dedicated for youth centres and sports clubs for the same age group. Al-Dosari pointed out that registration is currently open for the three tournaments through the Sports for All Federation application. The schedule of competitions, the days allocated for the tournament, and the date of the final match will be determined at a later time, he added. **(QNA)**

Hashish seized

The Air Cargo Customs Department has foiled an attempt to smuggle around 12.90kg of hashish, hidden inside wooden plates, the General Authority of Customs said in a post on its official X account.

Qatar underscores protecting rights of elderly

Qatar has affirmed its commitment to building a strong, cohesive family that represents a basic pillar for protecting and promoting the rights of all its members, especially the elderly, out of its conviction that the family is the natural environment for the elderly to enjoy their rights and to live with dignity.

Third Secretary in the Human Rights Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Saud Abdullah al-Hanzab said during the interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert, within the UN Human Rights Council's 54th session in Geneva, that the elderly enjoy a high status in Qatar, and concern for them in Qatari society is based on basic foundations, the most important of which are re-



ligious duty and societal cultural values that require reverence, respect and protection of the elderly.

He highlighted that Qatar has worked to promote and protect the rights of the elderly by taking various legislative, policy and ex-

ecutive measures.

The elderly enjoy a number of specialised services that suit their needs and priorities, which are provided to them through many public and private institutions, such as the National Committee for the Affairs of Women, Children, the Elderly, and Persons with Disabilities and the Center for Empowerment and Care of the Elderly (Ihsan), he added.

Al-Hanzab explained that these services include: specialised healthcare, legal protection, social security, housing, and other services that aim to provide economic, psychological, health and physical security for them, enable them to participate effectively and positively in development, and utilise their expertise in economic and social construction. **(QNA)**

Envoy hails Qatar's support to Libyan people



Qatar's ambassador in Tripoli Khalid Mohamed bin Zabin al-Dosari has asserted that Qatar's support for Libya's flood victims stems from its firm positions and a continuation of its established approach of solidarity and support for brothers and friends in various circumstances.

In remarks to QNA, the ambassador said that under the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, Qatar operated an air bridge to support the brothers in Libya, carrying food and medical aid and a field hospital with more than 160 beds presented by the Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS), Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD) and other entities in the state.

He explained that this continued Qatari assistance to the brotherly Libyan people confirms the ongoing support of the Qatari leadership, government and people, to the brothers to Libya.

Ambassador al-Dosari noted that Qatar has always been standing by Libya in all crises, and supporting it in various circumstances, stressing the depth of the fraternal relations binding the two countries and the two brotherly peoples. (QNA)



Ooredoo upgrades speed to up to 50Gbps with cutting-edge solution

Ooredoo has announced that it is the first operator in the world to deploy 50GPON connectivity, the 50Gbps-capable fibre-based access connection for consumers.

50GPON is an innovative technology, officially adopted as the evolution standard after 10GPON by the ITU standardisation body, that enables super-fast connectivity of up to 50Gbps on a single connection, providing an unprecedented network experience to users across Qatar via Ooredoo's fibre network.

The new technology enables consumers to use high-bandwidth latency-sensitive applications such as 8K-interactive video applications, online collaboration and co-ordination solutions, 3D cloud design, and high-graphic/high-quality AI applications, among others.



Ooredoo Qatar CEO Sheikh Ali bin Jabor al-Thani.

Ooredoo Qatar CEO Sheikh Ali bin Jabor al-Thani said: "We're proud to be the first operator globally capable of deploying such powerful technology, which aligns perfectly with our overarching aim of upgrading our customers'

worlds. We have long had a strategic commitment to partnering with global leaders in technology and innovation, enabling us to leverage both our expertise and experience and our partners' capabilities.

"This latest launch is an excellent example of the benefits we, and our customers, enjoy as a result of such partnerships. We look forward to further enhancing our offering as technology develops ever further in the years to come."

Ooredoo's 50GPON technology can meet the bandwidth requirements of both consumers and enterprises.

Initial deployment will be for B2B customers and areas that require high-speed connectivity with roll-out to consumers for 8K content and AR/VR gaming, as an example, to follow.

QU YSC launches new round of 'Science in Sports' programme

Coinciding with the new academic year, the Qatar University (QU) Young Scientists Centre (YSC) launched the 10th cycle of the 'Science in Sports' programme for male sophomore and junior school students. The YSC offers many specialised scientific and research programmes in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) directed at school students of all academic levels.

The programme includes six secondary schools from areas inside and outside Doha. It offered students practical workshops on various sport topics, with a focus on sport material science and its impact on performance, sport equipment design, and how to develop sport stadiums.

Upon completion of the scientific workshops, the students continue their journey in the programme by developing sport innovations to solve problems and difficulties facing players.

It will then be presented in a final competition that the YSC will hold in November. Prof Noora al-



The YSC offers many specialised scientific and research programmes in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), directed at school students of all academic levels.

Thani, director of the YSC, said: "We aim through this programme to expand students' awareness of new sciences and fields, and seek to create a spirit of challenge to come up with innovations and

mathematical solutions in a competitive scientific environment."

She thanked YSC's partners Unesco - Doha Office and the Qatar National Commission for Education, Culture and Science.



Kosovo PM Albin Kurti honours students from Qatar Charity's Qatar Training Centre.

Kosovo PM lauds Qatar Charity's training centre

Prime Minister of Kosovo, Albin Kurti, honoured 13 students from Qatar Charity's training centre on their winning distinguished positions in the International Science, Technology and Mathematics "STEM" Olympiad held in Paris.

The event was held during the visit of the Kosovo PM to the centre's headquarters in the capital, Pristina, in the presence of Abdulaziz El sehli, Charge d'Affairs of the embassy of Qatar in Albania and Kosovo; Nawaf al-Hammadi, assistant CEO of the Operations and International Development Sector at Qatar Charity; Taulant Rizvanolli, deputy minister of education of Kosovo; and Benjamin Chen, academic director of the STEM Foundation.

The Qatar Training Centre, affiliated with Qatar Charity, is the official representative of the State of Kosovo in the International Olympiad for STEM.

The centre's students have won 13 medals (six gold medals, four silver medals, and three bronze

PM Kurti praised the qualitative excellence of the students participating in the Olympics, stressed his support for them, and urged them to continue developing their potential. He also praised the efforts of Qatar Training Centre

medals), as Kosovo is among the top countries in the world obtaining medals.

Kurti praised the qualitative excellence of the students participating in the Olympics, stressed his support for them, and urged them to continue developing their potential. He also praised the efforts of the Qatar Training Centre that it made to get its students to the podium in this international competition.

Al-Hammadi, expressed his great happiness at the excellence of the students of the Qatar Training Centre in international competitions and promised to support the development of their

capabilities in co-operation with the institutions in Kosovo. El sehli, stressed Qatar's keenness to strengthen the bonds of constructive co-operation between Qatar and Kosovo, noting that "we will work hard to continue providing support for such efforts, especially Qatar's distinguished charitable projects in Education Field.

The Qatar Training Centre is considered one of the distinguished centres in the fields of education and training in the fields of languages, information technology, and management, and it is the agent and representative of Kosovo in the International STEM Olympiad competition.

HBKU, QFFD, Geneva Graduate Institute open new programmes

Hamad Bin Khalifa University's (HBKU) College of Public Policy (CPP), Geneva Graduate Institute, and Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD) held an opening ceremony for the 2023-24 edition of the Executive Programmes in Development Policies and Practices (DPP) for the Middle East and North Africa (DPP-Mena) programme and Conflict and Fragility Management (CFM) programme.

Dr Leslie Pal, dean, HBKU's CPP; Dr Alex Dormeier Freier, director, Geneva Graduate Institute; and Khalifa bin Jassim al-Kuwari, director-general, QFFD, gave keynote speeches to welcome the programme's participants, which comprise professionals operating in the development and humanitarian fields to bolster their careers.

Two participants - Saiid Saber, DPP-Mena, and Nsamba Ahumedi, CFM - gave speeches to their fellow colleagues wishing

them luck as they embark on the six-month programmes together. The programme co-ordinators, including Dr Evren Tok, associate dean for Community Engagement, CPP; Dr Alaa Tartir, academic co-ordinator for DPP-Mena; Dr Seda Duygu Sever, regional co-ordinator, CFM; and Dr Margaux Pinaud, academic co-ordinator for CFM, introduced the attendees to their respective programme's curricula.

Both programmes' first modules, running from September 3-22 are being held at Minaretein in Education City. "Our long-running partnership with QFFD and the Geneva Graduate Institute embodies our collective commitment to strengthening the field of international development in the Mena region. It underlines HBKU's CPP as a proactive institution that transcends borders in order to facilitate expertise and build capacity in Qatar, the region, and beyond," said Dr Pal.

The six-month programmes comprise three modules in total; after completing the Doha-based course, participants will then undergo an online learning portion from their respective countries. The final module, held in Geneva, Switzerland, will see the professionals meet fellow DPP-Mena and CFM participants from around the world and complete their curricula together.

The DPP-Mena and CFM coursework utilise case studies that explore contemporary regional and global development challenges to enhance participants' strategic analysis and leadership skills.

Each participant is tasked with developing a professional thesis tied to their professional work that addresses their organizations' needs, which draws upon their strategic analysis and leadership skills refined throughout their studies in the DPP-Mena and CFM programmes.

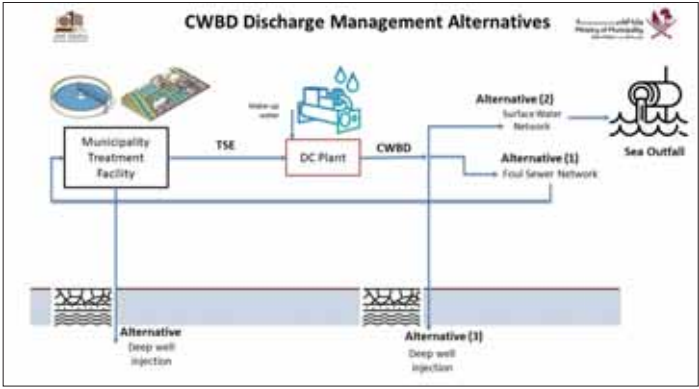


Opening Ceremony for the DPP and CFM programmes.

Study examines cooling water blowdown impact

The Infrastructure Planning Department at the Urban Planning Sector of the Ministry of Municipality assigned the Chemical Engineering Department of the College of Engineering at Qatar University to carry out a project to study and investigate the effect of discharge of cooling water blowdown (CWBD) on waste water treatment plants, groundwater and surface water.

Qatar University is the national university of Qatar and considered extremely qualified to perform such studies, because of the cumulative experience of its academic and technical staff, analytical laboratories and computer modelling capabilities, which in turn has helped in obtaining practical results for the study that is based on strong scientific fundamentals. During the project implementation period, co-ordination was made with the relevant authorities that affect or are affected by the operations of the cooling water plants. The subject entities expressed their co-oper-



ation and provided the necessary support in all stages of the project including the required information available in their possession relevant to this important study, which has contributed effectively to the success of the project and its completion on time.

These entities included the Public Work Authority (Ashghal), the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Qatar General Electricity & Water Corporation

(Kahramaa), and Qatar Cool.

A workshop was held at the end of the project, in the presence of these entities, through which the details of the technical study were explained, and its outputs discussed. The technical report of the study was also sent to the authorities concerned for their comments. In Qatar, district cooling plants rely on the use of treated wastewater effluent (TSE) as a water source for operation of their cooling facilities.




Participants in a workshop held during the project.

The used TSE is also subjected to several treatments that include the addition of some chemicals. Accordingly, CWBD is considered as a wastewater stream discharged from cooling towers into the marine environment, sewage treatment plants or reused in applications such as irrigation of farms, green spaces, and public parks. Each of these discharge points have certain regulations and permissible limits for the water contaminants; the constraints are there to avoid

negative and long-term consequences on the environment and society. The study for this project consisted of two packages to investigate the impacts of wastewater discharge from district cooling plants on discharge to municipal wastewater Treatment Plant and injection into ground water aquifers and/or discharge to the sea environment.

The study was conducted by collecting and analysing water samples that were taken from the

used and discharged water from district cooling plants, and studying the effect of the quality and quantities of wastewater on the discharge points. In addition, advanced mathematical modelling and simulation programmes were used in order to study the different scenarios for the impact of wastewater in the short and long term, in all discharge points, in order to obtain practical standards for discharging CWBD in the three environments.



INVITATION TO TENDER

ORYX GTL Limited is pleased to announce the following tender(s):

S. No.	Tender Ref.	Tender Title	Tender Bond (QAR)	Bid Closing Date & Tender Bond Validity Period
1	STC-CN-021-23-MC	Call-off Contract for Inspection and Maintenance of Spring Hangers in ORYX GTL (RLIC)	45,600/-	11 Oct 2023 at 12.00 noon & 180 days
2	TC-CN-024-23-MC	Call-off Contract for Bolt Torquing & Tensioning Services and In-situ Flange Machining Services in ORYX GTL (RLIC)	45,600/-	11 Oct 2023 at 12.00 noon & 180 days
3	TC-CN-025-23-MC	Call-off Contract for Thermal Metal Spray Services	136,860/-	11 Oct 2023 at 12.00 noon & 180 days

Companies wishing to register their interest and obtain Tender Document(s) for the above Tender(s) must pay a nonrefundable registration fee and register with ORYX GTL as detailed below:

Tender Registration Fee	QAR 500/- (Non-refundable) per Tender
Payable to	ORYX GTL Limited
IBAN (29 Digits)	QA23QNBA000000000013010705001
Bank	Qatar National Bank – HQ or any branch (cash only)
Registration Dates	From From 17 th September 2023 to 21 st September 2023 8:00 am to 1:00 pm
Registration Process and Requirements:	Write an e-mail to oryxgtltenders@oryxgtl.com.qa with the following attachments: 1. Copy of Commercial Registration (CR) 2. Copy of bank deposit slip of the Tender Registration Fee. 3. Copy of ICV Certificate

COMPANIES WHO HAVE PAID THE NON-REFUNDABLE REGISTRATION FEE BUT FAILED TO FORMALLY REGISTER AT THE DATE AND TIME STATED ABOVE WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED AS ACCEPTABLE TENDERER.

TENDER BOND SHALL BE ISSUED BY A BANK REGISTERED IN THE STATE OF QATAR.

Effective from 1st July 2023, bids from Local Suppliers and Contractors (companies established under the Laws of State of Qatar with local Commercial Registration) who are not in possession of an ICV score in the ICV portal by Tender Closing Date (or commercial bid submission date if separately mentioned/notified) will not be accepted. Local Company that have been established for less than 2 years are exempted from this requirement. For further details please visit ICV Digital Portal- <https://icv.qa/US>

For more information about ORYX GTL and its tenders, please visit our website: <https://www.oryxgtl.com.qa>

Health ministry in joint campaign for oral and dental health awareness

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) and Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) are collaboratively carrying out the national campaign for oral and dental health.

Running until the end of September, the campaign aims to raise the public oral health awareness, mainly among children, adolescents, adults and elderly, to consolidate the healthy mouth in a healthy body concept and alter the negative habits that affect oral and dental health, especially smoking, and avoid taking high-sugar food and beverages.

The campaign encourages individuals to pursue a healthy food regime and to reduce sugar in food and beverages, with the aim of reducing the rate of children's tooth decay which has reached 85% in the national survey of 2017 for the 4-8 age-group. It also aims to increase awareness on the importance of daily care for mouth at home, and to enhance communication between dental services and protection departments in various medical institutions, as well as a variety of sectors in the community.

The campaign is part of the National Oral and Dental Health Committee's

outcomes which include publishing awareness and cultural brochures on oral and dental health in general through social media platform of the MoPH, social platforms of health sector partners, in addition to displaying screens placed in the entrances of public, private hospitals and health centres.

In addition, the campaign features cultural and awareness lectures on the importance of oral and dental health, dedicated to students of several public and private elementary, preparatory and secondary schools, to be presented by professional physicians from PHCC. (QNA)

Bid to smuggle illicit drugs foiled



The General Directorate of Drug Enforcement in co-operation with the General Directorate of Coasts and Borders Security and the Internal Security Forces (Lekhwiya) at the Ministry of Interior (MoI), has foiled an attempt to smuggle big amounts of illicit drugs after dropping them near the coasts of Qatar, with the aim to smuggle them into the country by sea. Accordingly, MoI has stressed that it would take all the necessary efforts to combat such attempts targeting the smuggling of illicit drugs or trading in them in the country, to guarantee the safety and security of the society against such harmful substances.

Qatar reaffirms its support for Sudan people

Qatar underlined its keenness to promote and protect human rights in Sudan and ensure its stability, security, unity, and territorial integrity, reaffirming that it stands with the Sudanese people to overcome the crisis they are going through. This came in a statement delivered by HE the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the UN Office in Geneva Dr Hind Abdulrahman al-Muftah during the interactive dialogue on the High Commissioner's oral update on Sudan within the framework of the 54th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. She pointed out that Qatar confirms the importance of commitment to human rights guarantees for Sudanese people during peace and war situations, and stresses that the major step is to ensure immediate cessation of fighting, restore security and engage in a meaningful dialogue that ends the current crisis through peaceful means and protects the Sudanese people from further suffering. In this regard, she reaffirmed Qatar's support for the Joint Saudi-US Initiative and its welcome to other regional and international endeavours, expressing her hope for the success of these efforts. She added that Qatar is closely following the humanitarian situation in Sudan and confirms that it has been continuing its efforts to provide the essential humanitarian assistance for the Sudanese people since the crisis began. (QNA)

Auction Announcement

ARPM Tender and Auction Committee announce the following Auction:

Auction Subject	Sale of Malaysian Teak Wood			
Launching Date	Closing Date	Auction Bond QR.	Auctions Documents Price QR.	Auction Method
17/09/2023	01/10/2023	40,000 (Qatari Riyals Forty Thousand) for any of the four groups (A-B-C-D) offered for sale (refundable subject to conditions)	500 (Qatari Riyals Five Hundred only)	One Closed Envelope

Auction description:

Auction purpose is for the following:

Sale of Malaysian Teak Wood

The awarding will be made to the highest bid among the applicants.

General Conditions:

- Auction Documents / Conditions shall be obtained from Purchasing Department, ARPM Co., located on the 9th Floor, Al Rayyan Building, Old Salata, Zone 18, Al Muthaf Street, Next to Al Bustan Hotel during working hours 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (Fri. & Sat. Closed).
- Auction Documents Fee (QR 500 – Qatari Riyals Five Hundred only) - non-refundable, will be paid in cash in ARPM Co. Headquarter.
- Site visit for the Malaysian Teak Wood and its Location shall be according to the Auction Conditions and the attendance of the visit shall be limited to those who obtain the Auction documents and pay the prescribed fees as per Item 2 above.
- To obtain Auction documents, the following documents are required:
Authorization letter from the bidding company in Arabic signed by the officially authorized manager and stamped with the company's seal - Copy of the establishment card - ID of the authorized person to receive the documents - Copy of the valid company's commercial registration - Company's classification certificate (if any).
- The Bid must be submitted according to the Conditions stated in the bidding documents. The Bid shall be enclosed with an Auction Bond in the name of Al Rayyan Project Management Company (to be placed in separate envelope inside the Bid envelope) in the form of a payable cheque certified by one of the banks operating in the State of Qatar of only 40,000 (Qatari Riyals Forty Thousand) for any of the four groups (A-B-C-D) offered for sale, and it will be returned back within 90 days from the closing date subject to the Terms & Conditions, noting that no bid shall be accepted unless it has been enclosed with Auction Bond document.
- The bid (Price of the Malaysian Teak Wood) shall be submitted in local currency (Qatari Riyal) and shall be valid for 90 days from the closing date of the bid and cannot be revoked within that period.
- Deadline for accepting bids is 12:00 pm of the closing date (Sunday 01/10/2023).
- All forms attached to the Auction documents including the form of undertaking, shall be filled, completed and authorized as stated therein and returned with the other documents.
- All necessary data for the company (contacts & follow-up) must be attached: Mobile - Phone - Fax - E-mail - company address of where the correspondence to be sent, clarifying the tasks of each individual (when purchasing Auction documents) and within the company bid.
- For any queries related to documents and bidding, contact Al Rayyan Project Management Co. - **Tel: 40341846 – 40341804, Fax: 40341899** – email: L.cabral@arpm.com.qa; m.aseef@arpm.com.qa
- Deadline for accepting inquiries and requests 24/09/2023.
- The extension of the closing date may be requested in case of necessity (with justifications), not less than (5) working days prior to the closing date for Tender and Auction committee desertion and decision.
- In case the closing date is extended or any modifications are made during the announcement period, the company will be notified by fax or e-mail formally.

Tenders and Auctions Committee
ARPM

Liquidation Announcement
"2"

Based on the Extraordinary
General Assembly Resolution

To Liquidate
Redington Qatar W.L.L. (the "Company")
(Voluntary Liquidation)

The Liquidator – Rami Mohammad Ali Qudah

Deloitte & Touche – Qatar Branch

Announce the liquidation of
Redington Qatar W.L.L.
Commercial Registration No. (25255)

Any party who has any claims from this Company
should send a registered letter including all
supporting documents to
P.O. Box 431,
Doha – Qatar, within
the remaining legal period.



Campaign targets violators of traffic laws



The General Directorate of the Traffic Department in co-operation with the Convoy and Patrol Security Group at the Internal Security Forces (Lekhwiya) has been organising joint traffic inspection campaigns to spot violators of traffic laws and regulations, to maintain the safety of all road users. The campaign checked the acceptable levels of engine and exhaust noise levels and the acceptable levels of tinted vehicle glass, that do not negatively impact the vision of the driver, among other violations. Some campaigns were carried out at Lusail area.

Iraqi politician calls for more women's empowerment, political participation



Ala Talabani

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

There have been several achievements in Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein regime in terms of women's participation in social life and empowerment as well as people's participation in political process, but a lot more needs to be done, noted a former Iraqi parliamentarian.

Speaking to *Gulf Times* on the concluding day of Georgetown University's conference 'The Invasion of

Iraq: Regional Reflections', Ala Talabani, co-founder, High Council for Iraqi Women noted that Iraqi women had to go through several hardships over the course of time.

"We had to go through the dictatorship of one party which took more time to get the women participate in the political arena. Slowly we started including certain percentage for the Iraqi women in the parliament and presently it is 25% in the constitution. Now you can see about 85 women in the parliament which makes them join the political life and be part of the decision making areas," explained Talabani.

However, she noted that there are several challenges in passing certain legislations which touches women's lives or the society in several areas.

As for the conference, the politician said that these types of meetings and conferences are important for Iraqis especially for those who live inside their country. "We hold such meetings among ourselves but it is good to hear others and their perspectives to understand how they differ from or are similar to our views. With all these views we feel that we have achieved something good, facing challenges, threats and many more. The conference has provided a better view and a wider view on Iraq," she highlighted.

Talabani said Iraq is facing two major issues currently. "We need to review the constitution and change many articles in the constitution for providing the basic rights of the Iraqi people and equal rights. Then we have to be the decision makers of the country and its foreign policy, not outsiders. There are lots of will among people for a change in the constitution but the political parties and the government have to take the call," she added.

WCM-Q's certificate programme focuses on lifestyle medicine



Some of the speakers and participants in the programme.

In an initiative designed to promote the application of lifestyle medicine in healthcare delivery among healthcare practitioners, Weill Cornell Medicine - Qatar (WCM-Q) offered a certificate programme developed by the college's Institute for Population Health (IPH).

The 60-hour Certificate in Lifestyle Medicine (CLM) provides healthcare professionals with the skills and knowledge to use evidence-based therapeutic lifestyle medicine approaches to prevent and manage lifestyle-related chronic health conditions to reduce morbidity, complications and suffering associated with the disease.

The evidence-based practice adopts behavioural interventions through positive lifestyle habits such as regular physical activity, eating a balanced whole-food diet, adequate sleep, tobacco cessation, stress management and other non-drug methods

to prevent, treat and manage chronic diseases like obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, hypertension and cancer.

The course is aimed at educating, inspiring healthcare professionals about the preventative and therapeutic role of lifestyle medicine, and its impact in helping to improve health outcomes, reduce healthcare costs and to reshape the delivery of healthcare, to make it more holistic and sustainable.

The latest edition of the course was delivered by local and international speakers and the programme attracted participants from Qatar and overseas.

The speakers were Dr Javaid Sheikh, dean of WCM-Q; Dr Ravinder Mamtani, WCM-Q professor of population health sciences and vice dean for population health and lifestyle medicine, and professor of medicine at the Centre for Global Health; Dr Sohaila Cheema, associate

professor of clinical population health sciences and assistant dean at IPH; Dr Ahmad al-Mulla, senior consultant of public health and disease control, and director of Hamad Medical Corporation's Tobacco Control Centre. In his presentation titled "Building Resilience," dean Sheikh who is also professor of psychiatry, and professor of population health sciences at WCM-Q, examined the reasons as to why resilience is increasingly important in modern life, and how it can be enhanced by all individuals.

Dr Mamtani said: "There is scientific evidence that lifestyle diseases can be prevented, treated and even reversed by adopting healthy lifestyle measures. In the recent past, healthcare systems across the world have embraced blending lifestyle medicine with the conventional approach, to provide the best health outcomes to the population."

LEGAL

Egyptian activist jailed

A court in Cairo yesterday sentenced prominent publisher and activist Hisham Kassem, who had recently stepped up his criticism of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's rule, to six months in prison, his lawyer said, Reuters reported from Cairo. Kassem is a leader of Al-Tayar al-Hurr, or Free Current, a newly formed liberal group. The movement has appealed for political change to address an economic crisis and said it could field a candidate in presidential elections due to be held by early 2024. No serious challenge is expected against al-Sisi, a former army chief who has continued backing from the security forces.

QU Health marks World Patient Safety Day

On the occasion of World Patient Safety Day, experts from Qatar University's (QU) Health and Medical Sciences have shared their insights on the significance of maintaining patient safety and increasing awareness about proper medication use and verification.

Prof Ahmed Awaisu, professor and head of the Department of Clinical Pharmacy and Practice at the College of Pharmacy at QU, stated: "This year, we echo the voices of various healthcare professional organisations concerned with patient safety and healthcare quality on World Patient Safety Day 2023, under the theme 'Engaging Patients for Their Safety.' The pharmacy profession has evolved in recent years towards patient-centred and outcome-oriented care. Our curriculum will continue to evolve and emphasise the role of patients and their engagement in ensuring the quality and safety of their care."

Dr Alia Ghareeb, section head, Strategic Programme Development at the Office of the Vice-President for Medical and Health Sciences Office at QU, said: "Integrating patient safety and good education into university and postgraduate curricula is a proactive approach to building a patient-focused safety and care culture in healthcare institutions. This education equips students, from the beginning of their professional journey as healthcare providers, with the necessary tools, frameworks, and ethical considerations to make informed decisions prioritising patient well-being and strong patient engagement."

According to Dr Fadi Khraim, assistant professor of Clinical Affairs in the College of Nursing, patient safety is of utmost importance in healthcare and requires seamless collaboration and teamwork among nursing staff and other healthcare providers. By combining the unique skills and perspectives of all healthcare providers, they can collectively predict, identify, and address potential safety concerns.

Dr Mohamed al-Kawaldeh, assistant professor in the College of Nursing, emphasised: "Well-trained and knowledgeable nursing staff dedicated to serving our community is one of humanity's great blessings. Engaging patients in their safety becomes a shared endeavour, where compassion and dedication merge with decades of experience to form a protective shield around those in our care."

Dr Rania al-Hawry, clinical

lecturer at College of Medicine, highlighted the pivotal role patients and their families play in maintaining healthcare safety and assisting healthcare providers in delivering better services. She emphasised the importance of patients providing accurate information about their medical history and existing conditions.

Dr Mohamed Ali al-Hamdani, assistant professor of Public Health, added: "Elevating patient safety means integrating their voices into prevention and treatment decisions. Patient input will lead us towards achieving optimal safety and quality. World Patient Safety Day can mark the beginning of this positive transformation."

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Flooding, lightning strikes kill 8 in war-hit Yemen

Flooding and lightning strikes in Yemen have killed eight civilians, an official and a doctor said yesterday, underscoring the threat of extreme weather in the war-ravaged country, AFP reported from Sanaa. The lightning strikes occurred on Friday in the Al-Layha and Al-Zahra districts of Hodeidah governorate on the Red Sea coast, said Hamza Saied, a doctor at the hospital in Al-Layha. "Six women and a man were killed, and three others were injured," he said. The area is controlled by Houthi rebels who seized the capital in 2014, prompting a coalition to intervene the following year and setting in motion a brutal conflict that has created what the United Nations describes as one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

Tunisia arrests migrants, seizes boats in crackdown on people-smuggling

Reuters
Tunis

Tunisian police supported by planes and anti-terrorism units arrested hundreds of migrants and seized boats yesterday in a major crackdown on people smuggling in the coastal region of Sfax — a key departure point for migrants heading to Europe.

The operation, which the government said was ordered by President Kais Saïed, came as the Italian island of Lampedusa struggles with a record number of landings by boat migrants crossing from North Africa.

Tunisian National Guard units raided homes where hundreds of migrants were staying, intercepted trucks carrying migrants towards the beaches and seized vessels used by the smugglers, officials and witnesses said.

Several suspected people smugglers were detained in the operation involving planes, police dogs, military trucks and hundreds of police officers in the towns of Jebiniana, Kerkennah, Msatria, and Sfax — the capital of the governorate. “The air operation is intended to target smugglers who trade in the pain of frustrated people,” National Guard Colonel Houssein Jbebli told reporters.

Saïed ordered the crackdown to confront the “unacceptable influx of migrants”, the Interior Ministry said in a statement.

Tunisia is under strong pressure from Italy and the European Union, which pledged 1bn euros of EU money to help Tunisia’s battered economy in exchange for stemming the flow of migrants. In the last few days, about 7,000 people arriving from North Africa on boats landed on the small Italian island of Lampedusa, prompting appeals for help from the island’s mayor.

Overall, some 126,000 boat migrants have arrived in Italy since the start of the year, almost double the 64,529 recorded in the same period of 2022, according to Italian interior ministry data.

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni called on Friday for the European Union to act jointly “with a naval mission if necessary” to prevent migrants crossing the Mediterranean from North Africa.

Sudan’s Burhan holds talks in Uganda as battles rage in Khartoum

AFP
Kampala

Sudan’s de facto leader Abdel Fattah al-Burhan held talks yesterday with Uganda’s veteran President Yoweri Museveni on his latest diplomatic foray abroad.

The Sudanese general was pictured meeting with Museveni at State House in the Ugandan town of Entebbe on what was described as a one-day working visit. “They deliberated on bilateral and regional issues,” said a brief statement from the Ugandan presidency.

Sudan has been at war since April when fighting erupted

between the regular army led by Burhan and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces commanded by his deputy-turned-rival Mohamed Hamdan Daglo.

Clashes around Khartoum’s military headquarters — where Burhan had been holed up until last month — had seen a brief two-week respite before flaring again, with the RSF showering it with artillery fire, residents said yesterday.

Eyewitnesses on the ground told AFP they heard clashes in central Khartoum, with one resident saying the RSF “is firing heavy artillery” at army headquarters.

Burhan has since late August made six trips abroad.



Military personnel supervise the arrival of aid supplied by the UAE for survivors of the floods that submerged Libya’s eastern city of Derna, at the airport of Benghazi, yesterday.

Aid arrives in flood-hit Libya but hopes fade for survivors

AFP
Derna, Libya

Shipments of international aid began to arrive in Libya yesterday, offering a lifeline to thousands despite dwindling hopes of finding more survivors days after deadly flash floods.

Sunday’s disaster submerged the port city of Derna, washing thousands of people and homes out to sea after two dams burst under the pressure of torrential rains triggered by a hurricane-strength storm.

Conflicting death tolls have been reported, with the health minister of the eastern-based administration, Othman Abdeljalil, putting the number of lives lost at 3,166. The World Health Organisation said “the bodies of 3,958 people have been recovered and identified”, with 9,000 more still missing, as it announced 29 tonnes of aid had arrived in the eastern city of Benghazi.

“This is a disaster of epic proportions,” said Ahmed Zouiten, the WHO’s Libya representative.

An AFP correspondent saw two aid-laden planes, one from the United Arab Emirates and another from Iran, land in Benghazi, more than 300 kilometres west of Derna.

The Italian embassy said a ship had arrived off Derna with two helicopters, bulldozers, tents, blankets and pumps.

Tonnes of aid from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have also arrived in the east, along with a field hospital from France. Hatem al-Tawahni, medical director of Benghazi Medical Centre, said 15 injured from Derna are now being treated there.

One patient, Eid Kayat Abdel Khalef, was working in Derna when the flood hit. He said 75 people from his hometown of Al-Sahrif in Egypt were killed.

“There are people whose fate is completely unknown... we don’t have any information about them,” he added.

A steady stream of vehicles trickled into Derna on a makeshift road as diggers toiled to shift rubble.

In Al-Bayda, 100 kilometres

west of Derna, people worked to clear roads and homes of mounds of mud.

A volunteer in Al-Bayda who is originally from Derna said many people had told her of the “confusion and chaos” of relief efforts in the flood-stricken port city.

“I have also lost a lot of loved ones there,” said Rahab Shneib.

“Despite the ongoing efforts of many humanitarian organisations to bring comfort to the heart, it is important to note that many people have remarked on the lack of organisation.” Derna resident Mohamed al-Dawali said: “In this city, every single family has been affected.” Seir Mohamed Seir, a member of the security forces, said more than 1,500 families had been saved, along with a three-month-old girl.

“Her entire family died, she was the only one who survived.” The floods were caused by hurricane-strength Storm Daniel, compounded by poor infrastructure in Libya which was plunged into turmoil after a Nato-backed uprising toppled and killed longtime dictator Muammar Gaddafi in 2011.

The Islamic Relief aid organisation warned of a “second humanitarian crisis”, pointing to the “growing risk of water-borne diseases and shortages of food, shelter and medicine”.

But the Red Cross and the WHO pointed out that contrary to widespread belief, the bodies of victims of natural disasters rarely pose a health threat.

The spokesman for the eastern-based Libyan National Army, Ahmed al-Mesmari, said the floods had affected “over 1.2mn people”. The UN has launched an appeal for more than \$71mn to assist hundreds of thousands in need. “We don’t know the extent of the problem,” UN aid chief Martin Griffiths said Friday, as he called for co-ordination between Libya’s two rival administrations — the UN-backed, internationally recognised government in Tripoli, and one based in the disaster-hit east. The head of the eastern-based government, Oussama Hamad, announced new measures would be imposed from Saturday, closing the disaster zone off from civilians.

Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso sign Sahel security pact

Reuters
Bamako

Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, three West African Sahel nations ruled by military juntas, signed a security pact yesterday promising to come to the aid of each other in case of any rebellion or external aggression.

The three countries are struggling to contain insurgents linked to Al Qaeda and Islamic State and have also seen their relations with neighbours and international partners strained because of the coups.

The latest coup in Niger drove a further wedge between the three and countries of the regional bloc, the Economic Community of West African States,

which has threatened to use force to restore constitutional rule in the country. Mali and Burkina Faso have vowed to come to Niger’s aid if it is attacked.

“Any attack on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of one or more contracted parties will be considered an aggression against the other parties,” according to the charter of the pact, known as the Alliance of Sahel States.

It said the other states will assist individually or collectively, including with the use of armed force.

“I have today signed with the Heads of State of Burkina Faso and Niger the Liptako-Gourma charter establishing the Alliance of Sahel States, with the aim of establishing a collective defence and mutual assistance framework,” Mali junta leader

Assimi Goïta said on his X social media account. All three states were members of the France-supported G5 Sahel alliance joint force with Chad and Mauritania, launched in 2017 to tackle militant groups in the region.

Mali has since left the dormant organisation after a military coup, while ousted Niger’s President Mohamed Bazoum said in May last year that the force is now “dead” following Mali’s departure.

Relations between France and the three states have soured since the coups.

France has been forced to withdraw its troops from Mali and Burkina Faso, and is in a tense standoff with the junta that seized power in Niger after it asked it to withdraw its troops and its ambassador.

SA holds state funeral for Zulu leader Buthelezi

AFP
Ulundi

Thousands of people, some dressed in traditional warrior clothes, yesterday attended the funeral of South Africa’s divisive Zulu leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who was implicated in a wave of deadly violence that marked the country’s emergence from apartheid.

Mourners crowded a small stadium in Ulundi, the ancient capital of the Zulu kingdom in eastern South Africa, to pay tribute to the founder of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), who died on September 9 aged 95.

“The sun has set on an era and on a life that witnessed and had an impact on much of our country’s modern history,” President Cyril Ramaphosa said in a eulogy.

Earlier, family members dressed in black led a coffin covered by an animal skin and an IFP flag across a red carpet before it was placed under a black canopy on the pitch.

Around it sat mourners, some wearing traditional leopard skins and holding spears and shields made from

cow hides, others in white IFP T-shirts bearing a portrait of the late leader.

“He treated all of us Zulus as one person. That is why I am here,” said Bonga Makhoba, 31, who said he drove 150 kilometres and slept in his car to attend the service. “I just respect him and I want him to... rest in peace.” During the ceremony, which started in the morning and continued well into the afternoon, the IFP Women’s Brigade chanted “he has led us this far” in Zulu while other mourners paid tribute to “Shenge”, as Buthelezi was known after his clan name.

Guests sitting under white marquees opposite an altar included former presidents Jacob Zuma and Thabo Mbeki. Buthelezi was once a rival of Ramaphosa and his former boss Nelson Mandela, as the pair led negotiations to end white rule in South Africa. For years, he was locked in a bitter rivalry with the ruling African National Congress (ANC).

The party had been his political home until he broke away to form the Inkatha movement in 1975.

Born of royal blood, he was to some the embodiment of a proud and feisty Zulu spirit, while to others he often acted as a warlord.

As premier of the “independent” homeland of KwaZulu, a political creation of the apartheid government, Buthelezi was often regarded as an ally of the racist regime.

He was dogged by allegations of collaborating with the white government to fuel violence and derail the ANC’s liberation struggle — a claim he furiously denied.

Violence between Inkatha supporters and rival liberation groups claimed about 12,000 lives, as unrest between the ANC and IFP escalated in the run-up to the democratic elections in 1994.

Ramaphosa conceded he and Buthelezi “did not always agree” but speaking of the violence said it was “not the day to point fingers and cast blame”.



A portrait of the late Zulu prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi is placed near the coffin during his funeral proceedings in Ulundi, yesterday.

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A TRIBUTE TO A WATCHMAKING ICON AND A CELEBRATION OF THE OCEANS

Swatch is celebrating another Swiss watchmaking icon, Blancpain's *Fifty Fathoms*. This watch was born exactly seventy years ago and revolutionized watchmaking by becoming the first true diver's watch. Launched in 1953, the Fifty Fathoms was created by a diver to meet the needs of underwater exploration. It immediately became the professional timekeeping tool of choice for diving pioneers and elite marine corps around the world.

In its new collaboration, Swatch honors this icon with five new models, all while staying true to itself in a fun, playful way. Named Bioceramic Scuba Fifty Fathoms, the collection references the brand's own diver's watches, the SCUBA line. The watches in this non-limited collection faithfully reproduce all the Fifty Fathoms hallmarks: superior water resistance, outstanding legibility, mechanical movement, secured rotating bezel and anti-magnetic protection. Blancpain and Swatch drew their inspiration from the deep seas to create a collection of five Swatch models. Each one is named after one of the blue planet's five oceans: ARCTIC OCEAN, PACIFIC OCEAN, ATLANTIC OCEAN, INDIAN OCEAN and ANTARCTIC OCEAN.

True to form for a diver's watch, the Bioceramic Scuba Fifty Fathoms is water resistant in deep water, down to 91 meters. It's another nod to Blancpain: the name Fifty Fathoms refers to the fathom — Historically the maritime measure of depth in the English-speaking world — fifty fathoms equals 91 meters (or 300 feet).

The Bioceramic Scuba Fifty Fathoms is equipped with a Swatch mechanical movement, the SISTEM51, the first and only mechanical movement whose production is entirely automated. The mechanism is anti-magnetic, thanks to its Nivachron™ hairspring, and has just 51 parts including one central screw as well as a 90-hour power reserve. In 2013, SISTEM51 revolutionized the world of automatic watches with its visible movement: the front tells the time, the back tells the story.

In keeping with this idea, the back of all five watches features an illustration of a magnificent, colorful animal found

in all five oceans: the nudibranchs (scientific name: Nudibranchia). They are featured in a digital print on the movement's rotor. This rotor allows the watch to recharge automatically with a simple movement of the wrist. On the ARCTIC OCEAN watch is the nudibranch Dendronotus Frondosus, characterized by its soft, subtle shapes. The PACIFIC OCEAN features Chromodoris Kuiteri. Bright as the sun, it recalls these warm, clear blue waters. The ATLANTIC OCEAN has Glaucus Atlanticus. Its deep blue colors pay tribute to wild seas. But don't be fooled: even though this species highlights the fragility of marine life, it's still poisonous — nicknamed the blue dragon. The INDIAN OCEAN, with its Nembrotha Kubaryana, evokes the mesmerizing colors of corals and the lush, dazzling waters. Finally, the ANTARCTIC OCEAN features Tritoniella Belli, recalling the mystery and allure of icy polar waters. It resembles an iceberg battered by storm waves. All these nudibranchs actually live in the oceans their watches are inspired by. Each watch also has a depiction of the ocean it represents on the back.



For absolute Fifty Fathoms devotees, the ARCTIC OCEAN model features a special symbol on the dial: a red trefoil on a yellow background with a white cross cutting through it. The words "NO RADIATIONS" are placed below the logo to drive the message home. In the sixties, the dials on these diver's watches used the "NO RADIATIONS" logo to show that they did not contain radium. Since then, they have become highly sought-after collectors' items. Today, they are part of the legendary Fifty Fathoms heritage.

Another noteworthy reference can be found on the ANTARCTIC OCEAN model: a genuine water contact indicator that detects the presence of water. Since 1954, Blancpain has added this feature to some of its models intended for use by diving clubs and military units. Placed at 6 o'clock on the dial, the sensor ensures that the watch's water resistance has not been affected by the previous diver's use. A change in sensor color would indicate a trace of moisture. A number of Fifty Fathoms models equipped with the two-color sensor bear the name "MIL-SPEC", in accordance with US Navy specifications. The new Blancpain X Swatch Collection comes in exclusive colors that were specifically developed for this collaboration. They add a strong, playful and original touch to Blancpain's professional diver's watches. Every Bioceramic Scuba Fifty Fathoms has its own identity and makes its own allusions to the Blancpain collection.

The watches in this new Swatch collaboration are available from September 9 and only at selected Swatch stores worldwide. As with the Bioceramic MoonSwatch, purchases are limited to one watch per person per day. The watches will be presented in a special diving case. They will also be on display in selected Blancpain boutiques for several weeks.



All the models in this collaboration between the two Swatch Group brands are made of Bioceramic. This unique material is patented by the brand and made of two-thirds ceramic and one-third biosourced material derived from castor oil. As an expression of commitment to ocean preservation, the NATO straps are made from recycled fishing nets that have been removed from the sea.

The shared Blancpain X Swatch logos can be found on the dial and crown. The word "Swatch" is also inscribed on the case, just as "Blancpain" is inscribed on the original Fifty Fathoms watches. The back of the watch features inspirational inscriptions like PASSION FOR DIVING - LICENCE TO EXPLORE - OCEAN BREATH - PROTECT WHAT YOU LOVE and IMMERSE YOURSELF.





Trump says his problem with Biden competence, not age

AFP
Washington

Joe Biden, America's oldest president, received support from an unexpected ally over his age: Donald Trump said the Democrat was "not too old" to seek a second term, while quickly adding: "I think he's incompetent."

The former president's comments, made in an interview with NBC's *Meet the Press* to be aired today, come as America faces a profound debate over the ageing of its political class, a major factor ahead of the 2024 elections — when Biden will be just shy of 82 and Trump himself 78.

Polls show that while the age gap between the two men is small, Americans worry more about Biden's age, with one survey finding that three in four people doubt his ability to last a second term.

That Trump ended his own term in office as the second-oldest president ever (Ronald Reagan was 77 at the end of his term) presents the real estate magnate

with a challenge, however, in repeatedly portraying Biden as too "sleepy" to do the job.

But that hasn't stopped the Republican, who would be 82 at the end of a second term, from trying to thread that needle.

"Some of the greatest world leaders have been in their 80s," he told NBC. "I'm not anywhere very near 80, by the way."

"And Biden's not too old," Trump added. "But I think he's incompetent, and that's a bigger problem."

Biden, who overcame a stuttering problem as a youth, has often been mocked for his verbal stumbles.

But he remains trim, physically active, does not drink and is often seen riding his bicycle during weekends at his Delaware home.

Democrats say he also fares well on the competency front, having overseen the passage of major legislation, including a massive infrastructure bill, the largest gun-safety bill in decades, and the Build Back Better social spending program.

Biden has also been active on the glo-



Former US president and Republican presidential hopeful Donald Trump speaks during the Pray Vote Stand summit at the Omni Shoreham hotel in Washington, DC. (AFP)

bal stage. Indeed, during his just-ended trip to Vietnam — which analysts say was staged partly to highlight his vigour —

that country's 79-year-old Communist leader smilingly complimented Biden on his relative youth.

Trump, for his part, has gotten mostly positive marks during annual physicals — though he has been classed as overweight and does not exercise other than golf. Like Biden, he does not drink.

Trump, too, has had his share of bizarre verbal moments, mangled pronunciations and physical stumbles.

But in the NBC interview he said his own age does not concern him, noting that his parents had long lives.

"So genetically, that's a good thing."

His insistence on his own competency was ridiculed during the 2020 presidential campaign when Trump said he had scored an "amazing" result on what he said was a test of mental acuity.

He said he had had to remember, in order, these words: "Person, woman, man, camera, TV"

His proud and repeated recitation of those five words was ridiculed by political rivals and went viral on social media.

Still, in an apparent reference to that test made in the NBC interview, Trump said, "I aced it. I got everything right."

Zelensky to make second wartime White House visit to rally support

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky will pay his second wartime visit to Washington next week, the White House announced, in a bid to solidify the support of his country's crucial backer, which has shipped billions of dollars in aid to fight "Russian invaders".

Zelensky will travel to the White House on Thursday for talks with President Joe Biden and also hold meetings at the US Congress, where elements of the rival Republican Party are hesitant as Biden seeks to push through a major new package for Kyiv. The Ukrainian leader's trip to Washington will come after meetings with other world leaders at the UN General Assembly in New York.

Jake Sullivan, Biden's national security advisor, said that the trip came at a "critical time" as Ukraine wages a counteroffensive against Russia. Biden will reaffirm "his commitment to continuing to lead the world in supporting Ukraine as it defends its independence, its sovereignty and its territorial integrity," Sullivan told reporters. He contrasted Zelensky's trip to Russian President Vladimir Putin's recent summit with Kim Jong-un of North Korea, one of the world's most isolated and sanctioned countries, from which Moscow is seeking weapons.

But doubts have also grown over the future of US assistance as Congress approaches a September 30 deadline to approve funding just as the election season approaches. Former president Donald Trump, the frontrunner for the Republican nomination to challenge Biden next year, has lashed out at US assistance, saying the money would be better spent at home and predicting an eventual triumph for Putin, for whom he has shown admiration. But traditional Republicans including Senator Mitch McConnell, the party's Senate leader, support assistance to Ukraine.

The Bio-logy of US interference

Sierra Leone president accuses US of pressure to interfere in vote

The president of Sierra Leone has accused the United States of pressuring him to interfere in his country's June 24 election count, a statement in stark contrast to the concerns Washington has levelled regarding the fairness of the poll.

"When the elections were at the height — of calling the results — this is when the problems started," President Julius Maada Bio said during a speaking event at American University in Washington. The Election Commission of Sierra Leone (ECSL), he said, "had done all their calculations, collations, all the processes. I was now requested to stop them from calling the result by the United States. So I don't know who is accusing who of interference."

"They are an independent, semiautonomous body," the president said of the ECSL. "I declined, and I said I have never called this institution, I am not going to call them now." Bio, 59, was re-elected in a disputed vote criticised by both the opposition and international observers. In a joint statement following the election, delegations from the United States, European Union, France, Ireland and Germany said they shared the concerns of national and international observers "about



Sierra Leone President Julius Maada Bio delivers a keynote speech at the American University School of International Service in Washington, DC, yesterday. (AFP)

the lack of transparency in the tabulation process." Ahead of the poll, some thought the country's soaring inflation and dire economic straits would give the opposition an opening. Bio won with 56.17% of the ballot, just above the 55% needed to avoid a runoff. On August 31, the State Department announced visa restrictions on those "believed to be responsible for, or complicit in, undermining democracy in Sierra Leone," including through vote rigging or intimidation of election observers. The names of those targeted were not made public, and visa decisions are confidential under US law. "Elections are always contentious issues, no matter where they happen in the world, including the United States," Bio said during the event at his alma mater, where he earned his Bachelor's and

Master's degrees following his move to the United States, after handing over power from the military junta he briefly led to a democratically elected government in the 1990s. When "the United States casts doubt on the credibility (of the election), you are calling for a coup," Bio said. "The same representatives of the United States have told us that in any case, they just wanted a second round. In any case, I was going to win, because all the polls have made that clear." Sierra Leonean Information Minister Chornor Bah told AFP that "I cannot speak to the US motivation" behind allegedly asking Bio to interfere in the ECSL's announcement. "You'll have to ask the US that." Freetown still has a "great relationship" with Washington and looks forward to maintaining it, Bio said. — AFP

Former US envoy to Pakistan gets probation for ethics violations

AFP
Washington

Richard Olson, a former US ambassador to Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates, has been sentenced to three years of probation for violating federal ethics laws.

The 63-year-old Olson was also fined \$93,400 after pleading guilty to charges he misused his official position for personal gain. Olson, who served as the US envoy to

Pakistan from 2012-2015, pleaded guilty in June of last year to making a false statement and violating laws governing lobbying for a foreign government.

"US law prohibits senior officials - like the defendant - from representing a foreign government before any federal agency or from aiding or advising a foreign entity with the intent to influence the US government for one year after leaving their positions," the US Attorney's Office for Washington said in a statement. "The defendant took numer-

ous steps to conceal these illegal activities, including deleting incriminating emails and lying to the FBI during a recorded interview," it said.

According to the US Attorney's Office, Olson, while serving as the US envoy to Pakistan, also received favours and benefits from a Pakistani-American businessman identified in court documents only as "Person 1." They included \$25,000 paid to Olson's then-girlfriend to help pay her tuition at Columbia University in New York and \$18,000 in first

class travel for the ambassador to attend a job interview in London.

"One major favour was that the defendant agreed to lobby members of Congress on Person 1's behalf with respect to weapon sales to Pakistan and Middle Eastern countries that Person 1 was trying to broker," the US Attorney's office said.

According to *The Washington Post*, "Person 1" is Imaad Zuberi, who was sentenced to 12 years in prison in 2021 for making illegal campaign contributions and other offences.

Swedes throng capital to mark half century reign

AFP
Stockholm

Tens of thousands of Swedes thronged central Stockholm yesterday to mark 50 years since King Carl XVI Gustaf ascended the throne.

To the sound of military bands and under a sunny sky, the 77-year-old monarch, clad in a sober suit and tie, enjoyed the public acclaim along with Queen Silvia, 79, wearing a canary yellow ensemble, as six horses led the royal procession.

The crowd broke into applause as they passed and waved Swedish flags to mark the milestone for Carl Gustaf, who was the world's youngest monarch when he was crowned aged 27 in September 1973 after the death of his grandfather Gustaf VI Adolf.

The king is the longest reigning monarch in Sweden's history and also the European monarch with the second-longest reign, behind his cousin Queen Margrethe of Denmark who took the throne in 1972.

Born on April 30, 1946, Carl Gustaf Folke Hubertus Bernadotte was only nine months old when his father, Prince Gustaf



King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden and Queen Silvia of Sweden arrive in a carriage for festivities to celebrate the 50th anniversary of King Carl XVI Gustaf's accession to the throne at the Royal Palace in Stockholm yesterday. (AFP)

Adolf, died in a plane crash in Denmark.

Central Stockholm was closed to traffic with police expecting crowds that have the day to top several hundred thousand — though celebrations went ahead amid

tight security given that Sweden last month raised its terror alert level following a spate of Koran burnings that have angered the Muslim world.

Christina Flodin, an administrator aged

59, was among admirers of the king, who Friday oversaw the changing of the guard at the palace ahead of a gala banquet for business and religious leaders and other Scandinavian royals.

"I am there to celebrate his 50 years with him — I want to show my gratitude for all he has done," she told AFP, saying he represents in her view "continuity, stability, a good model leader."

"I came for my brother who is in the navy and participating in the parade," said Wendela Seppi, a machine operator aged 23. "It's a bit unreal — I find it's cool something's happening" in Stockholm.

The afternoon procession through the capital was the highlight of the celebrations, their horse-drawn carriage escorted by 3,000 troops from the army, navy and air force and military bands.

The final leg of the procession was to see them being rowed across the water in the royal barge to the steps below the palace in the Old Town, with an outdoor concert nearby featuring several popular Swedish acts to top off the day, from Cuban salsa to disco and classic Swedish sounds.

The city centre was transformed into a giant public dance floor to allow residents

to let their hair down.

Despite occasional scandals — the biggest when a 2010 book alleged he frequented clubs and had numerous affairs — the king enjoys broad support in his homeland.

A poll this month in Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* said 62% of Swedes were in favour of the monarchy, a level that has remained stable over two decades.

The king's role has been purely ceremonial since constitutional reform in 1974.

"We must not abolish the monarchy," said Martin Persson, a 60-year-old bus driver. "I think it's good — and I'm hoping to see him today," said Persson, from the western coastal town of Vastra Gotaland.

The palace has remained tight-lipped about the cost of the festivities.

As far as presents for his majesty are concerned, Swedish furniture retailer Ikea is gifting the man who already has a throne a special armchair to mark the occasion.

The retro design comes from the "1970s when the king met Silvia at the Olympic Games in Munich," Ikea executive Johan Ejdemo told AFP.

Remembering Mahsa Amini



People protest in Trafalgar Square on the first anniversary of the death in custody of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Kurdish woman arrested by the morality police in 2022 for allegedly flouting mandatory dress codes, in London, Britain.



N Korea's Kim takes a tour of Russia's nuclear facilities

Reuters
Vladivostok

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un inspected Russian nuclear-capable strategic bombers, hypersonic missiles and warships yesterday, accompanied by President Vladimir Putin's defence minister. A smiling Kim was greeted in Russia's Knevichi airfield, about 50km from the Pacific port city of Vladivostok, by Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu, who saluted him. The North Korean leader then inspected a guard of honour.

The United States and South Korea fear the revival of Moscow's friendship with Pyongyang could give Kim access to some of Russia's sensitive missile and other technology while helping arm Russia in its war in Ukraine. Shoigu showed Kim Russia's strategic bombers – the Tu-160, Tu-95 and Tu-22M3 – which are capable of carrying nuclear weapons and form the backbone of Russia's nuclear air attack force, Russia's defence ministry said. "It can fly from Moscow to Japan and then back again," Shoigu told Kim of one aircraft.

Kim was shown asking about how the missiles were fired from the aircraft, at times nodding and smiling. Shoigu showed him the MiG-31L supersonic interceptor aircraft equipped with "Kinzhal" hypersonic missiles. The Kinzhal, or dagger, is an air-launched ballistic missile capable of carrying nuclear or conventional warheads.

It has a reported range of 1,500 to 2,000km while carrying a payload of 480kg. It may travel at up



North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un and Russia's Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu (right) visit Knevichi aerodrome near Vladivostok, Primorsky region, yesterday.

to 10 times the speed of sound (12,000kph, 7,700mph). Russia's ambassador to North Korea, Alexander Matsegora, told reporters that Kim's programme was "very intense" and that it was not yet clear how long he would remain in Russia, state news agency RIA reported. It also quoted Oleg Kozhemyako, governor of Vladivostok's Primorye region, as saying he would have talks with Kim today on co-operation in sport, tourism and culture.

After the aircraft and missiles, Kim inspected the Russian Pacific Fleet's frigate "Marshal Shaposhnikov" in Vladivostok and saw a demonstration of modern missile control systems, RIA said.

South Korea and the United States said on Friday that military co-operation between North Korea and Russia would violate UN sanctions against Pyongyang and that the allies would ensure there was a price to pay. Russia has gone out of its way to publicise Kim's

visit and drop repeated hints about the prospect of military co-operation with North Korea, which was formed in 1948 with the backing of the Soviet Union.

For Putin, who says Moscow is locked in an existential battle with the West over Ukraine, courting Kim allows him to needle Washington and its Asian allies while potentially securing a deep supply of artillery for the Ukraine war. Washington has accused North Korea of providing arms to Russia, which has the world's biggest store of nuclear warheads, but it is unclear whether any deliveries have been made.

Kim on Friday inspected a Russian fighter jet factory that is under Western sanctions. He and Putin discussed military matters, the war in Ukraine and deepening co-operation when they met on Wednesday. Putin told reporters Russia was "not going to violate anything", but would keep developing relations with North Korea.

India's Nipah outbreak: what do we know so far?

Authorities in India are scrambling to contain a rare outbreak of Nipah, a virus spread from animals to humans that causes deadly fever with a high mortality rate. Here is a look at what we know so far:

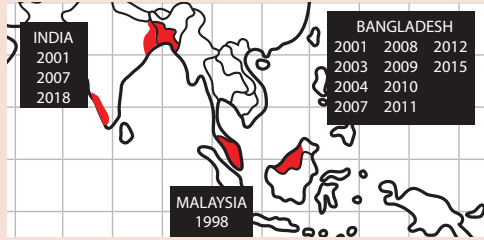
What is the Nipah virus?

The first Nipah outbreak was recorded in 1998 after the virus spread among pig farmers in Malaysia. The virus is named after the village where it was discovered. Outbreaks are rare but Nipah has been listed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) – alongside Ebola, Zika and Covid-19 – as one of several diseases deserving of priority research for their potential to cause a global epidemic. Nipah usually spreads to humans from animals or through contaminated food, but it can also be transmitted directly between people. Fruit bats are the natural carriers of the virus and have been identified as the most likely cause of subsequent outbreaks. Symptoms include intense fever, vomiting and a respiratory infection, but severe cases can involve seizures and brain inflammation that results in a coma. There is no vaccine for Nipah. Patients have a mortality rate of between 40 and 75% depending on the public health response to the virus, the WHO says.



What has happened during previous outbreaks?

The first Nipah outbreak killed more than 100 people in Malaysia and prompted the culling of 1mn pigs in an effort to contain the virus. It also spread to Singapore, with 11 cases and one death among slaughterhouse workers who came into contact with pigs imported from Malaysia. Since then, the disease has mainly been recorded in Bangladesh



and India, with both countries reporting their first outbreaks in 2001.

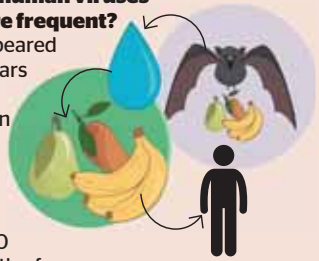
Bangladesh has borne the brunt in recent years, with more than 100 people dying of Nipah since 2001. Two early outbreaks in India killed more than 50 people before they were brought under control. The southern state of Kerala has recorded two deaths from Nipah and four other confirmed cases since last month. Authorities there have closed some schools and instituted mass testing. This marks Kerala's fourth recorded spate of Nipah cases in five years. The virus killed 17 people during the first instance in 2018. The state has managed to stamp out previous outbreaks within a matter of weeks through widespread testing and strict isolation of those in contact with patients.

Are animal-to-human viruses becoming more frequent?

-Having first appeared thousands of years ago, zoonoses – diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans – have multiplied over the past 20 to 30 years. The growth of international travel has allowed them to spread more quickly. By occupying increasingly large areas of the planet, experts say, humans also contribute to disruption of the ecosystem and increase the likelihood of random virus mutations that are transmissible to humans. Industrial farming increases the risk of pathogens spreading between animals while deforestation heightens contact between wildlife, domestic animals and humans.

By mixing more, species will transmit their viruses more, which will promote the emergence of new diseases potentially transmissible to humans. Climate change will push many animals to flee their ecosystems for more liveable lands, a study published by the scientific journal *Nature* warned in 2022.

According to estimates published in the journal *Science* in 2018, there are 1.7mn unknown viruses in mammals and birds, 540,000-850,000 of them with the capacity to infect humans. (AFP)



India's Tarsem Singh brings dark love story to Toronto film fest

AFP
Toronto

Indian director Tarsem Singh Dhandwar, known for his award-winning music videos and visually arresting fantasy features, unveiled his first movie in eight years at the Toronto film festival – a shocking true-crime story about love, class and murder in 1990s Punjab.

Dear Jassi is Singh's first-ever film set in his home country and, in an interview with AFP, he explained how he waited for just the right time to make it.

The 62-year-old Singh first heard the real-life tale of star-crossed love – a Canadian-born girl from a wealthy Punjabi family meets a rickshaw driver while visiting relatives in India – more than 20 years ago, and the idea never left him.

"I gave my brother a call and said, 'We either make the story right now, or we wait at least two decades for it to become retro.' This was not a subject matter that



Indian director Tarsem Singh poses during the Toronto International Film Festival in Toronto.

was going to get solved quickly," he told AFP.

At that time, Singh was already a known commodity in Hollywood: his dreamlike video for REM's seminal hit *Losing My Religion* won six MTV Video Music Awards in 1991, including Video of the Year. He went on to direct Jennifer Lopez in the sci-fi horror flick *The Cell* (2000) and other features including *The Fall* (2006), the *Snow*



Actor Pavia Sidhu arrives for the premiere of *Dear Jassi*.

White-based *Mirror Mirror* starring Julia Roberts in 2012, and *Selfless* with *Ryan Reynolds* (2015).

But the heartbreaking tale of Jassi and Mithu remained on his to-do list, and a meeting just before Covid-19 hit with screenwriter Amit Rai, who he said was "possessed" with the story, resulted in a script. Singh insisted on not using stars in the film – Pavia Sidhu (Jassi) had some acting experience, and Yugam Sood (Mithu) is a university student



Actor Kanwar Grewal poses for photographers at the premiere of *Dear Jassi*.

making his screen debut. "They would have liked for me to use somebody from Bollywood. They would have liked for me to make it in Hindi," Singh said. "But I said, 'It just needs to be this.' (...) It's in Punjabi and it's small."

Singh turns the ripped-from-the-headlines drama into something of a folk tale – the film starts and ends with narrative verses from singer Kanwar Grewal. The format is akin to Shakespeare's narrator in *Romeo and Juliet*, and Singh moulds his story to fit the broad strokes of the classic play – Jassi speaks to Mithu from a balcony, and there is even a sleeping potion.

After their initial meet-cute in Punjab, the lovers are on opposite sides of the world for years, until Jassi returns to India and secretly marries Mithu. When her family discovers the union, Jassi is beaten and tricked into signing a criminal complaint against her husband.

She manages to return to India, but a tender reunion quickly gives way to a deadly denouement, orchestrated by her own mother and uncle. In real life, Jassi's relatives were only extradited to India last year. The case is still pending.

For Singh, the story was personal in that the events unfolded not far from where he was born in Punjab. And he felt he could clearly

convey the societal pressures at work, especially in his depiction of Jassi's mother.

With nine daughters in a blended family, Jassi's mother faced a choice, Singh says: "One goes rogue, and the other eight won't get married, they are ruined. What do I do to get them married – write this one off or embrace her?"

"And the answer was write her off. (...) I don't agree with it but I understand it," he said. "She's in pain and making the absolute wrong decisions."

Singh said having the world premiere of *Dear Jassi* in Toronto was a "natural fit," given the story's Canadian connection. It will also screen in competition at the London Film Festival in early October. When asked if he will make more movies in India, Singh is effusive.

"Once I did this, I said, 'Oh, I love the experience! I want to do a whole bunch of big ones there. And I'm probably going to go into it straight away,'" he said.

So what type of movie could it be? "A massive... Indian action flick," he says.

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GULF TIMES

Major milestone as Qatargas becomes QatarEnergy LNG

Qatar, which is committed to the sustainable development of cleaner energy resources, has crossed another major milestone with Qatargas being renamed ‘QatarEnergy LNG’, emphasising a future vision for the country’s liquefied natural gas industry.

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

QatarEnergy is already the world leader in LNG, which is a cleaner, more flexible and reliable source of energy and an integral partner in the global energy transition.

For QatarEnergy, energy transition means building a better and brighter future by helping meet today’s energy needs, while safeguarding the country’s environment and natural resources for generations to come, bound by the highest standards of sustainable human, socio-economic and environmental development.

While announcing the renaming of Qatargas as QatarEnergy LNG, HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi, who is 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.

The ongoing North Field expansion is the largest LNG development in global history and will generate substantial revenues for Qatar and hugely contribute to the country’s GDP

Minister 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.”

Al-Kaabi noted that while Qatar recognised the tremendous value that the Qatargas brand accumulated over time, the country believes 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.

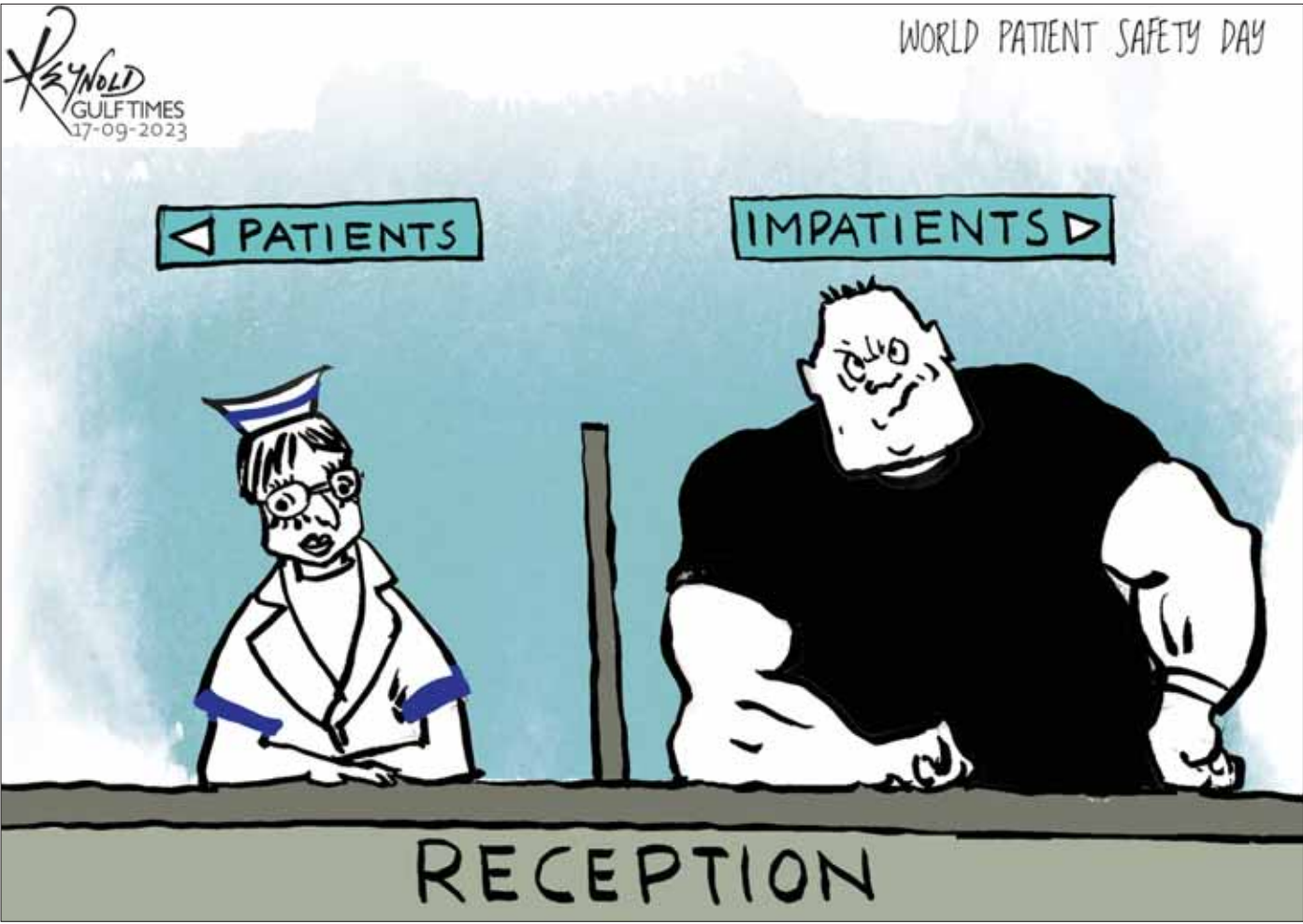
In this context, he noted, “We are reaffirming our belief in the future of LNG as a primary source of energy for decades to come and placing greater emphasis on the central position LNG occupies in our strategic priorities, development efforts, and energy investments.”

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 through an additional six LNG trains being set up as part of the multi-billion dollar North Field Expansion.

The ongoing North Field expansion is the largest LNG development in global history and will generate substantial revenues for Qatar and hugely contribute to the country’s GDP.



By Anne-Marie Slaughter, Ilona Szabó, Jayati Ghosh and Poonam Ghimire
Washington, DC/Rio De Janeiro/New Delhi

Our collective future hinges on a transformative shift in our relationship with the planet. This week, during the United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York, negotiations will begin at the ministerial level to plan the Summit of the Future in 2024. Coming together to save our common home must be at the top of the agenda.

The triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution has accelerated and intensified in recent years. Moreover, the world is coming perilously close to irreversible tipping points, such as the collapse of the West Antarctic and Greenland ice sheets, bleached coral reefs, and a substantial loss of tropical forests. The latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change shows that global warming is set to reach or exceed the internationally agreed target of 1.5° Celsius in the coming two decades, even in the best-case scenario of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.

Despite these risks and challenges, it is still possible to achieve a green and equitable global economy. A good starting point would be for countries and communities that have benefited the most from decades of planetary exploitation to acknowledge that they bear a special responsibility to help alleviate the climate crisis.

Rich countries around the world are responsible for around half of historical carbon emissions, which have been essential to their development. The Paris climate agreement thus explicitly emphasises that environmental governance must proceed on the basis of “common but differentiated responsibilities” – a core principle of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

But the onus of committing to a green and just transition rests upon all of us. In wealthy countries, where the rich are responsible for far more emissions than the poor, environmental solutions must differentiate between high and low emitters. And while low- and middle-income countries have an undeniable right to pursue growth, they must develop more sustainably for the benefit of their citizens. Bilateral co-operation, as well as multilateral institutions, should help them align their policies with emissions-reduction targets, biodiversity protection,

and a shift toward a circular economy.

To generate the necessary political will to commit to a just green transition, countries need a vision of energy abundance, rich biodiversity, and a thriving planet. To this end, as members of the UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism (HLAB), we propose that a Pact for the Future, which has been proposed as the outcome of the Summit of the Future, include the set of recommendations to rebalance the relationship between people and planet outlined in the report that HLAB submitted to the UN Secretary-General in April.

Our proposals recognise that a healthy planet is a global public good that benefits all of humanity. It would align existing treaty commitments, raise collective ambition, and marshal the resources to enable states and non-state actors to build a net-zero future.

For developing countries, the green transition offers a chance to join the ranks of the world’s high-income countries. While they lack the financial means to fund ambitious policies like the US Inflation Reduction Act and the European Green Deal, many of these countries have abundant natural resources, such as forests that must be safeguarded to preserve the planet and the critical minerals and rare earths required to achieve the energy transition. Moreover, global power shifts have given them additional leverage to pursue new funding options and fairer agreements to address climate challenges.

As active participants in the negotiations for a Pact for the Future, low- and middle-income countries can increase their green ambitions, take a lead in creating a sustainable future, and push back against the old “international division of labour,” in which their natural resources were exploited to create wealth and accelerate decarbonisation in advanced economies. Instead, at the upcoming Summit of the Future, they can propose and negotiate multilateral agreements and financing mechanisms to deliver a just climate transition alongside the Sustainable Development Goals.

The foundations of a Pact for the Future that works for people and planet have already been laid. The first step is to reaffirm existing treaty obligations – including the Paris climate agreement, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and others – and to accelerate progress with time-bound targets. The pact should also commit to net-zero emissions; the phase-out of fossil fuels;

the provision of clean energy to the 800mn people lacking access to electricity; a halt to deforestation (including a new incentive mechanism to protect standing forests); biodiversity targets that respect the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities; the regeneration of natural systems; and a pollution-free planet.

The problem is that, without investment, these commitments will remain paper promises. HLAB thus endorses the recommendations of the UN High-Level Expert Group on the Net-Zero Emissions Commitments of Non-State Entities in 2022, which specify the scale of investment required to achieve net-zero emissions and the practical steps that member states and multilateral banks must take to begin meeting these needs.

HLAB also emphasises that, in addition to mobilising financial resources, a just green transition requires transfers of knowledge and technology. And it highlights the importance of pricing and regulating carbon emissions, eliminating fossil-fuel subsidies, increasing transparency concerning emissions and carbon capture, and offering incentives to accelerate the shift to clean energy.

Contrary to popular belief, tackling climate change is not a zero-sum game. Regaining balance with nature would not only ensure the survival of future generations, but would also generate countless opportunities for current ones. To succeed, however, the pact must include strong commitments and establish clear expectations. With preparations for the Summit of the Future underway, now is the time to start imagining our shared path to a sustainable and equitable transition. — Project Syndicate

● Anne-Marie Slaughter, a former director of policy planning in the US State Department, is CEO of the think tank New America, Professor Emerita of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University, and the author of Renewal: From Crisis to Transformation in Our Lives, Work, and Politics.
● Ilona Szabó, Co-Founder and President of the Igarapé Institute, is a member of the United Nations Secretary-General’s High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism.
● Jayati Ghosh, Professor of Economics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, is a member of the Club of Rome’s Transformational Economics Commission.
● Poonam Ghimire is a member of the United Nations Secretary-General’s High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism.

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Expert highlights Amir's efforts in settling many global issues

QNA
Washington

Expert on UN affairs Prof Abdul Hamid Siam has praised the efforts made by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to settle and resolve many outstanding global issues in Afghanistan, Chad and other countries, and his keenness to attend in person during the previous years the sessions of the UN General Assembly to deliver a speech in which he addressed all the issues raised and Qatar's vision on them. He said, in an interview with the Qatar News Agency (QNA) about the 78th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), that Qatar hosted the US dialogue with the Taliban in Doha for a long time until they reached an agreement in Doha on

Feb 20, 2020, to end a war that lasted about 20 years, in addition to mediating to resolve other conflicts such as Darfur and reach agreements with the concerned parties. He added that it also mediated in Lebanon and invited all parties to Doha to reach an agreement, and in Yemen in a way that preserves its unity and sovereignty. Siam pointed out that important and influential countries are keen to attend the work of the UN sessions every year, highlighting the importance of the Qatari presence because it attaches great importance to the UN, adding that His Highness the Amir's speech during this session will be comprehensive, as it is supposed to address a number of current issues such as the war in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Palestinian, and will focus on the Sudan issue. He pointed out that personally attending the

UNGA is an opportunity to communicate with other leaders because there are more than 120 heads of state and heads of government who will be in this place, which provides an opportunity to talk to them directly about current issues. Siam expected that the war in Ukraine would take an important part of the Amir's speech because it lasted a long time, indicating that in a speech last year, His Highness called for negotiations and said that in the end, Russia and Ukraine should sit at the negotiating table and the earlier they do, the sooner they will be able to save a large number of victims. He also pointed out that the Palestinian issue is always a top priority in His Highness the Amir's speeches, as he reminds the international community of its responsibilities towards this issue because the Palestinian people are still

suffering, and there is a need to move to find a solution to this issue on the basis of the two-state solution, which is the vision Qatar always presents and defends strongly. Highlighting Qatar's important initiatives in education and the protection of women in conflict zones and others, the UN affairs expert affirmed that Qatar is helping the international community with food issues, energy issues, global warming, climate issues, combating terrorism. He pointed out that the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 made the image of Qatar more beautiful, which impressed them due to the wonderful organisation in a calm atmosphere, without noise or any violence or riots, making everyone agree that it is the best football tournament in the history of the sport.

Qatar, UN: Half-century partnership of servicing humanity, peace, progress

For more than half a century, Qatar's opinions on issues of the Arab and Islamic nations have always been heard by the UN. Qatar has always aimed at delivering the voice of the voiceless, the weak and the marginalised while defending their causes yearly through the international forum. In recent years, Qatar has increased its presence in most of the UN's activities both regionally and internationally, to reach solutions to crises, maintain peace, prevent conflicts, and maintain post-conflict peace. Qatar is one of the troop-contributing countries participating in the UN's peacekeeping missions. Qatar's participation in the meetings of the UN's General Assembly (UNGA), held in September of each year, is considered a prominent presence at the highest levels. Qatar and the UN share very concrete relations, one that is based on strategic co-operation in service of humanity on all fronts. Since joining the international organisation in 1971, Qatar has been an active member, working tirelessly to achieve

the organisation's objectives and principles, including maintaining international peace and security, as well as supporting international development efforts, promoting and consolidating human rights, and participating in collective efforts and initiatives to address the challenges facing the world. Qatar is proud of its distinguished and active role in the UN, which is referred to by the international organisation and member states on issues raised on the international scene. Qatar is known for its serious and fruitful partnerships with the UN bodies and its achievements and respect for international commitments and initiatives in various fields to support multilateral international action to meet common challenges. As a translation of the existing partnership between Qatar and the UN, Doha, which the UN views as a prestigious global platform for dialogue, has become an international centre for many of the UN's main organisations. This signifies that Qatar is at the forefront of countries in the region that is relied upon as a reliable partner of the UN.

Qatar's role in the UN is not just limited to attending official meetings, but also drafting UN resolutions and initiatives on an array of topics. These draft resolutions always have been acknowledged and encouraged by the UN. In this context, the UNGA adopted by consensus in April 2022, a resolution in support of Qatar's hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup. In April 2021, the UNGA declared in a resolution adopted by consensus that March of every year will be the International Day of Women Judges due to the initiative of Qatar. In recognition by the UN for Qatar's efforts to help vulnerable groups in different societies, especially children, the UNGA adopted in May 2020 a resolution to allocate Sept 9 as an "International Day to Protect Education from Attack," a decision called for by Chairperson of Education Above All Foundation and UN Sustainable Development Goals Advocate Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, and led by Qatar to mobilise international support in order to ensure accountability for the ongoing and de-

liberate attacks on education and armed violence suffered by children around the world. All of Qatar's submitted draft resolutions or initiatives to the UN were praised by member states, due to the nature of those initiatives and draft resolutions dedicated to the service of humanity and humankind, and ensuring world peace and security. Based on the proposal of Qatar, the UNGA approved in 2007, April 2 of each year, as World Autism Awareness Day. The purpose of this annual observance is to highlight the need to help improve the quality of life for people with autism so that they can live within their communities normally. Qatar has always had Arab causes and issues at the forefront of its priorities and concerns at the UN, based on the sense of responsibility towards the Arab Nation's fateful issues, and Qatar's keenness to keep Arab issues under the spotlight of the international organisation's agenda. Qatar submitted numerous draft UN resolutions on the central issue of the Arabs, the question of Palestine. An ex-

ample of which took place in November of 2006, when the UNGA adopted a draft resolution on the "Illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory," submitted by the delegation of Qatar on behalf of the Arab Group. With regard to maintaining international peace and security, Qatar has consistently called for making the Middle East region free of nuclear weapons. This is due to it being an essential step on the road to non-proliferation and eventually achieving the goal of complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Qatar has asserted that the establishment of a nuclear-free Middle East is a common goal for the people of the region, as well as the international community as a whole. Qatar also expressed more than once its full support for the negotiation process on the Iranian nuclear programme in order to reach a comprehensive and satisfactory settlement for all parties, whilst at the same time stressing the right of people to benefit from peaceful nuclear energy. (QNA)

Qatar continues to strive for global goals and meet challenges



Since joining the UN, Qatar has worked to achieve the organisation's goals and principles of maintaining international peace and security, supporting development efforts in various countries of the world, promoting and consolidating human rights, providing humanitarian relief and participating in collective efforts and initiatives to address current and future issues facing the world. In this context, the Permanent Representatives of Qatar to the UN are making great efforts to face the ongoing global challenges. Qatar's accession to the UN constituted a starting point for its foreign policy in the field of multilateral relations, based on the country's vision and its history, which is one of stellar commitment to Arab, Islamic and human values and belief in co-operation and a common destiny. The Permanent Delegation of Qatar to the UN was established in New York on September 22, 1971, when the organisation held a ceremony in which the flag of Qatar was raised to mark its accession. Since that date, eight ambassadors headed the Qatari mission so far. HE Sheikha Alya Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani occupied the position of the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the UN after she moved to work at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and joined the Permanent Delegation of Qatar to the UN as an adviser. She rose in positions until she became the Deputy Permanent Representative (2007-2011) and Permanent Representative of Qatar to the UN Headquarters in Geneva.

She was also a representative of the country during its membership in the UN Human Rights Council, the Executive Board of the World Health Organisation, and the Governing Body of the International Labour Organisation (2011-2013). She was also appointed during the same period as a Permanent Representative to the World Trade Organisation, and Consul General in the Swiss Confederation. She assumed her duties as the Permanent Representative of Qatar in New York as of October 17, 2013. During her time in New York, HE Sheikha Alya chaired the work of the Social Forum of the Human Rights Council in Geneva in 2013. She had contributions in presenting and running a number of draft resolutions on behalf of the State, including the UN General Assembly resolution on the International Year of the Family, the General Assembly resolution on the adoption of April 2 as World Autism Awareness Day, the UN General Assembly resolution on the establishment of September 15 as the International Day of Democracy, the resolution of the Sixth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, the adoption of the UN General Assembly resolution on education in crises, the General Assembly resolution on enhancing the effective use of military and civil defence assets in response to natural disaster and other important decisions. In a previous speech, HE Sheikha Alya explained that Qatar, since its accession to the UN, has spared no effort in fulfilling the commitments that resulted from joining international organisation, adding that this was embodied in its interaction and hard work within the framework of the international community. She explained that the State has also ratified and acceded to the majority of international agreements, highlighting its keenness to be a factor of stability in the region and the world and a source of raising awareness of the importance of regional and international co-operation by hosting conferences, meetings and workshops under the umbrella of the UN. (QNA)

UN House in Qatar gateway to development, humanitarian, diplomatic work in region, world

A number of UN officials have stressed that the presence of the UN House in Qatar consolidates the strategic partnership between Qatar and the UN, which resulted in many achievements and tangible results, and enhances the future of relations between the two sides. In statements to Qatar News Agency (QNA), UN officials welcomed the strengthening of the UN partnership with Qatar, stressing that the establishment of the UN House embodies one of the most prominent aspects of this partnership. They added that the participation of Qatar is reflected in the foundations of multilateral collective action, highlighting the status of Doha's international position as a centre for programmes and initiatives that focus on development and peace. The UN House is also the gateway to the development, humanitarian and diplomatic work of the UN in the region and the world, they noted. The inauguration of the UN House last March in Lusail added another gem to the Qatari architecture. The UN House includes offices of important organisations, such as the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco), International Labour Organisation (ILO), the World Health Organisation (WHO), UN Children's Fund (Unicef), UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the UN regional centre for combating cybercrime. It also hosts the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, in addition to UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UN Office of the UN Development Programme, International Hub on Behavioural Insights to Counter Terrorism, the Office on Parliamentary Engagement in Preventing and Countering Terrorism and UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT). In a statement to Qatar News Agency (QNA), Special Adviser to the Secretary-General of the



The UN House in Qatar in Lusail was inaugurated in March 2023.

UN on Public-Private Partnerships and Islamic Social Finance Dr Ahmed bin Mohamed al-Muraikhi stressed that the presence of the UN House in Doha reflects the future of the relationship between the two sides, adding that it also facilitates taking the necessary decisions and helps in understanding the nature of the projects and areas of concern to Qatar, the most important of which are the developmental and humanitarian aspects, due to the strategic importance that Qatar represents in the international humanitarian map. He added that the efforts of Qatar during the past years, and then the presence of the UN House in Doha, help in speeding up the response and prior co-ordination between the various authorities in the State and the various UN organisations, whether it is co-ordination between the government sector, the private sector, or civil society organisations, noting that the UN House speeds up the procedures and understanding of projects related to humanitarian work and the speed of response to them. He stressed that Qatar has spared no effort in providing humanitarian aid, and its efforts in international initiatives are clearly visible in order to address the challenges facing the world. He pointed out that the best proof of these efforts was during the Covid-19 pandemic, as Qatar was one

of the first countries to contribute in providing the vaccine to many poor countries; the national carrier Qatar Airways was also used to transport stranded UN employees working in relief efforts and humanitarian work. He noted the significant development of the relationship in recent years, as Qatar became one of the first countries to support the UN by signing agreements and providing financing for UN organisations by around \$500mn, as well as the opening of the UN House. He said that one of the most important areas in which Qatar seeks to strengthen its partnership with the UN is promoting interfaith dialogue and supporting the Alliance of Civilisations, as well as playing a mediating role in international crises. The best evidence of this is the success of Qatar in resolving the Darfur issue, he said, adding that the State also plays an effective role in protecting human rights, as well as providing financial contributions to the UN, in addition to the role of Qatar Fund for Development as an executive body in providing Qatari humanitarian and development aid. Dr al-Muraikhi praised Qatari charities' prominent role in strengthening partnership between them and UN organisations by providing humanitarian and development aid in many countries in need and participating in international relief with various

UN humanitarian organisations. In this regard, he referred to the efforts of Qatar Charity, which enjoys advisory status and membership in a number of UN bodies and organisations, in addition to consultative membership in the UN Social and Economic Council since 1997. He praised the prominent and effective role of the Education Above All Foundation in taking immediate and concrete measures to protect education through partnership with various UN organisations, led by Unicef and Unesco. He also noted the role of the Qatar Red Crescent and its distinguished partnership with various UN organisations in the implementation of many humanitarian and development projects in various poor countries. Director of Unesco Doha Office for Gulf States and Yemen Salah El Din Zaki Khaled said that Qatar, since its accession to the UN, has contributed significantly to the UN working group in the areas of sustainable development, human rights, climate change, education, health and youth empowerment. He expressed appreciation for Qatar's partnership with the UN, and its commitment to strengthening this partnership, which resulted in the establishment of the UN House in Qatar. He added that this initiative not only meets the aspirations of UN agencies, governments and concerned parties, but also strengthens Doha's international position as a centre for programmes and initiatives that focus on development and peace. The UN House in Qatar represents a strong contribution to achieving sustainable development. Chief of IOM Mission in Qatar Iman Younis Eriqat affirmed the organisation's pride in the work during its presence in Qatar at the UN House, stressing that the organisation works together with government agencies, especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to implement the goals related to migration that are in line with the Qatar National Vision 2030, as well as the Global Compact for Migration and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. (QNA)



Young Qataris flock to falcons market at Souq Waqif

The falcon and falcon hunting accessories and tools market at Souq Waqif have recently seen significant turnout from young Qatari people, as the hunting season is set to start soon, with many of them flocking to buy falcons and various accessories such as hoods and other hunting necessities.

Local Arabic daily *Arrayah* reported that such shops have made preparations for the season by importing various types of falcons. The largest share of imported falcons comes from Iran, including birds of prey captured from their natural environment. Besides the shops sell breeding falcons from the best strains imported from several European countries, especially Germany and Spain, in addition to the United States where these falcons are produced on dedicated farms.

A number of workers at these shops stressed that that they have imported large quantities from different countries, with prices ranging from QR2,500 to



QR30,000. The types of falcons currently on display there have attracted a large number of customers, and these shops are expected to receive other types of peregrine falcons, in addition to the Saker Falcon, which could cost more than QR100,000 for a single bird.

Meanwhile, a number young

people interested in falcon hunting pointed out they always wait for the start of falcon hunting season to enjoy their favourite hobby, which is considered a traditional hobby through which they continue the heritage of the ancestors.

They stressed that it is one of the most enjoyable hobbies for



them due to the competition involved in searching for and pursuing prey birds that are legally allowed to be hunted. Due to the high weather temperatures, they are preparing and examining their falcons at the falcon clinic to ensure their good health.

In the coming two weeks, young hunters are set to start training them and improving their fitness in preparation for the actual hunting season, which usually begins after the temperatures drop and humidity levels in the air decrease. They are also preparing them for local competitions organised by various competent entities.

Faraj al-Marri, falconer, said that the turnout on the falcon market at Souq Waqif is considerably good these days as falcon hunters are getting ready to enjoy their hobby after the long summer break. He said that every falconer has a favourite type of falcons and he tried many types over the years but prefers the Saker falcons for its powerful body capabilities.

Mohamed al-Hammadi, falconer, said that a good number of falconers prefer to own a collection of falcons and they always look for adding new falcons to their collection, especially that some shops at Souq Waqif bring some excellent breeds.

He said that he allocates some of his falcons to take part at the various local competitions while some others are allocated for the hunting trips he shares with friends.

Noor Mohamed, seller, said that more distinguished peregrine falcons are expected to come to the local market from Iran during the coming two weeks as demand on



these is growing higher among young falconers. Besides, his shops sell all the other necessities of falconry and hunting such as gloves, ropes, hoods, and others.

Mostafa Ahmed, seller, that there are a good number of fal-

cons breeds from the specialised farms in Europe that could sell for QR10,000-QR30,000 a falcon. His shop also sells various falconry and hunting tools and accessories made locally in addition to the imported types.

Doha a major regional player, conference told

From Page 1

Discussions over the three days created a sense of shared responsibility to usher in positive changes that will offer the Iraqi people, especially the new generation, a better future.

Dean Masri said: "As we approach the university's 20th anniversary, Georgetown University in Qatar is reflecting on where we've been, where we are, and where we want to go. Our eyes are focused on

the next 20 years. We are embarking on an ambitious strategy to become the preeminent global campus in the region. We are investing in and expanding our academic offerings, and strengthening and growing our faculty. We are creating and innovating, and engaging with our communities locally, regionally, and globally. This weekend's event offers a preview of what is to come."

"In keeping with the intent of the Hiwaraat, the conference has brought together a variety of per-

spectives, and not always complementary views on difficult and challenging topics. We have heard from scholars and practitioners and had lots of forthright engagement from the audience. These conversations are not always easy, but they are necessary. Under Hiwaraat we hope to continue providing the space for these sorts of discussions on important regional and global affairs," added, Zahra Babar, associate director for Research at CIRS.



A panel discussion at the conference.

VCUarts Qatar documentary premieres at NMoQ

A documentary film directed and produced by Johan Granberg, associate professor in Interior Design at Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar (VCUarts Qatar), a Qatar Foundation partner, had its world premiere at the National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ) recently.

The film, titled *The Bamboo Dialogues*, asks the questions: "What is this material? and Why are we not using more of it in contemporary design, engineering, and architecture?"

Through a brisk and thought-provoking storyline, the film draws attention to the possibilities and challenges this plant species offers designers and consumers alike.

Granberg talked about the context of the film. "With a growth rate of up to a metre per day, which is a world record for living plants, and structural properties that in certain cases equal those of steel and concrete, bamboo is a versatile design material. It provides an interesting alternative in an ongoing contemporary material/sustainability dialogue.

"In spite of such advantages, the plant has long-standing difficulties in gaining serious momentum and awareness in mainstream design practices. The small-scale nature and the



Johan Granberg at the premiere of his documentary.

peripheral cultural and geographic locations of the bamboo industry have further made it difficult for bamboo to make its "voice heard," he said.

The Bamboo Dialogues is the second movie in a series that aims to draw attention to the versatility and sustainable properties of bamboo. It follows on the heels of the first documentary *Bamboo—the Tradition of the Future*, also produced by Granberg in 2019. The film had almost 1.2mn views on YouTube.

The documentary was filmed in Sweden, Italy, Indonesia,

China, USA, Hong Kong, Papua New Guinea, Costa Rica, the United Kingdom, Taiwan, the Philippines, Uganda, Kenya and Qatar.

The premiere was followed by a discussion about the role of bamboo in contemporary design. Ibrahim M Jaidah, CEO, Arab Engineering Bureau, Neil Thomas, engineer, and founder and director, Atelier One, London, and Granberg participated in the discussion. The discussion was moderated by Mohamed Suleiman, chair of Interior Design at VCUarts Qatar.