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Our Say



Faisal Abdulhameed al-Mudahka,

Qatar projecting soft power on the global stage

Qatar has been making remarkable strides in recent years as a trusted mediator in various international conflicts. These diplomatic successes highlight Qatar's growing soft power and its ability to foster dialogue, negotiate agreements, and promote peace in some of the world's most challenging

From facilitating the just concluded US-Iran prisoner swap to playing a pivotal role in the Afghanistan pullout, and addressing crises in Darfur, Mali, and Somalia Oatar's mediation efforts have not only garnered international recognition but also solidified its position as a key player on the global stage. Five US citizens freed by Iran in a high-profile prisoner swap mediated by Qatar landed back in the United States on Tuesday to a joyous reunion with family members. In a reciprocal move, Washington also released five Iranians detained in the US. Oatar has voiced optimism following the landmark Iran-US prisoner swap in Doha on Monday which could be a crucial catalyst for advancement in relations between the longstanding adversaries. The swap has raised expectations for a revival of diplomatic ties and the resurrection of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), more commonly known as the nuclear deal. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani conveyed his appreciation for the implementation of the Iran-US prisoner exchange on his X platform, saying: "With the entry into force of the US-Iranian prisoner exchange agreement, we thank both parties to the agreement, hoping that it will pave the way for further understandings. The release of American and

Iranian detainees marked a significant breakthrough in diplomatic relations between these two nations. Oatar's neutrality, diplomatic finesse, and strategic location in the Arabian Gulf made it an ideal intermediary for this sensitive negotiation. The successful resolution of this longstanding issue demonstrated Qatar's ability to bridge divides and foster diplomatic solutions. Ironing out the intricacies of the complex Afghanistan pullout has been one of Qatar's outstanding mediation successes. The **United States Armed Forces** completed their withdrawal from Afghanistan on 30 August 2021, marking the end of the 2001-

2021 war. **To Page 8** falmudahka@gulf-times.com

Cabinet hails Amir's UN speech; lauds Iran-US prisoner swap deal

UN regional centre for combating cybercrime to be opened in Doha

E the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Dr Khalid bin Mohamed al-Attiyah chaired the Cabinet's regular meeting yesterday at its seat at the Amiri Diwan.

Following the meeting, HE the Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs issued the following statement:

At the outset of the meeting, the Cabinet hailed His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's speech at the opening session of the 78th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 78) on Tuesday in New York, and the important contents and firm principled positions it included towards current issues at the regional and international levels, stressing that His Highness the Amir had drawn in his speech clear guidelines and sound foundations for a new world based on keeping pace with scientific and technical development, respecting the rights of peoples and lifting injustice against them, adhering to international law, resolving disputes by peaceful means, and adopting environmentally friendly policies, working to achieve the sustainable development goals,

and combating racism and incitement campaigns against entire peoples, religions and civilisations.

The Cabinet welcomed the results of the state visit made by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to the Co-operative Republic of Guyana on September 13, followed by an official visit to the Republic of El Salvador.

The Cabinet expressed its deep satisfaction with the success of Qatar's mediation, which resulted in the release of five US citizens detained in Iran, in exchange for the release of a number of Iranians held by the US, within the framework of an agreement under which Iranian funds that had been frozen in South Korea were transferred to Doha

The Cabinet affirmed that the Amir's fruitful talks with presidents of the two countries, and the agreements and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) that were signed during the two visits, opened new and broad horizons for co-operation relations between Qatar and both the Co-operative Republic of Guyana and the Republic of El Salvador in various fields, as well as for exploring partnerships and investment opportunities, and strengthening joint efforts to address global challenges and contribute to maintaining international peace and security.

been frozen in the Republic of Korea were transferred to Doha, stressing that the confidence, integrity and neutrality of all parties in Qatar was the main reason for making this achievement, which added new success to the Oatari diplomacy.

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satisfaction with the success of

Qatar's mediation, which result-

ed in the release of five citizens

of the United States of America

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the Islamic Republic of Iran held

by the United States, within the

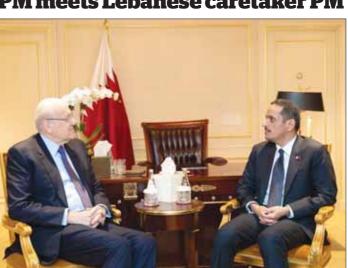
framework of an agreement un-

der which Iranian funds that had

The Cabinet then considered the topics on its agenda as fol-

First - Approving a draft decision of the Minister of Environment and Climate Change regarding the rules, conditions and requirements for the safe transportation of radioactive materials by vehicles. To Page 4

PM meets Lebanese caretaker PM



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met yesterday with Lebanese Caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati on the sidelines of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly in New York. The meeting discussed co-operation ties between the two countries and ways to support and strengthen them, as well as regional and international issues of common concern, in addition to discussing outcomes of the Quintet Meeting on Lebanon hosted by Doha. HE Sheikh Mohamed affirmed Qatar's firm position towards Lebanon, its unity and territorial integrity, and Oatar's constant support for the fraternal Lebanese people. (QNA)

Qatar committed to a tobacco-free future



HE the Minister of Public Health Dr Hanan Mohamed al-Kuwari along with other officials at the UN event.

atar's commitment to build a tobacco-free future was highlighted by HE the Minister of Public Health Dr Hanan Mohamed al-Kuwari at a United Nations event yesterday.

She was addressing a meeting of the fifth anniversary of the Tobacco-Free Financing Pledge on the sidelines of the 2023 UN General Assembly in New York, with the theme "There's no room for tobacco in a Net Zero world?

The minister reviewed a number of milestones made by Oatar in the field of tobacco control, most notably the significant reduction in tobacco use, as the percentage of youth using any tobacco products dropped from 20% in 2004 to 12.1% in 2018. This aligns perfectly with the national target of a 5% reduction in smoking prevalence by the end of 2022, as stipulated in the second national health strategy to reduce smoking prevalence by 5% by the end of 2022.

Dr al-Kuwari said: "One of the main achievements in this regard is the establishment of a robust legal framework, as Oatar endorsed and implemented the Tobacco Law approved in 2016 in line with the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. **To Page 4**

Qatar joins Digital Co-operation Organisation

Qatar has declared its formal membership to the Digital Co-operation Organisation (DCO), a recently established organisation with the aim of enhancing international co-operation in the areas of innovation, empowerment, and accelerating the growth of the digital economy.

The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology said in a statement yesterday that this is a strategic step that demonstrates Qatar's dedication to growing the digital economy. HE the Minister of Communications and Information Technology Mohamed bin Ali al-Mannai noted, "Our association with the

DCO reflects Qatar's digital aspirations and our resolve to promote worldwide digital advancement. We aim to integrate Qatar's digital strides with the collective expertise of the DCO members."

He added that Qatar's accession to DCO is part of the country's strategy to enhance Qatar's role as a major player internationally in technology and digital innovation, seeking to strengthen the joint exchange of expertise, as well as empowering the youth and entrepreneurs to venture into the digital realm both on regional and international levels. Page 6

Azerbaijani leader sends 'Armenians' message of peace

zerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev yesterday offered the ethnic Armenians of the breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh region and also neighbouring Armenia prospects of co-operation, reconciliation and joint development after his forces took control of the enclave.

In a televised address, he said Azerbaijan had regained full sovereignty over its territory and now wished to integrate Karabakh's population and turn the region into "paradise".

He said Azerbaijan had nothing against Karabakh's Armenian people - "they are our citizens" but only against their "criminal" separatist leadership.

His words appeared aimed at addressing allegations by Armenian leaders that Baku planned to



Armenian police detain a protestor in downtown Yerevan yesterday as separatists in Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan's authorities announced they would cease hostilities.

"ethnically cleanse" Karabakh's 120,000-strong Armenian population, and, more broadly, decades of open hostility and distrust between Baku and Yerevan.

Azerbaijan said it had halted military action in its breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh after its battlefield success forced Armenian separatist forces to agree



Azerbaijani's President Ilham

to a ceasefire that will see the area fully return to Baku's control.

Under the agreement, outlined by Azerbaijan and the Russian Defence Ministry, which has peacekeepers on the ground, separatist forces are meant to disband and disarm, while talks on the future of ethnic Armenians who live there are due to start today.

At least 200 killed, 400 wounded in Karabakh

Yerevan: A separatist official

in Nagorno-Karabakh said yesterday there were hundreds of casualties after a day-long military operation by Azerbaijan in the breakaway region. "There are at least 200 killed and more than 400 wounded," the Karabakh region's rights ombudsman, Gegham Stepanyan, announced on social media. At least 10 civilians were among the dead, five of them children. Stepanyan added. Azerbaijan has not given details of its casualties but President Ilham Alivev said Wednesday evening that some of its soldiers had been killed.



PM in New York meetings







HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met in New York with President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Mirjana Spoljaric, on the sidelines of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly. They discussed co-operation between Qatar and ICRC, especially in providing relief to those affected by the war in Sudan and neighbouring refugeehosting countries. They also deliberated bilateral co-operation in other conflict zones, and bolstering joint work in the fields of food and medical aid, environmental sanitation, and water provision. HE the Prime Minister also met Venezuelan Foreign Minister Yvan Gil Pintoon, Dutch Foreign Minister Hanke Bruins, Foreign Policy Adviser to the German Chancellor Jens Plotner, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland Elina Valtonen, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, Mariya Gabriel. They discussed co-operation relations and ways to support and enhance them and regional and international issues of common interest. (QNA)







Qatar sets new records in air travel

The air transport industry in Qatar witnessed an unprecedented increase in the number of passengers during the current year 2023, reaching its highest levels during May, June, July and August.

Mohamed Faleh al-Hajri, in charge of managing Qatar Civil Aviation Authority (QCAA), revealed that large numbers of passengers were registered through Hamad International Airport, especially during May, June, July and August, compared to the numbers of passengers recorded in these same months during previous years. Al-Hajri explained that the number of passengers during the months of July and August 2023 is the highest ever since the start of the airports operations, as the numbers exceeded 4mn passengers each month.

He added that this significant increase in the number of arriving and departing passengers alike is due to many factors that contributed to reaching these record numbers, the most notable is the increased connectivity between Oatar and the rest of the world.

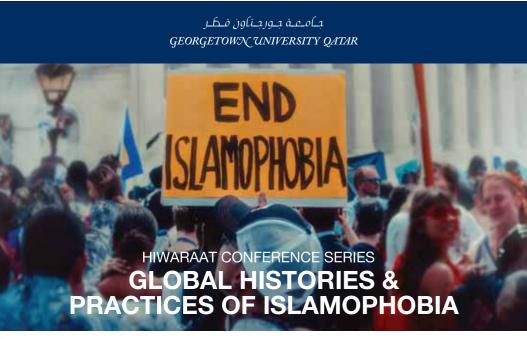
and the increasing importance of Qatar as a tourist and commercial destination and an important centre that attracts many visitors annually, in addition to the global expansion of the Qatar Airways network that connects Qatar to all parts of the world.

It also showed expectations for the number of passengers for this year issued by the Air Transport Department at the General Authority of Civil Aviation - which was approved after updating flight schedules and based on the air transport forecast model - the possibility of registering record numbers in the coming months of 2023, reaching rates and numbers higher than those recorded in 2019, which indicates further recovery in the air travel market.

Expectations also indicate that the number of passengers in 2023 could reach about 43mn passengers, which is consistent with the Air Transport Administrations expectations of completing the recovery from the effects of Covid-19 by 2023, and exceeding the operating rates recorded in the pre-pandemic period. (QNA)

Qatar attends GCC ministerial meeting

Qatar participated in the 19th meeting of the GCC ministers and heads of the civil service and administrative development bodies held yesterday in Muscat, Oman, HE the President of Civil Service and Government Development Bureau Abdulaziz bin Nasser bin Mubarak al-Khalifa led Qatar's delegation participating in the meeting. The participants reviewed the agenda of the meeting, chief of which are the final statement issued by the 18th meeting and the GCC strategy in civil service and human resources development. They also discussed the memorandum of GCC General-Secretariat on the unification of purchasing HR systems licenses in GCC states, as well as the recommendations made in the meeting of the GCC Undersecretaries Committee of Civil Service held on Aug 31, 2023. Representatives of the GCC civil service and administrative development bodies discussed, during the meeting, prospects of co-operation and joint action, along with the topics, along with future projects and plans, including the initiative of the joint programme approved in the previous session of the meeting as proposed by Qatar that was organised for the first time in Doha last July. On the margins of the meeting, a ceremony was held on Tuesday evening to honour competencies of civil service and distinguished companies in replacing and localising jobs, alongside GCC personalities and leading institutions in social work in GCC states. (QNA)



September 30 - October 1, 2023

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With Islamophobia becoming a household term over the past decade, it is incumbent on scholars and practitioners to explore the historical origins and global connections of this phenomenon to fully understand and confront its current iterations. Convened by members of the Georgetown University in Qatar faculty, this conference brings together a diverse collection of professionals, academics, government officials, artists, and students to explore the global, historical, theological, and political dimensions that drive practices of Islamophobia

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Al-Hammadi meets Yemeni deputy FM



HE the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi met yesterday with Yemeni Deputy Foreign Minister for Financial and Administrative Affairs Awsan Abdullah al-Aud. The meeting discussed bilateral relations. **(QNA)**

Mohamed al-Obaidli appointed director-general of GCC office

The committees of GCC ministers of labour and ministers of social affairs appointed Mohamed bin Hassan al-Obaidli as Director-General of the Executive Office of the Council of Ministers of Labour and the Council of Ministers of Social Affairs of the GCC. This came during a meeting of the committees in Muscat. (QNA)



Qatar calls for halting military escalation in Nagorno-Karabakh

Qatar has expressed its deep concern about the current events in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, and called on all parties to exercise the utmost restraint, pursue a policy of calm, and stop the military escalation immediately. In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed Qatar's aspiration to resolve the differences between Armenia and Azerbaijan through dialogue and diplomatic channels in a way that preserves the interests of the two countries and peoples. The ministry affirmed Qatar's full support for all international efforts aimed at restoring security, stability and peace in the region. **(QNA)**

Cabinet hails Amir's UN speech; lauds Iran-US prisoner swap deal

From Page 1

Second – Taking the necessary measures to ratify an additional agreement to the agreement between the government of Qatar and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) regarding the establishment and financing of the United Nations regional centrefor combating cybercrime in Doha.

Third - Approving the unified administrative arrangement project between the government of Qatar and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), on supporting the

Peacebuilding Fund.

Fourth – The Cabinet reviewed the following two issues and took the appropriate decision thereon:

1- Annual report (13) on the results of the work of Qatar Committee for the Alliance of Civilisation for the year 2022.

2- A report on the results of the participation in the meetings of the Commercial and Industrial Co-operation Committees and the consultative meeting accompanying them, and the 5th meeting of the Ministerial Committee for Standardisation in the Gulf Co-operation Council countries.

Qatar committed to a tobacco-free future: minister

From Page 1

This law prohibits tobacco agriculture and manufacturing within Qatar while allowing only the import of traditional products. It also restricts tobacco-related businesses and trade, imposing a minimum distance requirement of 1,000m from schools. Furthermore, we have banned smoking in closed public places and mandated graphic health warnings on tobacco packages.

"Work has also been done to reduce the demand for tobacco through price increases. Qatar has established a comprehensive tobacco product taxation model, including customs and excise taxes.

This resulted in a 100% increase in the price of all tobacco products. Additionally, we implemented tax stamps to enhance indirect tobacco product taxation and support tracking and tracing of tobacco products," Dr al-Kuwari pointed.

She stressed the country's interest in increasing awareness and behaviour change, for which a national health awareness campaign has been launched targeting at-risk groups such as youth and workers

"We have also been keen to provide standardised, quality, integrated and accessible tobacco cessation services, as tobacco cessation centres have been established in the public and private sectors, with 13 out of 31 primary

healthcare centres in Qatar currently providing these services. In addition, HMC's Tobacco Control Centre treats approximately 1,200 new patients each year, trains clinicians and specialists to ensure the best quality of care, promotes health awareness, conducts scientific evidence-based research, and utilises innovative services such as laser therapy to help people stop smoking," noted the minister.

The minister highlighted that

The minister highlighted that the selection of HMC Tobacco Control Centre as WHO Collaborating Centre, further confirms Qatar's commitment to global tobacco control efforts.

"School-based surveys were also conducted in 2004, 2007, 2013 and 2018, as well as adult surveys in 2007, 2013 and 2023. Furthermore, in the current year, we have established a Tobacco Products Quality Control Laboratory to ensure that the specifications and safety of tobacco products meet the designated standards," she continued. Dr al-Kuwari also spoke about the tobacco control policies implemented during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, where Qatar played a pivotal role in ensuring that the tournament was 100% tobacco-free.

This included raising awareness about tobacco hazards, enforcing tobacco-free policies through trained volunteers and security personnel, and overseeing policy implementation while providing a report for future events.

Official

Amir congratulates Nepal's president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent yesterday cables of congratulations to Nepal's President Ram Chandra Poudel on his country's Constitution 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 Pushpa Kamal Dahal. (QNA)

Minister of Labour, Omani counterpart discuss ways to enhance co-operation



HE the Minister of Labour Dr Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri met yesterday with his Omani counterpart Dr Mahad bin Saeed Ba'owain on the sidelines of the 9th meeting of the GCC Labour Ministers' Committee in Muscat. The meeting discussed ways to enhance co-operation between the two countries, especially in the labour sector. They also touched on means to enhance the utilisation of successful experiences in developing the working environment in both countries. (QNA)

Qatar reiterates full support for bettering GCC work environment

QNA Muscat

E the Minister of Labour Dr Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri affirmed Qatar's support for GCC countries to improve the work environment, noting the necessity of expanding and deepening regional dialogue and strategic relations on labour affairs. This came in the speech delivered by HE Dr al-Marri during his participation in the 9th committee meeting of GCC Ministers of Labour, held yesterday in the Omani capital, Muscat.

HE the Minister of Labour said that job localisation in private sector establishments is a priority, in order to benefit from qualified national cadres in the GCC, noting that Qatar has adopted a clear job localisation strategy for the private sector after having studied the labour market's needs for skill and specialisation in the coming period.

He noted the need to continue to update the common GCC vocational classification and description manual, as well as to prepare joint GCC action strategy propos-



HE the Minister of Labour Dr Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri and the Qatar delegation at the conference in Muscat.

als and initiatives on labour and the workforce, stressing the importance of the exchange of expertise among GCC countries for the improvement of Gulf labour market policies and systems, and to adopt best practices in offering GCC citizens training while in their job posts, in order to improve their competencies.

their competencies.

He stressed the importance of unifying GCC member positions in international organisations, in

supporting the adoption of constructive proposals and improving the GCC work environment.

He referred to the Doha initiative for dialogue between the GCC states and West Asian countries with African countries, to be hosted by Qatar in the first quarter of 2024, with the participation of the African Union. HE the Minister of Labour said that the dialogue aims to strengthen consultation mechanisms among all parties concerned

with the future of expatriate workers from the African continent to the countries of the region.

HE Dr al-Marri invited the GCC ministers of labour to the 10th committee meeting, to be hosted by Qatar next year. On the sidelines of the 9th committee meeting of the GCC labour ministers, HE Dr al-Marri participated in a ceremony honouring distinguished companies in the field of job localisation, as well as owners of small and distinguished GCC businesses, in addition to honouring competent civil service sector employees.

In addition to discussing the topics highlighted by HE Dr al-Marri, the GCC ministers dealt with removing obstacles hindering GCC expatriate status and mobility within GCC countries, and their inclusion in national job localisation quotas. Additionally, the committee meeting determined member state priorities in framing the proposed strategy for the joint GCC action plan on labour and the workforce priorities.

The 9th committee meeting of GCC Ministers of Labour also discussed enhancing GCC-international organisation co-operation on Labour affairs.

New website launched to highlight public health system transformation

he Ministry of Public Health, Hamad Medical Corporation and Primary Health Care Corporation have launched a new website www.moph.gov.qa/ english/mediacenter/campaigns/ withu4u highlighting the recent transformation of the public health system.

Ali Abdulla al-Khater, adviser to the Minister of Public Health For Communications and chair of the Supreme Committee for Healthcare Communications, said the transformation of Qatar's public healthcare system has been truly remarkable.

"Qatar as a country has grown at pace over the past few decades and



Ali Abdulla al-Khater

the healthcare sector has played its role in this supporting this development through an unparalleled transformation programme." "We have doubled capacity and activity in recent years and our commitment to quality improvement has resulted in multiple accreditations and awards for the quality and safety of our services."

The new website is part of a broader awareness campaign run under the slogan 'With you, for you.' to highlight the quality and advances within the public healthcare system and identifies some of the key areas of progress throughout recent years: capacity expansion; new specialist services; quality and accreditation; international standards of care; and health promotion. Al-Khater highlighted that the health sector's growth and

development enabled healthcare teams to play a central role in Qatar having one of the lowest Covid-19 mortality rates in the world, as well as supporting the successful delivery of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 widely acclaimed as the greatest World Cup in history.

"We are proud of what we have achieved as a public health sector and we are committed to continuing this journey of transformation. Our healthcare teams are dedicated to further improving access to care for patients, expanding our range of primary, secondary and tertiary services, and enhancing the overall patient experience," added al-

Qatari delegation takes part in Global Entrepreneurship Congress in Australia

A delegation comprising Qatari entrepreneurs led by Qatar Development Bank (QDB), is participating in the Global Entrepreneurship Congress 2023, which kicked off yesterday in Melbourne, Australia, under the theme "Transform Your World." During its participation in the pavilion allocated to Gulf entrepreneurs, the delegation will hold introductory sessions on the Qatari entrepreneurship system and workshops to discuss the opportunities and challenges facing the system in Qatar and the region. The congress, which runs until tomorrow, is seen as the largest gathering of male and female entrepreneurs around the globe, includes specialised sessions in entrepreneurship, and hosts institutions supporting the sector, policymakers, strategic experts, researchers, and economists. Various owners of institutions, small- and medium-sized companies, and emerging companies from the GCC countries are participating in the conference in a special pavilion allocated for them. Qatar will be represented in the pavilion by Cytomate, a cybersecurity company, and Karty financial services company, with support

The participation represents the first of its kind for the GCC countries as a single economic bloc and opens the way for the Gulf entrepreneurship system toward renewed co-operative horizons. The conference is attended by 4,000 participants, including entrepreneurs, owners of small and medium enterprises, and startup companies from 200 countries around the globe. **(QNA)**







City smart parking system close to completion in priority areas

The Ministry of Municipality, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, and the Public Works Authority (Ashghal) announced the completion stages of the Public Parking Management Project in the country under Law No 13 of 2021 on regulating vehicle parking.

Under the law, the management of public parking will begin under the supervision of the relevant municipal departments, and in partnership with the private sector's companies assigned by the Ministry of Municipality, immediately after completing the project procedures.

Director of the Technical Office at the Ministry of Municipality engineer Tariq Juma al-Tamimi said. during a press conference, that the office worked to limit public parking to the planning areas proposed for the first phase in co-ordination with the Public Works Authority, approve electronic information signs and parking stickers, and follow up with the "Tasmu" team at the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology and the project contractor to ensure the completion of the installation of smart parking management systems according to the contract.

He explained that the installation of about (3,300) parking sensors has been completed as a first stage, with a completion rate of (100%), while the remaining stages are being completed to cover all priority areas, and 80 identification signs were also installed, with a completion rate of (80%), and two parking management systems outside the right-of-way, with a completion rate of (20%).

He stated that organizing the management of public and private parking in the country aims to achieve a number of positive indicators and contribute to improving the quality of life in cities and residential neighbourhoods,



in addition to reducing congestion and traffic congestion in major crowded places, and encouraging the use of public transportation to reduce emissions and pollution and reduce road congestion, in addition to optimal exploitation of the state's resources of roads and land and increasing the return on investment in infrastructure, which can be invested in development work, supporting the country's economic growth and combating the phenomenon of abandoned cars.

Director of Digital Innovation Department at the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology Eman al-Kuwari said that implementing the smart parking service, enhanced with the technologies of the Tasmu central platform, constitutes an important technical step towards enhancing comfort and

well-being for everyone. It contributes to improving traffic and reducing congestion, and this service was developed with the aim of improving the users' experience in finding parking spaces with ease, pointing out that this service is considered one of the forefront of modern mobility solutions because

municipality, communication, and Ashghal announce finishing stages of Public Parking **Management Project**

it relies on advanced technologies. It combines the Internet of Things, cloud computing and user-friendly interfaces, such as artificial intelligence and remote sensing tech-

She added that the ministry is pleased to develop the smart parking service with our partners in the Ministry of Municipality and the Public Works Authority, as this co-operation works to improve the quality of life within the country, in addition to reducing traffic congestion, it supports environmental goals by reducing gas emissions from vehicles and improving air quality in urban areas.

Head of Doha City Design Team at Ashghal engineer Mohamed Ali al-Marri confirmed that the infrastructure works for approximately (18,210) vehicle parking lots have been completed in different areas, while infrastructure services included (1,056) parking lots inside the right-of-way and (791) outside the right-of-way in the West Bay area, the Qatar Energy District and the Corniche, in addition to (1,537) parking spaces inside the right of way and (637) outside the right of way in central Doha.

He pointed out, during the press conference, Ashghal's keenness to create an environmental balance between the spaces allocated for parking and pedestrian paths that aim to promote a healthy lifestyle, while being keen to increase green spaces and provide the necessary



Officials from the Ministry of Municipality, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, and the Public Works Authority announced the completion stages of the Public Parking



A section of the audience at the announcement ceremony.

infrastructure for alternative means of transportation. Some parking lots on the Corniche Road have also been allocated for electric cars, in line with the country's trend in achieving environmental sustainability, reducing carbon dioxide emissions, and the trend towards using alternative energy means.

It is worth noting that organising parking is considered one of the important elements in promoting the Qatar National Vision 2030, the master plan for parking for the country, and the master plan for transportation in Qatar 2050.

Work is also currently underway to ensure that the smart parking management system in the "Tasmu project addresses all points related to the mechanism of reserving parking, collecting fees for it, controlling violations, and applying penalties.

Meanwhile, the technical office at the Ministry of Municipality is working to complete the prepara-

tion of the road map for managing public and private parking in the country, in co-ordination with the Public Works Authority and the relevant departments in the ministry.

It is noteworthy that the Public Relations Department at the Ministry of Municipality is implementing a media campaign to educate the community about the public parking management system and inform the public of the parking reservation mechanism and the violations and penalties associated with it, while working to launch a trial period for the project in co-ordination with the relevant authorities and departments by organising training workshops for municipalities and private companies working in the field of parking management to explain the vehicle parking management system in accordance with the regulations of the law and the smart parking management system in the "Tasmu" project.

Industrial Wastewater Treatment Plant wins international health, safety awards

QNA

The Public Works Authority (Ashghal) has made a new achievement in the fields of health and safety (HS), which are two key strategic pillars for Ashghal. The authority, represented by the Drainage Networks Projects Department, has won the 'Distinction' award from the British Safety Council and the 'Gold' award from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) for 2023. for the Industrial Wastewater

Treatment Plant Project (Phase 1). Commenting on these two achievements, Drainage Networks Projects Department Manager at Ashghal engineer Khalid Saif al-Khayareen stated: "The authority prioritizes the safety of its workers in line with its strategy to implement sustainable infrastructure projects, while recording outstanding health and safety performance. These awards reflect the authority's efforts and desire to co-operate effectively with all its partners to implement the highest standards of worksite safety, raise awareness and encourage the adoption of best practices in the

The Industrial Wastewater Treatment Plant Project (Phase 1) has achieved 3.5mn manhours without injuries since the project commencement. The project received certification from ISO 14001:2015 in Environmental Management System and ISO 45001:2018 in Occupational Health and Safety Management. both of which are considered an important achievement for the



The authority, represented by the Drainage Networks Projects Department, has won the 'Distinction' award from the British Safety Council and the 'Gold' award from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) for 2023, for the Industrial Wastewater Treatment Plant Project (Phase 1).

project and the authority as a

In this context, Head of Treatment Plants and TSE Network Projects Section engineer Abdulrahman Mohamed al-Sulaiti commented saying that Ashghal requires that contractors provide a clear and integrated plan with specific standards and procedures to provide a healthy and safe working environment for workers.

The authority also monitors contractors' performance at worksites in all projects and requires them to submit periodic reports during projects to ensure adherence to these standards. Additionally, several initiatives have been implemented to enhance contractors' safety culture, including by rewarding companies that are most committed to safety standards. Ashghal is implementing construction works for the first



Engineer Khalid Saif al-Khayareen

phase of the Industrial Wastewater Treatment Plant Project, with the aim of providing a cutting-edge treatment plant dedicated to industrial wastewater treatment a first of its kind in the State of Qatar. Ashghal has made significant progress in implementing the project according to schedule, with about 72% of the work completed to date.







The Industrial Wastewater Treatment Plant Project (Phase 1) has achieved 3.5mn man-hours without injuries

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Amir's UNGA speech draws widespread media attention

he Arab and international media followed with great interest the speech delivered by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani at the opening session of the 78th UN General Assembly (UNGA 78), held on Tuesday in New York City, US, as a large portion of their news coverage was devoted to it.

The media also highlighted the Arab and international issues included in the speech, focusing on His Highness the Amir's statement that Qatar continues to adhere to the principled position on justice for the Palestinian issue, which has become a test of credibility of the world's politicians towards the Middle East.

Under the title 'Qatar's Amir vows to continue efforts to promote peace,' the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) referred to His Highness the Amir's reaffirmation of "the importance of resolving disputes with peaceful means," declaring his country's commitment to continuing efforts to facilitate peace.

KUNA added that His Highness the Amir stated that this matter constitutes a "firm commitment deeply rooted in the core of our foreign policy," explaining that "responsibility also prompts the State to strengthen its role in providing humanitarian aid, exerting mediation efforts and resolving conflicts that affect our region."

KUNA explained that His Highness the Amir affirmed that Qatar "continues its adherence to the firm stance regarding the fairness of this cause, which has become a credibility test for world politicians in relation to the Middle East region," adding that "Qatar provides political, humanitarian and developmental support to the brotherly Palestinian people and contributes to the rebuilding of the Gaza Strip which is reeling under the siege, in addition to its continuous contribution to UNRWA funds."

The Jordan News Agency (Petra) also reported His Highness the Amir's emphasis on the Palestinian cause becoming "a credibility test for world politicians in relation to the Middle East region," adding that Qatar, "continues its adherence to the firm stance regarding the fairness of this cause." The Algeria Press Service also noted His Highness the Amir's statements on the Palestinian issue and how it is not acceptable for the Palestin-

• The media highlighted the Arab and international issues included in the speech, focusing on His Highness the Amir's statement that Qatar continues to adhere to the principled position on justice for the Palestinian issue

ian people to remain prisoners of the Israeli settler occupation's arbitrariness, and the rejection of any just political solution, pointing out that the "the failure of the international organisation to take action against the occupation provided and continues to provide the opportunity for Israel to undermine the foundations of the two-state solution by means of settlement expansion until the occupation has brazenly taken the form of an apartheid regime in broad daylight."

Turkiye's Anadolu Agency noted His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's call to support the Palestinian people to find a just political solution in addition to stopping the fighting in Sudan that has been raging for five months.

The Agency also highlighted His Highness the Amir's response

to the incidents of burning copies of the Holy Qur'an in a number of European countries, where he said: "I would say to my Muslim brethren that it is implausible for us to get distracted by a biased person whenever it occurs to him to provoke us by burning the Holy Qur'an or by other forms of triviality. The Qur'an is too Holy to be desecrated by a witless person."

He added that: "I would say to all those who seek to justify these hideous acts as freedom of expression: compromising the sanctity of others deliberately, that it should not be seen as an example of freedom of expression."

In a related context, various visual media outlets followed the speech of His Highness the Amir at the UNGA.

A report by Oman TV, which was covering the speeches de-

livered by world leaders at the UNGA, stated that the speech of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani included a call of solidarity and efforts for a safer and more stable world, pointing out to His Highness the Amir's speech where he said: "If we truthfully constitute an international community, and not merely diverse entities, it must be our duty to strive towards ending the injustice afflicting them, at least in accordance with what is required by the resolutions of this body, and entailed by international law. It is not acceptable for the Palestinian people to remain prisoners of the Israeli settler occupation arbitrariness, and the rejection of any just political solution in accordance with the principles of international legitimacy by successive Israeli govern-

The Lebanese Al-Jadeed TV quoted in its news bulletin an excerpt from His Highness the Amir's speech, noting that the Amir of Qatar His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani had stressed in his speech the necessity of finding a sustainable solution to the

political vacuum in Lebanon and introducing mechanisms to prevent it from recurring.

His Highness the Amir's speech also received the attention of Turkish channel TRT Arabic, which stated in its report that the Amir of Qatar His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani had pointed out that people on Earth are living in two different eras due to the contradiction between scientific and technological development, and the spread of famines and wars that have exacerbated the migration crisis.

The report, which appeared in the news bulletin, quoted part of His Highness the Amir's speech in which he said:"In areas such as genetics and artificial intelligence, the possibilities for realising the well-being of all humanity are increasing. But the gap between possibility and reality is also widening. However, as these possibilities are unfolding in the same era, there are people who are grappling with child labour, starvation, unemployment and civil wars, while developed countries guard their borders against the influx of refugees fleeing this suffering." (QNA)

Qatar joins DCO to boost digital economy

atar has declared its formal membership to the Digital Co-operation Organisation (DCO), a recently established organisation with the aim of enhancing international co-operation in the areas of innovation, empowerment and accelerating the growth of the digital economy.

The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology said in a statement yesterday that this is a strategic step that demonstrates Qatar's dedication to growing the digital economy.

HE the Minister of Communications and Information Technology Mohamed bin Ali al-Mannai noted: "Our association with the DCO reflects Qatar's digital aspirations and our resolve to promote worldwide digital advancement. We aim to integrate Qatar's digital strides with the collective expertise of the DCO members." He added that Qatar's accession to DCO is part of the country's strategy to enhance Oatar's role as a major player internationally in technology and digital innovation, seeking to strengthen the joint exchange of expertise, as well as empowering the youth and entrepreneurs to venture into the digital realm both on regional and international levels.

This membership emphasises Qatar's aim to lead in digital innovation and foster international digital collaboration.

By aligning with the DCO, Qatar now stands alongside 13-member nations of this organisation, which was instituted in 2020, encompassing over half a billion people. The DCO acts as a pivotal platform for nations aspiring to capitalise on digital transition for economic enhancement.

For her part, DCO Secretary-General Deemah al-Yahya expressed her enthusiasm regarding Qatar's entry, mentioning, "Qatar's association underlines the shared belief in the potential of digital collaboration. We anticipate a fruitful collaboration with Qatar's Ministry of Communications and Information Technology to champion comprehensive digital advancement for our international community." This association amplifies the DCOs collective capabilities, endorsing deeper collaboration in digital knowledge, tech breakthroughs, and innovative business solutions. It positions Qatar for accelerated digital economic development, offering an avenue to vast IT and communication sectors via the DCO's extensive network of member states and partners.

Central to the DCO's mission is the upliftment of the youth, women, and emerging entrepreneurs. The organisation advocates for enhanced digital access, skills development, and international digital prospects. It also highlights the need for a cohesive digital framework, including pivotal policies, regulations, and educational initiatives. It also aim to enhance cross-border data flows, encourage small and medium enterprises, and support entrepreneurship.

Given Qatar's significant digital transformation endeavours, the collaboration with the DCO is set to bolster the international digital landscape. (QNA)

Shura attends Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union executive committee meeting



The Shura Council participated in the meeting of the 32nd session of the Executive Committee of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union, which was held yesterday in Baghdad. The Council is represented at the meeting by Member of the Shura Council and Member of the Executive Committee Dr Sultan bin Hassan al-Dhabet al-Dosari. The meeting discussed the secretary-general's report and mechanisms for developing the work of the union. The draft work programme and the draft general budget for 2024 were also discussed, as well as the restructuring of special committees and other topics related to the work of the union. **(QNA)**



Qatar attends high-level Global Development Initiative meeting

Qatar participated in the high-level meeting on Global Development Initiative (GDI) co-operation outcomes for the Sustainable Development Goals, which was held on the sidelines of the meetings of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly in New York. Qatar was represented at the meeting by HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater.



ANNOUNCEMENT

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AlKhater meets UNRWA commissioner-general and Canadian minister



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater met with Commissioner-General of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Philippe Lazzarini, on the sidelines of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly in New York. The meeting discussed co-operation between Qatar and UNRWA. HE AlKhater affirmed Qatar's firm position on justice for the Palestinian cause and its enduring support for the Palestinian refugees, and lauded the role undertaken by UNRWA in this respect. Lazzarini extended his thanks and appreciation to Qatar. **(QNA)**



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater met in New York with Canadian Minister of International Development Ahmed Hussen on the sidelines of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly. They discussed co-operation between the countries and ways to support and enhance them, especially in international development, particularly in Africa, global food security, in addition to humanitarian aid to a number of countries, including Afghanistan. **(QNA)**

Raffles Doha, McLaren unveil afternoon tea collaboration

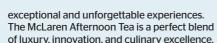
affles Doha, 'the epitome of luxury and elegance in Qatar', has announced a collaboration with McLaren, the renowned British supercar manufacturer, to launch an 'exclusive and exhilarating afternoon tea experience' to Malaki Lounge, where 'high tea meets the Grand Prix'.

This limited-time culinary journey is meticulously crafted by the culinary artisans at Raffles, showcasing the finest and freshest seasonal ingredients, all presented in true Raffles artistry, a statement explained yesterday.

Guests will have the opportunity to include in this 'extraordinary experience' until October 12, between 2pm and 9pm at Malaki Lounge, priced at QR330 per person. As part of the collaboration, Raffles Doha and McLaren Doha are also offering guests to book a McLaren test drive. In addition to the culinary excellence and the McLaren test drive experience, this collaboration is a celebration of the highly anticipated F1 Grand Prix and Geneva Motor Show coming to Qatar.

"We are delighted to partner with McLaren for this unique afternoon tea collaboration," said Christian Hirt, managing director at Raffles and Fairmont Doha. "At Raffles, we are committed to offering our guests the most







It's an experience that combines the worlds of motorsport and gastronomy, and we can't wait for our quests to enjoy it.'

Malabar Gold launches gold rate offer

alabar Gold & Diamonds, the sixth largest jewellery retailer globally with an extensive retail presence of over 330 showrooms across 11 countries, has announced its gold rate protection offer until November 12, allowing customers to block gold rates by paying 10% of the amount as advance.

The brand is also giving customers a free diamond gift voucher worth QR100 for advance bookings made on or before October 22, a statement said.

If the gold rate increases at the time of purchase, customers can avail of the blocked rate and if it reduces, they can still draw mileage of the reduced rate.

The offer will be valid across all Malabar Gold & Diamonds showrooms. Customers can either pay the advance directly at the outlet or online, via Malabar Gold & Diamonds' mobile app. The free gift voucher will be available only for the first 10% advance booking made by a customer before October 22. The gift voucher can be redeemed on or before November 12 at any Malabar Gold & Diamonds showrooms in the country of issue.

"Festive season is just around the corner with the next six months being all about festivals, celebrations, and weddings. Jewellery shopping is an integral part of this season and we want to ensure our customers get to maximise the benefits during this key shopping period, which is why we have introduced the Pay 10% advance booking offer," commented Shamlal Ahamed, managing director - International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds had recently announced its latest policy of 100% value on diamond exchange, making diamonds an equally attractive investment option as gold, the statement added.

Qatar Airways Holidays launches travel packages for Expo 2023 Doha

ith the spotlight on Doha as the first city in the Middle East and North Africa to host an Al International Horticultural Exhibition, Qatar Airways Holidays has launched "flight-and-hotel" packages with complimentary access to Expo 2023 Doha.

Travellers can expect to venture

into the future of sustainability and innovation, while also enjoying Qatar's year-round sunshine making it the ideal family getaway.

With unbeatable package pricing, transform your Expo 2023 Doha experience into an unforgettable adventure.

Expo 2023 Doha, which is expected to attract an estimated 3mn visitors from around the globe, will take place in Al Bidda Park from October 2 to March 28,

By choosing an all-inclusive package through Qatar Airways Holidays, travellers will not only secure their flights and accommodations but also gain complimentary access to the immersive world of Expo 2023 Doha.

ecutive, HE Akbar al-Baker said, "Expo 2023 Doha is set to be a hub of cultural, environmental, and technological marvels. As the Official Strategic Partner, Qatar Airways is committed to facilitating a seamless travel experience for international guests, showcasing Qatar's signature hospitality and extending a happy welcome to all destinations into one hub at Expo





Chopard

Chopard Loves Cinema

Julia Roberts shines as Chopard's global ambassador in a new Feel-Good campaign by James Gray and Alasdair McLellan

The face of the Happy Sport and Happy Diamonds collections since 2021, Chopard global ambassador Julia Roberts is now the muse of all the Maison's women's watch and jewellery collections. To celebrate this special bond, Chopard and Julia Roberts are combining their shared love of cinema through a campaign orchestrated by James Gray consisting of 12 video clips to be unveiled from March 20th 2023 - the International Day of Happiness - in which the director has captured all the audacity, playfulness and humanity that make Julia Roberts a contemporary icon. The films are accompanied by a new advertising campaign featuring visuals by photographer Alasdair McLellan. With all the power of a sunny disposition, the most beautiful and famous smile in cinema embodies everything that makes Chopard unique: virtuosity, Joie de Vivre and the Feel-Good spirit. Its positive energy spreads like a tidal wave giving women unshakeable confidence in themselves. Selected by Julia Roberts as talismans, Chopard watches and jewellery symbolise the blossoming of each individual, a sense of well-being extending well beyond Joie de Vivre and exuding an unmistakably radiant sparkle.

Backstage with Julia Roberts

Who has never dreamed of going behind the scenes of a Hollywood movie? Today, Chopard and James Gray are extending an invitation to this secret incursion, as James Gray captures the famous generally unseen backstage glimpses that are an integral part of a film set's charm in the latest Chopard Loves Cinema campaign.

Twelve episodes have been unveiled over the past few months, stating March 20th 2023: the International Day of Happiness that Chopard echoes on a global scale. "To me, every day is international happiness day, Global Happiness Day", says the actress. Chopard's Co-President and Artistic Director shares more details: "After our Happy Diamonds





Photo credit: Greg Williams

a mesmerising and twirling Julia Roberts illustrating the pure, immediate and communicative happiness at the heart of Chopard's spirit, this new series broadens the spectrum of the initial momentum. We are revealing a new facet of our identity, the Feel-Good vibe: the self-confidence instilled by Chopard jewellery or watches, reverberating in the air and infusing the entire surrounding universe with positive energy.'

An icon as you have never seen her

This is Julia Roberts in action, joking around offcamera, spreading her joy and larks. She knits, finds something nice to say about everyone, slips into trainers under her glamorous dresses, takes over the camera herself and interrupts her script rehearsal to cuddle her dog Myrtle that jumps on her lap.

Throwing herself whole-heartedly into this game somewhere between improvisation and script, Julia Roberts recalls her best memory at the Cannes Festival. It was with Chopard, in 2016: "The first time I was there, running late and racing down the hallway. Somebody was still sewing me into my dress, so we were all running down the hallway to the elevator and somebody was sewing away. And I just thought 'It's so classic'. It was a "Cannes"-

Julia Roberts is thus captured by the camera as the embodiment of a fulfilled woman. By filming these stolen backstage moments, James Gray has the ability to show in front of the camera what is going on behind the scenes. which is precisely what breathes life and magic into all the Feel-Good films in which Julia Roberts has been so

Adorned with her Chopard jewellery and buoyed by the confidence it instils in her, in turn, Julia Roberts brings her unique magic to the set. Making a film is above all about ensuring that everyone feels good and acknowledged, thus finding their own place in a shared adventure that leaves

no one on the sidelines. Chopard plays the part

As the campaign progresses, we get a look into the antechamber of a vast building full of huge studios bustling with crew members and precautions, props and







fulfilment and freedom. The impulses of the heart reign

supreme, intrinsically bound up with emotions and ready

to be generously shared around the world.





HMC's Urology dept receives top American accreditation



HMC officials and doctors with the accreditation.

The Urology Department at Hazm Mebaireek General Hospital (HMGH) of Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), has been accredited by American North Carolina Surgical Review Corporation as an outstanding surgical department in the treatment of urinary stones.

This accreditation evaluates surgical departments using standards of safety, competence, effectiveness and patient care quality. It is one of the programmes of the North Carolina Surgical Review Corporation and is considered the best in its category for medical professionals, surgeons, hospitals, and independent outpatient clinics worldwide. Dr Abdullah al-Ansari, chief medical officer HMC, said the corporation utilises the most advanced specialised medical technologies in its various surgical departments as part of its commitment to providing the best levels of medical care for patients and visitors.

The expansion of hospital capacity and the enhancement of

the quality of care provided, have contributed to the development of surgical services at HMC, where thousands of diverse surgical procedures have been performed, achieving success rates that rival global averages in this field.

"Patients and visitors now benefit from the availability of the best diagnostic tools and advanced treatment methods in Qatar, where the state has invested extensively in modern medical technology over the past few years, with notable success," al-Ansari added. Dr Ahmad al-Mohamed, medical director at HMGH, said: "This accreditation will enhance the hospital's medical reputation internationally. We encourage other departments to seek international accreditations that will enhance the hospital's medical reputation and improve the quality of healthcare provided

Dr Morshed Ali Salah, chief consultant of urology and head of Surgery Departments at HMGH, explained: "We obtained this accreditation for three years after evaluating 1,367 surgical procedures conducted over 15 months in urinary stones. The results of these operations were monitored, and safety, competence, and effectiveness standards were applied. This accreditation is evidence of the efforts made by the Urology Department to enhance patient safety and ensure the best healthcare for them after undergoing urinary stone surgeries."

Dr Salah also confirmed plans to accredit other surgical departments in the hospital. He pointed out that the Urology Department completed 4,086 surgical procedures between July 2019 and August 2023, including 1,441 surgeries in 2022 and 1,165 surgeries since the beginning of 2023 until the end of August. He emphasised that most of these procedures were urinary stone surgeries performed using endoscopy and laser techniques, in addition to extracorporeal shock wave lithotripsy procedures for 823 patients between May 2022 and August 2023.

Panel calls for innovative solutions to bridge education financing gaps

ebt, declining development aid, and lack of domestic funding are holding back efforts to achieve access to quality primary education for all children, noted a high-level panel of finance experts during a discussion held yesterday by Education Above All (EAA) Foundation in partnership with the World Bank, the Government of Sierra Leone and the Islamic Development Bank.

Entitled "Roadblocks to Achieving SDG4: The Impact of Education Financing Gaps and Lack of Domestic Resources on Reaching the SDG4 targets", the panel discussion, held at the Qatar Mission HQ in New York, was a key event on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly.

Panellists included Conrad Sackey, Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education of Sierra Leone; Dr Hiba Ahmed, director general, ISFD (Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development); Dr Luis Benveniste, global director for education, World Bank; Dr Robert Jenkins, Unicef, global director Education and Adolescent Development; and Thomas Beloe, chief of programme at UNDP's Sustainable Finance Hub.

"We must urgently reverse the concerning and declining trend in education funding"

Fahad al-Sulaiti, CEO EAA, hosted the group that was moderated by Dr Manos Antoninis, director of the Global Education Monitoring Report.

Speakers stated that in order to support increased access to, and better quality education, in low and lower-middle income countries, especially for those who have been left the furthest behind, we have to be even more creative.

The session found a need to consider how to address the

debt burden and find new, innovative and creative ways to engage and harness local resources in addition to hard money, include greater community participation in key aspects of education and to better leverage private sector investments in support of future economic outcomes as well as finding greater efficiencies in how existing resources are utilised. Speakers proposed innovative solutions to increase financing, such as improving efficiency and exploring nontraditional funding sources.

Al-Sulaiti said: "We must urgently reverse the concerning and declining trend in education funding. The Covid-19 crisis has not only disrupted children's education, but also led two-thirds of low and lower-middle-income countries to cut their public education budget. To add to this, education is receiving a reduced share of aid from donor countries."

RACA aspires to harness power of AI for charitable work

In co-operation with Qatar University and Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), the Regulatory Authority for Charitable Activities (RACA) held a meeting to discuss artificial intelligence (AI) and its relation to charitable and developmental work.

The meeting discussed ways to harness AI to serve the charitable work in Qatar and to develop this sector as well as to achieve the desired goals, especially the methods of directing assistance to the most groups in need, predicting crises and humanitarian needs, engaging donors and volunteers, interacting with the public and beneficiaries, data analysis and strategic direction, and improving project and resource management through AI. The meeting discussed many items, suggestions and initial ideas that AI can contribute to serving Qatari charitable work, most notably data analysis and strategic direction, what it

can provide in helping charitable organisations, extracting patterns and trends, and the possibility of using this information to determine needs and priorities, and thus improving the planning of charitable programmes and projects.

Among the ideas discussed at the meeting were communicating and involving donors and volunteers, designing targeted awareness campaigns, or improving the online donation experience, in addition to improving project and resource management by analysing data and identifying places that need more focus and support.

These ideas and proposals will require a rigorous scientific effort and the preparation of studies on transforming these ideas into applied work mechanisms and implementing them in cooperation between the concerned and competent authorities. (QNA)

CGB, QU sign pact for research, career development

he Civil Service and Government Development Bureau (CGB), represented by the Institute of Public Administration, signed an agreement with Qatar University (QU)'s College of Business and Economics in training research and career development, to serve common interests and empower and develop the human element in government agencies.

Through the five-year agreement, the College of Business and Economics will prepare research papers on current challenges facing government agencies to help find appropriate and innovative solutions, as well as prepare case studies and short research papers that enrich training programmes.

It also aims to prepare reports for training programmes as well as prepare and implement joint training programmes to support innovation culture, entrepreneurship and sustainability,



in addition to preparing research and benchmarks on the latest global trends in the field of training and reviewing the content of the training programmes of the Institute of Public Administration.

Azza al-Ali, who oversees the duties of the Director of Knowledge for Capacity Building Department at CGB, said that the agreement comes within the framework of CGB's efforts to strengthen partnerships with governmental and semi-gov-

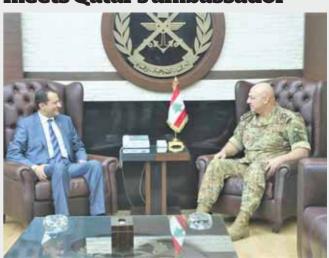
ernmental agencies in Qatar, based on CGB's belief in national competencies and their role in advancing government develop-

By partnering with QU, the CGB aims to prepare studies and research as well as provide training programmes that suit the needs of government agencies and their employees, which contributes to improving public services by investing in national cadres, al-Ali added. For her part,

the Dean of the College of Business and Economics at QU Prof Rana Sobh stated that the agreement comes within the framework of the college's endeavour to maximise its impact on the business environment and society locally and regionally, and to activate its co-operation and partnerships with various stakeholders, through several initiatives that the college seeks to implement in the pext period

plement in the next period.
Sobh also pointed out that these initiatives aim to link scientific research with the needs of society and spread scientific knowledge in a way that suits policymakers and managers, as well as participate in activities that lead to organisational and societal changes that contribute to making a fundamental impact on the way institutions work and their positive impact on the sustainable development of Qatar, socially and economically. (QNA)

Lebanese army commander meets Qatar's ambassador



Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces, General Joseph Aoun, met yesterday with Qatar's ambassador in Beirut Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman al-Thani. During the meeting, bilateral relations were reviewed. For his part, Gen Aoun extended thanks to Qatar for all the support it provided to the Lebanese Army, including salaries, food supplies and fuel. He also hailed Qatar's ongoing support for Lebanon. **(QNA)**

Qatar projecting soft power on the global stage

From Page 1

Qatar played a crucial role in hosting peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban on one hand and between the Taliban and the US on the other, facilitating the withdrawal of the American troops as well as military and civilian personnel of many other countries.

In fact, Qatar played an outsized role in US efforts to evacuate tens of thousands of people from Afghanistan. After the swift Taliban takeover of Kabul on August 15, the US looked to Qatar to help with the evacuation of tens of thousands in a chaotic and hurried airlift.

In the end, nearly 40% of all evacuees were moved out via Qatar. International media outlets also asked Qatar for help

with their staff evacuations.

Qatar's involvement in mediating the Darfur conflict in Sudan showcased its dedication to addressing humanitarian crises. In 2011, Qatar hosted negotiations between the Sudanese government and rebel groups in the Darfur region, resulting in the signing of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD). While challenges persist, Qatar's efforts contributed to a significant reduction in violence and marked progress toward a lasting peace in Darfur.

In Mali, Qatar played a critical role in mediating between the Malian government and various rebel groups. Qatar's engagement in the region highlights its commitment to promoting stability and security in Africa.

Our Say

Doha has also been actively involved in mediating the complex political landscape of Somalia. The country has facilitated talks between various Somali factions, contributing to political stability and progress in the country. Qatar's role in mediating the Somali crisis underscores its dedication to addressing conflicts in the Horn of Africa and fostering regional co-operation.

Qatar's mediation successes in various global conflicts have enhanced its reputation as a reliable mediator and a promoter of peace and stability. Several factors contribute to Qatar's ability to project

soft power effectively: 1. Neutrality: Qatar's policy of neutrality allows it to engage with conflicting parties without being perceived as biased. This neutrality builds trust among stakeholders and makes Qatar an attractive mediator. 2. Diplomatic Expertise: Qatar has invested significantly in building diplomatic capabilities, including hosting international forums and establishing institutions dedicated to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. 3. Strategic Location: Qatar's geographic location in the Middle East positions it as a crucial intermediary in regional disputes, allowing it to play a pivotal role in diplomacy and crisis resolution. 4. Humanitarian Efforts: Qatar's commitment to humanitarian aid and development

in conflict-affected regions reinforces its image as a compassionate and responsible global actor.

His Highness the Amir Sheilth

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani has always been quick to issue directives to dispatch aid to calamity-stricken countries. Qatar has the capacity to establish air bridges and transport significant quantities of relief materials in humanitarian operations spearheaded by its air force and charitable institutions like Qatar Red Crescent and Qatar Charity. Qatar's search and rescue team is also well-known for its expertise and devotion in helping out countries hit by natural calamities like earthquakes or floods. Qatar's rescue and relief teams have made meaningful intervention in Turkiye and Morocco, two countries which

have been hit by devastating earthquakes in the recent past.

Analysts agree Qatar's mediation successes and charitable work underscore its growing soft power and diplomatic prowess. The nation's ability to bring parties to the negotiating table and facilitate dialogue has contributed to peace and stability in some of the world's most challenging regions. Qatar's dedication to conflict resolution and its neutrality position it as a valuable mediator on the global stage, and its soft power continues to shape international diplomacy in meaningful ways.

In the end, what Qatar would like to see is a region free of disputes and one that resolves conflicts in sound and diplomatic ways.

(falmudahka@gulf-times.com)



Qatar Charity launches aid convoy in Sudan

atar's ambassador to Sudan Mohamed Ibrahim al-Sada inaugurated in Port Sudan a catar Charity (QC) food aid convoy for families affected by the floods in the Alaalyab area.

The convoy is the first relief intervention of its kind for those affected by the floods in the River Nile State this fall.

The envoy lauded the rapid response of QC and stressed the continued support of Qatar to the brothers in Sudan.

He praised QC's implementation of many important food and health projects during the past months to help internally displaced persons (IDPs), the stranded, and those affected by the war in several states.

Ambassador al-Sada noted that



QC responded, with the support of the philanthropists in Qatar, by implementing the first relief intervention, after the war, to support the affected hospitals in Khar-

toum. He indicated that OC also took the initiative to provide the first consignment of cancer drugs since the start of the war through a special air lift that included 62



tonnes of medicines and medical supplies for patients with cancer and kidney failure. He mentioned that QC continues to support the implementation of water, sanitation, and food projects for the affected.

The urgent convov of OC for the affected families in the Alaalyab area of the River Nile State contained 13 tonnes of necessary food aid for 2,400 affected people in the

The Qatari envoy, accompanied by senior officials from the Ministry of Health, also visited the dialysis centre of Port Sudan where dialysis medicines and consumables were delivered to ensure the continuity of service provided to the patients.

The Sudanese officials praised QC's continuous support to the most vulnerable and needy people affected by the war, and expressed their deep appreciation to His Highness the Amir, the government, and the people of Oatar for their unlimited support to their brothers in Sudan during all crises.

VCUarts Qatar's exhibition at Ars Electronica Festival draws great participation

CommonwealthUniversity School of the Arts in Qatar (VCUarts Qatar), a Qatar Foundation partner, made its debut at the worldrenowned Ars Electronica Festival 2023, in Linz, Austria, recently, which invoked great participation from the visitors.

VCUarts Qatar had its presence alongside 55 other universities from across the globe in a dedicated space titled "Ars Electronica Campus Exhibition".

The university's individual exhibition was titled "Meta-Functions of Cultural Production" and featured a selection of 10 works produced by undergraduate and graduate students and student-faculty collaborations.

The works on display included Arabic typographic forms, nanotechnology for increased functionality in textiles, generative processes translating patterns to sound, usages of artificial intelligence datasets

for blind contour drawings, prototyping for responsive architecture, and a visual exploration into the cultural conceptions of place.

The projects were "Preceding Emptiness: Alternative Arabic Typographic Technologies" by Levi Hammett, Mohamed Suleiman, Hind al-Saad and Fatima Abbas; "Simulated Fashion" by Hadeer Omar in collaboration with the University's Art Foundation programme's Time Studio; Ghayda Abduljalil's "Fast Paced Life"; "Nanoabaya" by Noor Rashid Butt, Khaled Saoud and Christopher Fink; "Stitch by Stitch" by Naima Almajdobah; "Sacred Silence" by Basma Hamdy, Shima Aeinehdar and Selma Fejzullaj; "Electric Calligraphy" by Lana Abou Selo, Fatima Abbas and Levi Hammett; "Rays of Essence" by Hind al-Saad, Sara Khalid, Joshua Rodenberg and Fatima Abbas; "Transformative Distortions" by Jood Elbeshti;

and Jameela AlHumaidi's "Morphing Memories".

The installations - at the intersection of art, design, culture, technology and new media - roused the curiosity of attendees, resulting in some "memorable" conversations between the VCUarts Qatar participants and visitors.

Jood Elbeshti, one of the participants, said: "Visitors often posed a variety of thought-provoking questions, ranging from inquiries about the technical aspects of my work to deeper explorations of its conceptual underpinnings. Some were curious about the materials and techniques I employed and wanted to understand the process behind my creations. Others delved into the symbolism and themes in my art, inquiring about the ideas that drove my creative choices. I had quite a few memorable discussions about the intricate facets of my project, fostering a deeper connection between my work and its audience?



VCUarts Qatar at Ars Electronica Festival 2023.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), in co-operation with Alfardan Automobiles, has announced the recall of BMW X5 40i, X6 40i, X7 40i,735i Saloon, and 740i Saloon, 2023 models over the possibility of the exhaust valve remaining closed, causing a possible malfunction in the engine if the transmission spring breaks due to wear.

The MoCI said the recall campaign comes within the framework of its ongoing efforts to protect consumers and ensure that dealers follow up on vehicle defects and repairs.

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

DAAM to support camel racing season

The Social & Sport Contribution Fund (DAAM) has announced its support for the 2023-2024 camel racing season, a statement said yesterday.

The new season commenced at Al Sheehaniya racetrack on September 2, and will run until April

It features eight local races and three festivals, including the Sheikh Jassim bin Mohamed bin Thani Festival for Purebred Arabian Camels, which will take place from November 25-December 6, 2023, the Purebred Arabian Camel Festival for the Sword of His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani from January 13-19, 2024, and the Purebred Arabian Camel Festival for the Sword of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, from February 24-March 7, 2024.

The close collaboration between DAAM and the organising committee of camel racing over the past years has been a key factor in the annual season's success. This partnership has witnessed significant growth in the sport, unprecedented local and regional participation, making it one of the most attractive events for enthusiasts of the



Since its establishment in 2010, DAAM has laid the foundation for numerous vital projects and initiatives in the social, sports, and cultural realms.

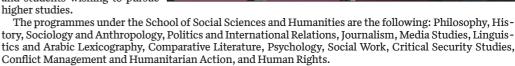
The contributions from the companies listed on the Qatar Stock Exchange, serve as key financial resources for the fund, making them integral partners in achieving sustainable community development in alignment with Qatar National Vision 2030, the statement added.

Induction Day organised at DI

he Doha Institute for Graduate Studies (DI) organised the first Induction Day for Master's and Doctoral Studies Programmes offered by its two schools, a statement said yesterday.

The event organised by the Student Affairs Department

was aimed at undergraduates and students wishing to pursue



The programmes under the School of Economics, Administration and Public Policy are Master of Public Administration, Executive Master of Public Administration, Master of Development Economics, Master of Public Policy and the Executive Dual Degree master's in Business Administration and Public Administration. The DI also offers eight programmes for Doctoral Studies: Development Economics, Public Administration, Politics and International Relations, Linguistics and Arabic Lexicography, History, Sociology and Anthropology, Media Studies and Critical Security Studies.

The DI also announced the opening of admission applications for the academic year 2024-2025 and will continue receiving applications until January 15, 2024.

Ehsan to hold Alzheimer's Awareness Walk todav

The Center for Empowerment and Care of the Elderly (Fhsan), an affiliate of the Ministry of Social Development and Family's Qatar Social Work Foundation, will today organise a walk to raise awareness of Alzheimer's disease under the theme 'Not too early, not too late'.

The walk focuses on the risk factors associated with the disease and ways to reduce them, trying to change the stereotypes about Alzheimer's, and the importance of taking all precautionary measures to reduce

Ehsan's Executive Director Fahad bin Mohamed al-Khavarin stressed the importance of community participation in raising awareness of the disease. The number of people with Alzheimer's is expected to

reach three times the current number by 2050. Alzheimer's is not classified as an age-related disease, al-Khayarin said adding there are many factors that help fight the disease, including improving the quality of life. adopting healthy life practices early on and taking up

Rafeeq Company CEO Abdullah Thamer al-Hemaidi said his firm would continue partnerships with the state agencies to help the elderly.

Director of the CEO Office and Public Relations of Qatari Diar Ahmed Mohamed al-Sada expressed deep appreciation of Ehsan for its vital role in holding important social events and initiatives such as the Alzheimer's Awareness Walk at Lusail Trail. - ONA

Regional workshop discusses dementia challenges

he Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), the World Health Organisation (WHO), and Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC)'s WHO Collaborating Centre for Healthy Ageing and Dementia recently organised a three-day regional workshop to follow up the implementation of the Global Action Plan on the public health response to dementia 2017-2025.

This followed the previous workshop held in May last year in Qatar, which focused on addressing dementia-related challenges and accelerating the multisectoral innovative collaboration to configure and implement specific regional and local responses to the rising health concern globally caused by dementia.

Representatives of WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, as well as representatives from the MoPH, civil society, people living with dementia, their families and caregivers participated in the

workshop to share knowledge and best practices to strengthen public health response to dementia in areas related to dementia policy, risk reduction, awareness, diagnosis, treatment, care and support for both dementia patients and caregivers. The workshop also tackled dementia information systems, research, and solutions.

This year's focus will be on ex-

panding the capacity of the Eastern Mediterranean Region countries to develop comprehensive national dementia plans and implement the existing plans for effective dementia care strategies to meet the unique needs of the region.
Dr Saleh al-Marri said: "It has

been a pleasure to work with colleagues and partners at WHO as we strategise and develop innovative solutions to shared healthcare challenges. HE Dr Hanan Mohamed al-Kuwari, Minister of Public Health, stresses the importance of disease prevention by improving health literacy, early screening programmes and promoting healthy lifestyle practices, and fully encourages all activities that support this."

Dr Rayana Buhaqa, WHO Representative in Qatar, underlined

WHO's commitment to supporting countries in the region to achieve the goals of the Global Action Plan on the Public Health Response to Dementia 2017-2025 and to develop regional, countryspecific, multisectoral responses to manage the health and social aspects of dementia.

Dr Hanadi al-Hamad, head of the WHO Collaborating Centre for

Healthy Ageing and DementiaCare, and vice-president of Long-Term, Rehabilitation and Geriatric Care at Hamad Medical Corporation, reiterated Qatar's commitment to strengthening partnerships and cooperation between countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region and stressed the importance of improving the quality of life for people living with dementia.

Dr al-Hamad added: "Our joint efforts are aimed at helping ensure that dementia care is given strategic attention and priority in the case of Qatar, as set out in the Qatar National Health Strategy 2018-2022. While we focus on raising public awareness, improving diagnostics and enhancing support for dementia patients and caregivers alike, we are also addressing the growing need for targeted research and innovation in this area. In addition, together we can work to better protect the rights of people living with dementia."





COMMENT

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What to make of Putin-Kim rendezvous

Russian President Vladimir Putin had obvious reasons for hosting North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un at Vostochny, Russia's new spaceport in eastern Siberia, this month. Owing to his illegal war of aggression in Ukraine, Putin is running low on both friends and ammunition

The Vostochny spaceport has a troubled history. Intended to replace the Baikonur facility in Kazakhstan, its construction was plagued by repeated delays and allegations of corruption and mismanagement. Now, it is rarely used - though it did launch the high-profile Luna-25 mission that crashed into the moon recently.

Russian-North Korean relations have a similar backstory. Once upon a time, the bond between the Kremlin and the Kim regime was tight. After all, communist North Korea was essentially a Soviet creation, and it relied heavily on Soviet support for decades. But following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian leaders saw more to gain by developing relations with booming South Korea. The Kremlin effectively switched sides, joining the (unsuccessful) international effort to prevent the Hermit Kingdom from developing nuclear weapons.

Now the situation has changed once again. Putin's attempt to erase Ukraine from the map of Europe has made Russia an international pariah – just like North Korea. Most of the world's developed economies have signed on to comprehensive sanctions against Russia, and the United Nations General Assembly has issued several resolutions condemning Putin's war of aggression. There are very few countries that have sided with Russia: Eritrea, Syria, Nicaragua, Belarus, Mali, and - of course - North Korea.

China and India might not openly condemn Russian

aggression, but nor have they endorsed it or done much to help Putin's war effort (other than purchasing Russian hydrocarbons)

Meanwhile, many countries that have abstained from these UN votes have increasingly made known their objections to Putin's war. At the recent G20 summit in New Delhi, for example, the final joint declaration included a clear affirmation of the principle of territorial integrity an obvious reference to Russian aggression and the Kremlin's misbegotten strategic objectives

Putin expected a quick victory when he launched his war in February 2022, but Russian forces have since lost roughly half of what they captured during the initial invasion. After nearly 600 days, they are bogged down and struggling to defend themselves against an independent, democratic Ukrainian polity that is determined to defend its freedom.

Under these conditions, where Putin needs every friend he can get, North Korea is suddenly back in the Kremlin's favour. With its thoroughly militarised society and abundant stocks of old Soviet-standard artillery ammunition, Kim's regime looks like a lifeline for Russia's flailing war effort.

Putin therefore had little choice but to roll out the red carpet for the North Korean dictator. Though the details of the Vostochny dealmaking will remain undisclosed, it is safe to assume that Russia will get ammunition in exchange for various essentials that North Korea desperately needs, not least food and energy. Beyond that, there has also been talk of Russia assisting North Korea in developing and deploying satellites, an area where it has been singularly unsuccessful.

Whatever the details, there can be little doubt that the deal violates the UN Security Council's sanctions against North Korea, which were originally put in place with Russian support. In claiming that the North Korea sanctions regime is a UN matter, not a Russian one, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov is being economical with the truth.

We are witnessing the emergence of an axis of outcasts: countries united in their willingness to violate international law by starting wars, developing nuclear weapons, and violating sanctions. This list also includes Iran, where Russia has been acquiring kamikaze drones with which to attack Ukrainian cities and civilians.

But make no mistake: reaching out to a country like North Korea is a $\,$ sign of profound weakness. China and India might not openly condemn Russian aggression, but nor have they endorsed it or done much to help Putin's war effort (other than purchasing Russian hydrocarbons). And whatever support Belarus, Eritrea, Syria, or Mali are capable of offering, it will not help the Kremlin achieve the aims of its "special military operation" in Ukraine. Nonetheless, these outcasts, driven by desperation, will deepen their co-operation, introducing new risks to regional stability and the global order. For example, if Russia furnishes North Korea with the technologies it needs to advance its missile or nuclear programmes, it is bound to have repercussions for Northeast Asian security.

Russia and North Korea may be failing in their space efforts. But their sanctions-busting and rule-breaking here on Earth are sure to have a destabilising effect on the international order. - Project Syndicate

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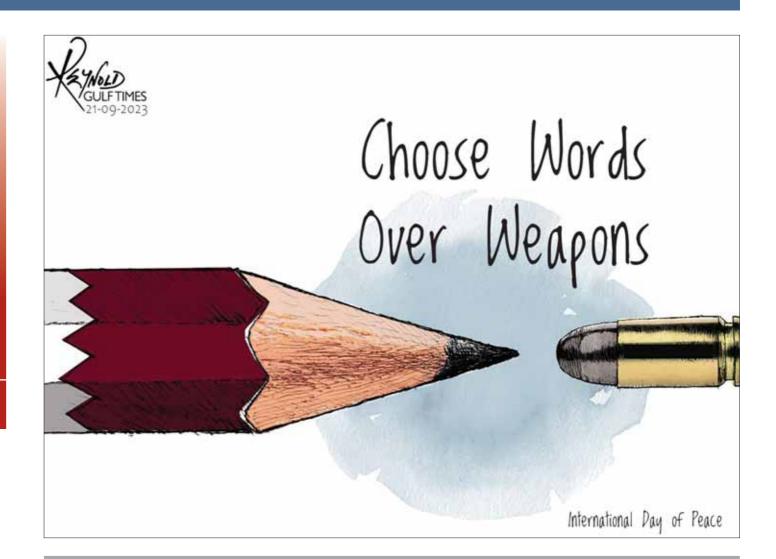
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Nepal eyes progressive and prosperous future



By Dr Naresh Bikram Dhakal

t is my great honour and privilege to extend warm felicitations and hearty ongratulations to every member α Nepali community currently residing in Qatar as well as to all Nepali people, both at home and abroad, on the happy occasion of Nepal's National Day and Ninth Constitution Day.

Nepal has been celebrating September 20 as the Constitution Day as National Day since 2016 to mark the historic promulgation of the Constitution of Nepal on September 20, 2015 by directly elected Constituent Assembly. This constitution has adopted a federal republic system that includes three tiers of government and has embraced the values of multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious, and multi-cultural society. Essential features of democracy, inclusion and social justice have been enshrined in it. While this constitution has settled various political aspirations of Nepalis ranging from democracy, inclusion and equal participation in the governance of the country, it has paved the way for achieving peace, progress and prosperity for the country.

As envisioned in the constitution, the first and second ever elections of the federation, province and the local levels of government were held in 2017 and 2022, respectively.

Over these times, Nepal has made tremendous achievements in terms of participation of women, youth, and different disadvantaged groups in politics

and other spheres of national life. The government has been focusing for making laws and bi-laws to strengthen the governing system for justice of people as well as development.

Nepal is now aiming forward to achieve economic growth and development, a longcherished aspiration of all the Nepalis. Nepal is scheduled to graduate from the status of Least Developed Country category in 2026 and aspires to become a middle-income country by 2030. Similarly, the country has internalised all sustainable development goals in its national plans and programmes while committing to reach net-zero carbon emission by 2045.

Nepal is endowed with rich natural and human resources. Nepal boasts of different flora and fauna as well as varieties of landscapes ranging from fertile plains in the south to the highest mountain of the world in the north. The topography ranging from 60 metres to 8,848.86 metres harbours abundant natural resources. On the occasion, I would like to invite for visiting naturally beautiful country Nepal.

This is where the sustainable investment on infrastructure and economic growth becomes critical. Nepal is looking for investment in infrastructure that generates employment to its people, fosters economic growth, and contributes to promoting resilient, inclusive and sustainable economy.

Infrastructure development, agriculture, tourism and human resource development are key areas for investments, both domestic and foreign. While the government is promoting domestic investment, there is a huge gap of investment for desired growth. Hence, Nepal looks forward to receiving investment from abroad including from Qatar.

Nepal's rich natural and human resources, its location between two giant economies India and China, a growing domestic consumption market of nearly 30mn people as well as structural and procedural reforms make Nepal a perfect destination for foreign investments. Investment in tourism, infrastructure, health and education could be

mutually beneficial to both our countries. Nepal and Qatar have continued to maintain friendly and cordial relations over the past 46 years.

A large section of Nepali community residing in Qatar over the years has been a strong linkage between our two countries.

We are thankful to the Government of Qatar and relevant agencies for taking care of Nepali migrants during the outbreak of the pandemic by providing necessary treatment measures as well as vaccination. We also appreciate the latest series of labour reforms introduced and implemented by the Government of of Qatar and look forward to collaborate on further measures in this area. We hope that Nepal and Qatar will create and construct a history as development partner in further years. We are looking possibilities for both countries' need and support to address the global opportunity and challenge.

Nepal's natural beauty and hospitable nature of its society could be a linkage for further promoting two-way people-topeople relations between our two countries. I believe recent visits to Nepal by popular Qatari adventurers, including Sheikha Asma al-Thani and Fahad Bader and their success in scaling world's top mountains located in Nepal will inspire more Qataris and members of other nationalities to visit Nepal during

Nepal's mountainous landscape, snowy mountains, lush green plains, panoramic valleys and gurgling rivers offer various adventurous activities. Mountain climbing, trekking, paragliding, rafting, mountain flights, sky-diving, bungee jumping, canyoning, jungle safari, bird watching comprise some of them. Nepal is only a single flight away from Qatar.

Finally, we commend the tremendous progress and prosperity Qatar has been achieving in recent times. Qatar's role in supporting regional and global issues of humanitarian concern and conflict management has gained appreciation from the wider community of nations.

Since my assumption of duties as ambassador of Nepal to Qatar for over one year, I was highly impressed by Qatar's spectacular hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup, a first for the Arab world. I would like to congratulate His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani on the magnificent hosting of the premier global event. On our part, we pride ourselves on having contributed towards its success and thank the Government of Qatar for the

I would like to conclude by wishing all the Nepalis, at home and abroad, a peaceful, prosperous and progressive year ahead.



A view of the majestic Mount Everest base camp in Nepal

Macron hosts King Charles for Versailles banquet

AFP

Versailles

President Emmanuel Macron yesterday hosted King Charles III for a glittering banquet at France's former royal residence of the Palace of Versailles, as the British monarch kicked off a three-day state visit aimed at showing the underlying strength of cross-Channel ties even after Brexit.

The visit, which was rescheduled from March due to the violent protests against pension reform that rocked France at the time, also aims to showcase Charles' stature as a statesman just over a year after the death of his mother and predecessor Queen Elizabeth II.

The original itinerary in Paris and the southwestern city of Bordeaux — packed with ceremony and pomp in a country that abolished its monarchy in the 1789 revolution and then executed the king — is largely unchanged.

Charles and Camilla were met outside the Versailles palace by Macron and his wife Brigitte, before going in to join other guests.

Guests at the dinner included luminaries ranging from the British rock legend Mick Jagger, the French former manager of the Arsenal football team Arsene Wenger and the world's richest man, the luxury goods tycoon Bernard Ar-

The menu will include delicacies like blue lobster cooked as a starter by star chef Anne-Sophie Pic, who has said she was inspired by the tastes of the "Sun King" Louis XIV, who built Versailles.

Other dinner guests in the glittering Hall of Mirrors included English celebrity Hugh Grant and Charlotte Gainsbourg, the actor and daughter of French singer Serge Gainsbourg and British actor Jane Birkin.

It was here that on her first state visit to France in 1957, Elizabeth II lunched with president Rene Coty.

There are reminders throughout the visit of the late queen, a French-speaking francophile who made five state visits to France during her record-breaking 70year reign.

Macron, who has faced accusations from left-wing opponents of himself behaving like a monarch, will be eager to ensure the event proceeds smoothly, without showing excess at a time of economic frugality.

"This image, in this context, is obviously fundamentally harmful for Emmanuel Macron even if there are diplomatic imperatives behind it which also play a role,"



Britain's Queen Camilla and her husband King Charles III and French President Emmanuel Macron and his wife Brigitte Macron arrive to attend a state banquet at the Palace of Versailles yesterday on the first day of a British royal state visit to France. (**Reuters**)

French author and academic Benjamin Morel told AFP.

Driven down the Champs-Elysees towards their talks at the Elysee Palace, Macron and the king were earlier seen chatting amicably while Camilla and Macron's wife Brigitte followed be-

hind in a similar vehicle.

After their talks at the Elysee, Charles and Macron walked the short distance to the residence of the British ambassador, pausing to shake hands with well-wishers on the upscale rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honore.

The French president, who has dealt with no fewer than four UK premiers over the last half-decade, is known to have a strong personal rapport with Charles.

Commentators in France excitedly noted how Macron had repeatedly touched Charles's shoul-

der and Brigitte Macron kissed Camilla, in a new protocol unthinkable under the more distant and austere Elizabeth II.

With both men known for their love of books, Macron presented Charles with a book by the 20th-century French writer Romain Gary, while he received a special edition of Voltaire's *Lettres sur les Anglais* ("Letters on the English").

Charles' visit is seen as the follow-up to moves by UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to reset relations between the two neighbours after post-Brexit turbulence.

Macron had a particularly prickly relationship with former premier Boris Johnson, reportedly describing him as a "clown" as he took the UK out of the European Union in January 2020 in a sea of Union Jack waving and rhetoric of British exceptionalism.

Coincidentally, Charles arrives one day after Macron held talks with British opposition leader Keir Starmer, whose Labour Party is increasingly confident of being able to oust the ruling Conservatives from power.

Charles will today make a keynote address to the French upper house Senate and also give a speech on the environment, long one of his most cherished causes. Tomorrow, on the final day, he will head to Bordeaux.

Biden, Netanyahu finally meet to smooth over 'concerns'

US President Joe Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu tried to smooth over tensions at talks yesterday, hailing "unbreakable" ties despite Biden's concerns over the state of Israeli democracy.

The veteran leaders shook hands against a backdrop of flags in New York, as they met for the first time since Netanyahu was re-elected in December at the head of a hard-right government pushing controversial judicial reforms. Keen to get Netanyahu to agree on a mega-deal that would normalise ties between feuding US allies Israel and Saudi Arabia, Biden focused yesterday on rapprochement instead of reproach

Biden "reiterated his concern about any fundamental changes to Israel's democratic system, absent the broadest possible consensus," the White House said after the meeting.

But he also "reaffirmed the unbreakable bond between the two countries which is based on the bedrock of shared democratic values," and restated Washington's "iron-clad" commitment to Israel's security. The US president extended an olive branch by formally inviting Netanyahu to Washington by the end of the year — having snubbed him this time by meeting on the sidelines of the UN General

Democrat Biden — who had previously criticised Netanyahu's government as "extremist" — said at the start of the meeting that he would discuss "hard issues, that is, upholding democratic values." Relations between Netanyahu and the Biden administration have been rocky ever since the Israeli leader made his political comeback at the head of a coalition of hard-right and ultra-Orthodox parties in December.



A relative of an inmate is comforted by a member of the Bolivarian National Guard after authorities seized control of the Tocoron prison in Tocoron, Aragua State, yesterday. (AFP)

Venezuela seizes control of gang-run prison

Venezuela said yesterday it had seized control of a prison from the hands of a powerful gang with international reach, in a major operation involving 11,000 members of its security forces.

The Tocoron prison in the northern state of Aragua has served as the Tren de Aragua gang's headquarters, where it had installed amenities such as a zoo, a pool and gambling rooms, according to an investigative journalist recently interviewed by AFP.

In a statement, the government congratulated law enforcement officers for regaining "total control" of the prison.

"This prison will undergo a process of restructuring and will be completely evacuated," read the statement, adding the operation had "dismantled a centre of conspiracy and crime."

Interior Minister Remigio Ceballos told state broadcaster VTV the inmates were being transferred to another facility, as images were shown of handcuffed prisoners sitting in rows on the ground.

It appeared some may have escaped during the operation, as a later government statement announced a "second phase" of the operation for the "search and capture" of "fugitive criminals."

Tren de Aragua, Venezuela's most powerful

local gang, is involved in crime countrywide and has spread its tentacles to neighbouring nations. According to an investigation by Venezuelan journalist Ronna Risquez, the gang has some 5,000 members.

It emerged a decade ago, and is involved in kidnappings, robberies, drug trafficking, prostitution and extortion. Tren de Aragua is also involved in illegal gold mining.

India warns on Canada travel after controversy over murder of Sikh

Ottawa rejects advisory, says country is safe

AFP New Delhi

ndia yesterday warned its citizens against visiting parts of Canada amid a diplomatic row sparked by Canada's bombshell accusation that New Delhi was involved in the killing of a Sikh separatist near Vancouver.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has demanded that India treat with "utmost seriousness" its allegations about the murder.

The fallout prompted tit-for-tat diplomatic expulsions and a forceful denial from India, which said any suggestion it played a role in the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar was "absurd".

Without explicitly referring to the dispute, India's foreign ministry said it was concerned for the safety of its citizens in Canada because of "politically-condoned hate crimes and criminal violence".

"Threats have particularly targeted Indian diplomats and sections of the Indian community who oppose the anti-India agenda," a ministry statement said.

"Indian nationals are therefore advised to avoid travelling to regions and potential venues in Canada that have seen such incidents."

The advisory did not name specific

cities or locations for Indians to avoid. In Ottawa, Canadian Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc dismissed the Indian warning.

"Canada is a safe country," he told re-

porters. Nijjar was shot by two masked assailants outside the Sikh temple he presided over in Surrey, an outer suburb of Vancouver.

An activist for the creation of a Sikh

state known as Khalistan, Nijjar was wanted by Indian authorities for alleged terrorism and conspiracy to commit murder.

He had denied those charges, according to the World Sikh Organisation of

Canada, a nonprofit organisation that

says it defends the interests of Canadian Sikhs.

The Indian government accuses Ottawa of turning a blind eye to the activities of radical Sikh nationalists who advocate

the creation of an independent Sikh state to be carved out of northern India. Relations between Canada and India have been strained in recent months

since the assassination of the Sikh leader and the demonstrations that followed in Canada.

Trudeau, who met with Modi on the sidelines of this month's G20 in New Delhi, said Tuesday that his government

Delhi, said Tuesday that his government did not rush to judgment in the case and had worked closely with its intelligence agencies.

"India needs to take this matter with the utmost seriousness," he said. "We

are doing that, we are not looking to provoke or escalate."

The United States has joined Canada in calling for India to reveal what it

The United States has joined Canada in calling for India to reveal what it knows about the slaying.

"We are deeply concerned about the

allegations referenced by Prime Minister Trudeau," National Security Council spokeswoman Adrienne Watson said in a statement. "It is critical that Canada's investigation proceed, and the perpetrators be brought to justice."

US calls on India to co-operate in probe

The White House is "deeply concerned" about allegations that Indian agents were potentially involved in the murder of a Sikh leader in Canada and encourages India to co-operate in any investigation, national security spokesman John Kirby said yesterday.
Canadian Prime Minister Justin

Trudeau announced on Monday that domestic intelligence agencies were actively pursuing credible allegations tying New Delhi's agents to the shooting of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, 45, in British Columbia in June. "We are deeply concerned" Kirby

said of the allegations. He added, "We encourage India to fully co-operate." — **Reuters**

A representative of the World Sikh Organisation of Canada, Mukhbir Singh, said his countrymen may have been "shocked" by Trudeau's assertion "but it was no surprise to the Sikh community".

"For decades, India has targeted Sikhs in Canada with espionage, disinformation and now murder," he alleged.

Balraj Singh Nijjar, son of the slain leader, said: "It was just a matter of time for when the truth would come out."

He added, referring to government authorities: "Hopefully, you can take this a step further and get specific individuals."

Unesco puts Rwanda genocide memorials on World Heritage list

AFP

Assembly.

our memorials to the 1994 genocide in Rwanda of more than 800,000 people, mainly Tutsi, were added to Unesco's World Heritage list yesterday, the UN cultural body said.

The sites at Nyamata, Murambi, Gisozi and Bisesero commemorating the mass killings were "just inscribed on the Unesco World Heritage list", the organisation posted on X.

The four sites commemorate the genocide that targeted the Tutsi minority in large part but also moderate Hutus who were shot, beaten or hacked to death by Hutu extremists between April and July 1994.

"This historic decision will help safeguard memory, counter denial and strengthen genocide prevention efforts globally. #NeverAgain," Rwandan government spokeswoman Yolande Makolo posted on X.

The Unesco move was also welcomed by Naphthali Ahishakiye, executive secretary of Ibuka, the association repre-

senting survivors of the genocide.
"This will make the genocide that was

committed in Rwanda against the Tutsi more known across the world," he told AFP in Kigali.

Skulls, bone fragments, torn clothing and images of piled up corpses confront visitors to the Kigali Genocide Memorial in Gisozi, the final resting place of around 250,000 victims.

Each year more are buried as new

graves are uncovered around the country, with remains also housed at a former Catholic church at Nyamata, a school complex at Murambi and a memorial at Bisesero built in 1998.

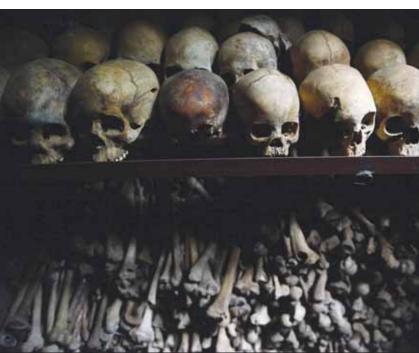
In addition to human remains, the sites

In addition to human remains, the sites also feature material evidence of the 100-day killing spree by Hutu extremist forces — spears, machetes, clubs and bladed weapons.

"These testimonies, these stories, this material evidence, will be well preserved even beyond our lives... They will be there, I would say, forever, or as long as possible," genocide survivor Marie Grace Mukabyagaju told AFP in Kigali.

Three of the sites were themselves the scene of massacres.

At Nyamata, more than 45,000 people who had sought shelter in the church were slaughtered in one day, according to Unesco. Its chapel now houses the



Human skulls preserved are exhibited on April 4, 2014 at the Genocide memorial in Nyamata, inside Catholic church where thousands were slaughtered during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. (**AFP**)

clothing and rosaries worn by the victims along with the weapons used by the perpetrators of the killings.

Mass graves are situated behind the church, with a vault that houses the skulls of victims and other human remains, according to the memorial's website.

At Murambi, tens of thousands of people who were encouraged to take refuge in the technical school on the pretext of ensuring their safety were executed in one of the genocide's bloodiest episodes.

At Bisesero, a "resistance memorial" pays tribute to Tutsis who fought back with spears and stones as Hutu extremists murdered hundreds of people in the surrounding hills.

The genocide was unleashed shortly after the ethnic Hutu president was killed when his plane was shot down in an attack blamed by the government on Tutsi rebels.

The killing ended only when the Tutsiled Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) took over in July 1994, having defeated the Hutu extremists.

Trials of genocide suspects have been held in Rwanda, at a UN tribunal in the Tanzanian city of Arusha, as well as in France, Belgium and the United States among others.

ICONE: Voices of Design Made in Italy exhibition unveiled

By Joey Aguilar

The "ICONE: Voices of Design Made in Italy" exhibition opened at Msheireb's M7 yesterday, offering an immersive experience into the world of design through the use of cuttingedge technologies.

Curated by Rossana Orlandi, a leading figure on the international creative scene, Compasso d'Oro 2022 winner, and ambassador for "good design"; and designed by Lucio Micheletti, the exhibition is a collaborative endeavour promoted by the Embassy of Italy in Doha and hosted by Qatar Museums. It will be on view until December 20.

Divided into two distinct parts, the first section animates objects. turning them into narrative actors, while the second section pays homage to the companies behind the iconic Made in Italy designs, weaving their stories into video compilations overseen by Francesca Molteni.

In his speech, Italian ambassador Paolo Toschi underlined the significance of the exhibit, lauding Orlandi as an embodiment of Italian design prowess and her dedication to sustainability, particularly her pioneering work with plastics.

"You will have an opportunity to preview something that is truly an experience. Rosanna embodies what design means for Italy. She comes from the industry, in particular, the fabric industry where she spent time developing skills, understanding business, fashion and at some point in her life she had an epiphany and became one of the icons and a key player in the world of Italian design. And you know how much design means to us not just in terms of creativity but as a factor for growth and a



Attendees touring the exhibition at M7

factor for opportunity."

The envoy stressed the uniqueness of M7 as a hub of creation. beauty, and dialogue. He credited Qatar Museums chairperson HE Sheikha Al Mavassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani for her kev role in making the event a reality and commended M7 Director Maha Ghanem al-Sulaiti for her steadfast leadership at M7.

In her address, Rosanna Orlandi expressed her admiration for Qatar and her joy at returning to Doha, saying: "I love Qatar... I love Doha, every time I come back, I'm so happy, thanks to HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, thanks to the ambassador who invited me to do this presentation, thanks to everybody who helped us".

"What we want to do is really to give emotion around the design, we want to present not only design, as the ambassador said, but the voice of the designer," she said, noting her personal involvement in reaching out to designers, resulting in a heartwarming collaboration.

She also cited the key role of Micheletti - the architect, designer, and artist - who brought to life (what she envisioned) and presented the pieces in a unique way.

"I chose the pieces and he realised what was in my mind, how to present in a different way with emotion because I think that emotion in design is very important,"

she said. Al-Sulaiti underscored M7's dedication to supporting local talent while also championing global design excellence. She thanked the ambassador and his wife for their staunch support of M7 and lauded Orlandi for her ongoing commitment to Qatar Museums.

She cited the institution's extensive track record of exhibitions, focusing on Italian design and including numerous ventures in fashion. The spotlight shifts to furniture design at the show, promising a showcase of exceptional creations.

Al-Sulaiti expressed optimism for future collaborations with the Italian embassy, noting the shared objectives in promoting cultural exchange. "We share very common goals in supporting cultural exchange and I also want to thank Rosanna Orlandi, this is her second exhibition at M7. She's a great friend of Qatar Museums, and also for her support during the Milan Design Week in supporting Qatari designers," she said.

In his speech, Micheletti



A dazzling display of Italian craftsmanship and innovation.







stressed the emotional connection forged through the exhibit and expressed hopes that visitors would appreciate this distinctive approach.

"This exhibition is very interesting because it is a dialogue directly from the artists themselves" he stressed.

Micheletti envisioned darkness as the optimal backdrop for showcasing the furnishings, seamlessly blending a museum ambiance with a theatrical stage to create an ideal focus and ambiance environment.



Rossana Orlandi and Italian ambassador Paolo Toschi at the event. PICTURES: Thajudheen



Maha Ghanem al-Sulaiti addressing the attendees of the event.



Rosanna Orlandi and Lucio Micheletti at the opening of ICONE: Voices of Design Made in Italy exhibition yesterday.



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