



Qatar's Choice for Orthodontic Excellence

Naseem Medical Centre, Al Hilal, D Ring Road

Dr. Chintan Chitroda
BDS, MDS | Orthodontics
With 15+ Years of Clinical Practice




Scan here for Appointment



4411 1133




Sky Vision Real Estate Offer

Studio Room (1,500/-to 2,500) @ a Villa in Thumama & Duhaïl

Labour Room 1,350/- @ Industrial Area

2 BHK Flat 4,800/- @ Bin Omram

Warehouse 300 Sqm - 13,000/- @ Industrial Area

Pls call: 33598672, 52038746







0 668039 136499

FRIDAY Vol. XXXXIII No. 12775

September 22, 2023
Rabia 17, 1445 AH

www.gulf-times.com 2 Riyals

Published in QATAR since 1978

www.gulf-times.com

[gulftimes](#)

[GulfTimes_QATAR](#)

[gulftimes](#)

[GulftimesVideos](#)



You know it's a GigaHome



when speed starts at 1Gbps



vf.qa/GigaHome

Qatari flag raised at Asian Games Village

The Qatari flag was raised yesterday at the 19th Asian Games village in China's Hangzhou. The tournament is due to kick off Saturday. Second Vice-President of Qatar Olympic Committee (QOC), Dr Thani bin Abdulrahman al-Kuwari, QOC's Jassim bin Rashid al-Buainain, and chef de mission Rashid Adiba were in attendance, along with several QOC officials and representatives and sports federations. **Sport Page 1**

'Jet engines have unapproved parts'

The US Federal Aviation Administration issued an alert yesterday warning that unapproved parts might be installed in certain General Electric model CF6 jet engines, telling owners to inspect planes or inventories for the parts. The FAA says UK-based AOG Technics sold bushings for GE Model CF6 engines without having FAA approval. Jet engine maker CFM International said on Wednesday thousands of engine components may have been sold with forged paperwork by AOG Technics.

US contractor charged with spying for Ethiopia

A US government contractor who worked at the State and Justice departments has been arrested on charges of spying, reportedly for Ethiopia. Abraham Teklu Lemma, 50, a US citizen of Ethiopian descent, was arrested August 24 and is charged with providing national defence information to a foreign government, the Justice Department said. The criminal complaint against Lemma, a Silver Spring, Maryland, resident whose LinkedIn profile describes him as an IT systems and data analyst, was unsealed on Friday.

Sudan's RSF ready for political talks: Hemedti

Sudan's Rapid Support Forces (RSF) are fully prepared for a ceasefire and to engage in comprehensive political talks for an end to its civil conflict with the army, RSF leader Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo said in a rare video appearance yesterday. Dagalo, known as Hemedti, made the comments in a recorded video message addressed to the UN General Assembly and released by the RSF shortly before army leader Abdel Fattah al-Burhan was due to give a speech to the assembly in New York. Most of Hemedti's recent communications have been audio messages, and his whereabouts are unknown.

Zelensky wins US air defence arms

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky won a promise of "significant" new air defence weapons from the White House yesterday but warned that Kyiv could lose the war with Russia if Republican lawmakers cut the flow of billions of dollars in US military aid. Wearing his trademark olive green military-style shirt, Zelensky huddled with members of Congress before stopping at the Pentagon and the White House, where President Joe Biden greeted him with an honour guard. **Page 8**

Qatar's commitment to tackle global health emergencies stressed

QNA
New York

HE the Minister of Public Health and Chairperson of the Executive Board of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Dr Hanan Mohamed al-Kuwari affirmed Qatar's unwavering commitment to a comprehensive, equitable, and inclusive approach to strengthening national, regional, and global preparedness for epidemics and health emergencies, with WHO at the heart of this collective approach.

This came during her speech during Qatar's participation in the high-level meeting on pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response at the UN General Assembly.

HE the Minister of Public Health said that Qatar's commitment to this pivotal issue and to making progress in it comes through the current presidency of the Executive Board of the World Health Organisation, stressing the full readiness to co-operate, exchange experiences, and formulate innovative paths to enhance the collective resilience in the face of health emergencies.

HE al-Kuwari stressed the need to strengthen the global



HE Dr Hanan Mohamed al-Kuwari addressing the conference.

structure for preparedness, response, and resilience, adding that Qatar appreciates the efforts led by the member states of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) to draft a WHO convention on epidemic prevention, preparedness, and response. The State also actively participates in the deliberations on the proposed amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005), taking into account the principles of equity, sovereignty, and solidarity.

HE the Minister stated that sustainable leadership is at the heart of the collective success, and this meeting is an opportunity to reaffirm the commitment

of member states to a unified, impartial, and comprehensive approach towards strengthening preparedness, prevention, and response to epidemics and health emergencies.

Balancing sovereignty and mutual accountability among WHO member states is pivotal, and the Comprehensive Health and Preparedness Review provides a voluntary and transparent mechanism that enhances intergovernmental dialogue on national capacities for health emergencies, she added.

HE Dr Hanan Mohamed al-Kuwari indicated that the Pandemic Fund has emerged as a driving force motivating national capacities to prepare for health emergencies, with low- and lower-middle-income countries benefiting from more than 75% of the selected proposals.

She noted that it is important to take an integrated ecosystem approach that focuses on collaborative surveillance, community protection, safe and scalable care, access to countermeasures, and emergency co-ordination, reiterating the importance of intensive co-operation between international partners and all stakeholders while recognising the impact of a variety of key actors in the global health scene.

PM meets Belgian prime minister



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met yesterday with Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium Alexander De Croo, on the margin of the 78th UN General Assembly (UNGA) in New York. During the meeting, they discussed bilateral co-operation relations between the two countries and ways to support and enhance them. They also discussed regional and international issues of common concern. **(QNA)**

Al-Muraikhi attends Biden reception



HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi attended a reception hosted, in New York, by US President Joe Biden and his wife Jill Biden, in honour of the heads of delegation participating in the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly. **(QNA)**

Qatar urges investment for achieving SDGs

QNA
New York

Qatar took part in the UN General Assembly (UNGA's) High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development, on the margin of the 78th session of the UNGA.

HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhatier represented Qatar at the dialogue.

She expressed her happiness to participate in this important dialogue, especially in light of the priority that the issue of financing for development should take, in efforts to accelerate the implementation of the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

HE AlKhatier pointed out that the foreign policy of Qatar is firmly rooted in the principle of co-operation and partnership to face common challenges

HE AlKhatier pointed to the conclusion of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, which constituted an important milestone in advancing collective ambition to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. She also expressed happiness that the political declaration of the summit was adopted by consensus, voicing Qatar's pride to participate along-

side Ireland in facilitating government negotiations on the political declaration, especially that it constitutes as a pivotal document for moving forward in achieving common vision and taking transformative measures.

Halfway towards achieving the SDGs, the urgency of the many existing challenges, and the large financing gap, call for global solutions, and require intensifying and increasing the pace of collective efforts in order to mobilise the financial resources that are urgently needed, she added.

She voiced the belief that innovative approaches and partnerships to strengthen private finance and ensure a more effective and inclusive international financial system could play a key role in helping countries, especially the most vulnerable and poorest, to invest in achieving the SDGs.

HE AlKhatier pointed out that the foreign policy of Qatar is firmly rooted in the principle of co-operation and partnership to face common challenges, saying that in line with the principles and commitments of Qatar in addressing the challenges of financing for development, in 2008 Qatar hosted the International Follow-up Conference on Financing for Development to review the Monterrey Consensus.

Qatar continues to play a pioneering role in supporting international efforts to address common crises and challenges by providing development, humanitarian and financial assistance that benefits millions of people around the world, she stressed. **To Page 2**

COMMUNITY

See Pages: 5 & 6



PM holds meetings with ministers, top officials in New York



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Filippo Grandi, on the margins of the 78th UN General Assembly (UNGA) in New York. During the meeting, they discussed aspects of co-operation between Qatar and the UNHCR.



HE the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met yesterday with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran Dr Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, on the margin of the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 78) in New York. During the meeting, they discussed co-operation between the two countries and ways to support and enhance them, as well as efforts related to negotiations to return to the joint action plan. The Iranian foreign minister also thanked Qatar for its role in mediating the US-Iranian agreement on the exchange of the detainees.



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met separately with United States' Deputy Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland, United States' Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Barbara Leaf, and Special Representative of US President for Afghanistan Thomas West, on the sidelines of the 78th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), held in New York. The meetings discussed Qatar-US bilateral relations and ways to strengthen them as well as regional and international issues of common concern in addition to the latest developments in Afghanistan. (QNA)



Official

Amir sends cables of condolences to Amir of Kuwait

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani and HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent cables of condolences to Amir of the State of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah on the death of Naeima Khalaf al-Dousary, widow of Sheikh Oqab al-Malek al-Salman al-Sabah.

Amir sends cables of congratulations to president of Malta

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent cables of congratulations to President of Malta Dr George Vella on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a similar cable to Prime Minister of Malta Dr Robert Abela on the occasion.

Amir sends cables of congratulations to president of Armenia

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent cables of congratulations to President of Armenia Vahagn Khachaturyan on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a similar cable to Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan on the occasion.

Amir congratulates governor-general of Belize

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent cables of congratulations to Governor-General of Belize Froyla Tzalam on the anniversary of her country's Independence Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a similar cable to Prime Minister of Belize John Antonio Briceno on the occasion. (QNA)

Qatar raises issues of hate crimes, Islamophobia at OIC meeting in NY

QNA
New York

Qatar participated in the annual co-ordination meeting of foreign ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation (OIC), which was held on the sidelines of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. Qatar was represented at the meeting by HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Dr Mohamed bin Abdulaziz al-Khulaifi.

In his statement on behalf of Qatar during the meeting, HE al-Khulaifi stressed that Qatar is always keen on participating in the annual meeting, out of its belief that the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation plays a crucial role in dealing with the shared interests and challenges faced by its nations and peoples. The current series of crises reinforces the need for greater unity and collaboration among member states. He added that the current crises were also an additional reason to enhance solidarity and co-operation between members.

He explained that at this half-way point towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, global attention is focused on the summit of sustainable development goals and preparations for the future summit. He pointed

out that global crises such as energy, food, and climate crises pose challenges to many of our countries, especially those with special circumstances.

In this regard, he referred to the Fifth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries hosted by Qatar in March of the previous year, where the political will was renewed, and support was mobilised for this group of countries. The Doha Program was adopted, including ambitious measures and commitments to build their capacity for resilience and achieve sustainable development. Qatar announced its contribution of \$60mn to support the programme.

On another note, the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs addressed the continued escalation of violence and violations by the Israeli occupation authorities and settlers against Palestinians in the occupied land. He mentioned the ongoing systematic Judaisation campaign in Jerusalem, where Islamic and Christian holy sites, especially the Al Aqsa Mosque, are being dangerously targeted. He affirmed that these actions not only constitute a clear violation of international law and legitimate international decisions but also provoke the feelings of millions of Muslims around the world, especially the Islamic world.



HE Dr Mohamed bin Abdulaziz al-Khulaifi

He stressed the necessity of keeping the Palestinian issue and the issue of Jerusalem at the forefront of the concerns of the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation and exerting efforts to provide political, humanitarian, and other forms of support to the Palestinian people.

He noted that the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly that requested an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on the effects of the Israeli occupation and its practices reaffirmed the international rejection of the occupation, settlements, and unlawful practices. He added that Qatar, in support of the Palestinian position in this matter, submitted a memorandum to the

court in July of the previous year.

He also highlighted the recent increase in hate speech and acts of bigotry against Islam and Muslims and the desecration of their sanctities, including the repeated incidents of Qur'an burning in some Western countries, which can ignite hostility and violence. He further stated that this matter, along with the broader problem of Islamophobia, should receive particular focus and consideration from the member countries of the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation.

Furthermore, he mentioned that while Qatar condemns terrorism in all its forms and rejects linking it to any specific religion, it emphasises the need to combat terrorism driv-

en by racism, extremism, hatred of foreigners, and other forms of bigotry. Qatar also condemns any disrespect for sanctities under the pretext of freedom of expression. There is no contradiction between demanding respect for sanctities and promoting tolerance and freedom.

He warned that Qatar is known for its efforts to promote the values of tolerance and moderation through dialogue between civilisations and religions, as well as its international efforts to counter violent extremism leading to terrorism. He explained that through its successful hosting of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, Qatar aims to highlight the role of sports in achieving peace and harmony among peoples and nations and to showcase the bright side of the Arab and Islamic society known for its moderation and balance.

In conclusion, the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated Qatar's commitment to the final statement of the 18th extraordinary session of the Council of Foreign Ministers. He emphasised the importance of keeping this issue on the agenda of the upcoming Islamic summit and other relevant meetings.

He also stressed the need for taking additional actions to address this negative trend against Islam and Muslims and to prevent its recurrence.

Qatar urges investment in achieving SDGs

From Page 1

HE AlKhater went on saying that the value of the contributions provided by Qatar to the countries of the South during the period 2014 to August 2023 amounted to approximately \$6.3bn, varied between development and humanitarian assistance. During the 5th UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5), hosted by Qatar, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani announced a financial contribution totalling \$60mn to support the implementation of the Doha Action Program for the LDCs, and to support the desired results and build resilience capacities in the least developed countries. Touching on the importance of the partnerships directed towards achieving results, she pointed out that Qatar is an investor and founder in the UNDP's network of development impact accelerator laboratories, where the total support it provided reached \$30mn.

HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation stressed that in light of the rapid transformations taking place in the world, the need is more dire than ever for strengthening multilateral action. She reiterated Qatar's determination to continue playing its leading role, it has been pursuing for a long time.

Al-Muraikhi meets several officials on sidelines of UNGA

HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi met separately on the sidelines of the 78th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), held in New York, with Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation of Sierra Leone Timothy M Kabba, Second Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Brunei Darussalam Dato Erywan Pehin Yusof, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina Elmedin Konakovic, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua Denis Moncada Colindres, and High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations Miguel Angel Moratinos. During the meetings, various topics of common interest were discussed. (QNA)



Sheikh Faleh meets Costa Rica, Rwanda ministers

HE the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Sheikh Dr Faleh bin Nasser bin Ahmed bin Ali al-Thani met yesterday with Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica Franz Tattenbach and Minister of Environment of Rwanda Dr Jeanne d'Arc, on the sidelines of his participation in the Climate Ambition Summit, held at the UN headquarters in New York. The two meetings discussed the importance that Qatar attaches to participating in the UN Ocean Conference and the initiatives of Qatar that will be launched during the UN Climate Change Conference COP 28. The meetings also discussed the importance of exchanging expertise in ecosystems and mangrove forests and encouraging visits that promote transferring technical expertise in clean energy technology, carbon markets, and converting waste into energy. **(QNA)**



Qatar's positive mediation aimed at region's security and stability

QNA
Doha

Adviser to HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, who is also the Official Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Majid bin Mohamed al-Ansari (**pictured**) affirmed Qatar's enduring commitment to being a positive mediator for enhancing the security and stability of the region.

The official spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, during the weekly media briefing, highlighted the announcement made last Monday regarding the arrival of five American citizens who had been detained in Iranian prisons to Hamad International Airport in Doha. He explained that they were released as part of an agreement reached by both parties, and that five Iranian citizens who had been detained in the United States were also released.

Dr al-Ansari further explained that as part of this agreement, frozen Iranian funds, amounting to approximately \$6bn were transferred to Doha. These funds would be used to activate the humanitarian financial channel through which these amounts would be allocated for food, medicines, medical equipment, and agricultural products for the benefit of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

He noted that this agreement was reached through intensive visits and diplomatic discussions over the course of two years, involving visits to Tehran and Washington, as well as meetings held in Doha, both directly and indirectly. He noted that, despite significant challenges, optimism prevailed because this agreement, especially



on the financial front, would lead to further negotiations on more significant issues in the upcoming stage. Dr al-Ansari emphasised that the stability of relations between Iran and the United States could lead to positive developments in the context of the (5+1) group and in regional dialogue with Iran.

In a related context, the Official Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reviewed the key moments of the visit of HE Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, to New York. During this visit, he met with several officials on the sidelines of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The official spokesperson also mentioned that HE Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani chaired Qatar's delegation at the co-ordination meeting of the foreign ministers of GCC countries. The meeting discussed fraternal relations among GCC countries and addressed the invitation from Iraq to take urgent and serious steps to address the negative effects of the developments resulting from the ruling of the Federal Supreme Court regarding the 2012 agreement between Kuwait and Iraq. Dr al-Ansari pointed out that HE Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also chaired Qatar's delegation at the ministerial meeting of

the GCC countries with the United States. This meeting included the foreign ministers of the GCC countries.

Furthermore, HE Sheikh Mohamed chaired Qatar's delegation in the opening session of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit. In his address, he said that the summit presented a significant opportunity to revive hope for achieving sustainable development goals. He emphasised the utmost importance of the current phase in implementing these goals and stressed that commitment to resolving disputes through peaceful means and dialogue based on respect are the optimal ways to ensure the preservation of development gains worldwide. He underscored Qatar's commitment to aligning its national development plans with the principles of sustainable development goals.

Al-Ansari noted during the weekly media briefing the hosting of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani alongside Prince Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein and High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell for a ministerial dinner on the Middle East. The dinner included discussions on the latest developments in the region and ways to enhance regional security and stability.

The official spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also mentioned the participation of HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Murairi in the official opening ceremony of the Sustainable Development Goals Pavilion funded by Qatar in partnership with the Education Above All Foundation.

Al-Mannai meets Chinese party official

HE the Minister of Communications and Information Technology and Vice-Chairman of Qatar Free Zones Authority (QFZ) Mohamed bin Ali al-Mannai met with Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Secretary of the CPC Beijing Municipal Committee Yin Li, and his accompanying delegation, during his visit to Ras Bufontas Free Zone. During the meeting, prospects for co-operation and co-ordination on issues related to investment opportunities in free zones were discussed. The Chinese delegation learned, during the visit, about the investment opportunities and outstanding benefits offered by QFZ and supported by the country's advanced infrastructure, to attract companies to invest and establish their businesses in Qatar. The delegation also viewed the Business Innovation Park at Ras Bufontas Free Zone. **(QNA)**



Two more Qatari planes land in Libya with flood relief materials



The fifth and sixth planes of the Qatari Air Bridge to help flood-affected victims in east of Libya arrived at Benina International Airport in Benghazi yesterday. The two planes carry 88 tonnes of humanitarian and relief aid as an emergency response to the situation in areas affected by floods and torrents, bringing the total Qatari aid up to 209 tonnes. The aid included shelter supplies, electricity generators, food and relief materials, and medical equipment provided by the Permanent Committee for Rescue, Relief and Humanitarian Aid in affected areas of brotherly and friendly countries, Qatar Fund For Development (QFFD), Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS), and Qatar Charity. Qatar has affirmed its full solidarity with Libya and its brotherly people in the face of the disaster of floods and torrents. **(QNA)**



Qatar, UK enhance parliamentary ties



The Qatar-UK Parliamentary Friendship Group held a meeting at the Shura Council yesterday with a British parliamentary delegation, currently visiting the country. Shura Council Member and member of the friendship group Ahmad bin Ibrahim al-Malki and Member of the UK Parliament and Vice-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary British-Qatar Group Ranil Jayawardena chaired the meeting. During the meeting, they discussed parliamentary relations between the two countries and ways to enhance them. The meeting also dealt with various topics related to parliamentary co-operation and increasing co-ordination between the two sides. **(QNA)**

Qatar participates in high-level event to support humanitarian response in Sudan

QNA
New York

Qatar participated in the high-level ministerial side event to support the humanitarian response in Sudan and the region, on the margins of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater represented Qatar in the event.

Qatar participated in the organisation of the event, along with Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the European Union, and the African Union. In a remark before the event, HE AlKhater expressed her deep regret over the humanitarian and tragic consequences of the fighting that has been ongoing in Sudan since April 15, which claimed lives of hundreds of defenceless civilians and led to displacement and migration of millions.

She reiterated Qatar's call on the parties to the conflict in Sudan to immediately halt fighting and fully



co-operate to facilitate access of humanitarian assistance to the affected people and abide by the principles and items of the international humanitarian law.

The minister of state for international co-operation pointed to the session of talks held on Sept 7 between His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and Chairman of the Transitional Sovereignty Council of Sudan General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan during which the firm position of Qatar towards supporting the unity, independence and territorial integrity of Sudan

was affirmed, in addition to reaffirming Qatar's position that calls for immediate cessation of fighting and pursuit of dialogue and peaceful means, expressing Qatar's aspiration to the engagement of all political forces in broad negotiations after the permanent cessation of the military conflict to attain a comprehensive agreement and sustainable peace, as well as Qatar's appreciation for the regional and international efforts and good endeavours that aim to end conflict and achieve stability in Sudan.

HE AlKhater outlined that

Qatar stands with its Sudanese brothers and considers this a deserved duty dictated by the requirements of fraternity and religion, whose humanitarian and development efforts have been continuing, in addition to Qatar's efforts in supporting stability, making, and building peace in Sudan. She pointed out that the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) signed in 2011, comes at the forefront of these efforts, in addition to Qatar's support for construction, development and peace-building projects in the Darfur region since 2013 with

\$500mn. Since the breakout of the recent armed conflict on April 15, 2023, and the consequential humanitarian crisis, Qatar has taken the initiative to stand with Sudan and launched an air bridge to deliver humanitarian assistance to Sudanese brothers, where the cost of humanitarian assistance, amounting to nearly 371 tonnes in the first phase, amounted to more than \$10mn, in addition to the evacuation of 1,855 people, including Sudanese residents in Qatar who were spending their vacations in their country when the war broke out until August 2023.

She noted the announcement made by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani to support the humanitarian response plan in Sudan during a pledging conference to announce the pledges held on Jun 19 and was co-chaired by Qatar with Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Germany, to support the humanitarian response in Sudan and the region.

HE AlKhater expressed Qatar's regret over the increasing com-

plexity of the humanitarian situation considering the escalation of the severity of the armed conflict, pointing out that this is evidently demonstrated in the updated reports of the United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

She said the deteriorating humanitarian crisis in Sudan requires more urgent support and ample funding to bridge the gap of funding in the humanitarian response plan for Sudan, along with the regional plan for refugees. She stressed that it is necessary for all nations to live up to their pledges that were announced last June, adding that it is important to rapidly counter and contain the entire crisis to ensure that it does not exacerbate and spillover into Sudan's neighbouring countries.

At the outset of the remark, HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation expressed Qatar's pride in co-sponsoring the high-level ministerial event, which is of utmost importance in the context of responding to the worsening humanitarian crisis in the sisterly Sudan and the region.

UDST hosts series of events to mark International University Sport Week

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) recently held its International University Sport Week (IUSW), hosting a series of entertaining and engaging sports activities across campus. The week was an opportunity for the UDST community to participate in a diverse range of team games and physical exercise, helping to highlight the enormous role that physical activity plays in a healthy lifestyle.

The dynamic five-day event coincided with the Unesco-recognised and globally renowned International Day of University Sport (IDUS), organised by the International University Sports Federation (FISU), of which UDST holds Platinum status.

Dr Salem Al-Naemi, President of UDST, said: "IUSW is more than just a celebration of athleticism. We use sport as a platform for our University community and the wider public to come together, be active and have fun. It is part of every culture, and a powerful tool to encourage positivity, performance and teamwork. We have such a vibrant culture at the University that we celebrated for an entire week, meaning more people had the chance to participate.

This reflects UDST's commitment to health, wellness, and community engagement, and one of the reasons we are FISU Healthy Campus award winners. By bridging the gap between sport and academia, we aim to inspire future generations to adopt an active and healthy lifestyle, setting the precedent for post-secondary educational institutions in Qatar."

The resounding success and overwhelming positive feedback from last year's inaugural IUSW ensured that this year's programme was equally as inclusive and exciting. Capturing the hearts of the audience, the Fun Olympics took centre stage – a friendly contest with 23 participants, each representing their country in games such as tug-of-war and lava rock.



Tony Martin



Mayar Mokhtar

The resounding success and overwhelming positive feedback from last year's inaugural IUSW ensured that this year's programme was equally as inclusive and exciting



Hussain al-Kharraz

On the sideline of IUSW, Tony Martin, manager of sports and well-being, spoke to *Gulf Times* and said: "It's a great experience for students, we teach and train them and they run all our events. We use our full time staff as mentors and supervisors. It is important for a country where sport events are at the fore, we are giving practical experience to these students.

We are looking at what is called a co-curricular record, which allows for students when they show leadership in activities outside the classroom to be recognised. What happens is that employers expect that students are going to be good academically but what they are really looking for is leadership and team players who can work in organisations. For UDST wellness and well-being is crucial and important not only for students but also for faculty and staff. We are internationally recognised as the only FISU holder of a Platinum healthy campus in the Middle East and GCC. So it is very important to our campus, our pres-

ident, and our board that we look at the well-being of students and our whole campus community. We have a multi-cultural campus and this event gives them an opportunity to compete. We are a strong academic campus but we believe in balance, we have fabulous facilities and a dedicated student affairs team. We try to make available to them any extra-curricular experience."

Mayar Mokhtar, a 4th year human resources management student said: "It's a great event that unites students from different countries. We represented our country Sudan, we ranked second in female tug-of-war. It's a fun event where all the students come together and enjoy the games and get a little break from our studies. Sport is very important in our life, UDST focuses on our physical well-being through various activities and among them fun Olympics."

Hussain al-Kharraz, a 2nd year data and cyber security student said: "My team represents Qatar in the fun Olympics. It is extremely fun, fascinating and magnificent, my team played well and our female team won the first place in tug-of-war. These fun games helped me to better manage my time and come to enjoy myself after I finished one of my academic test," al-Kharraz concluded.



UDST officials with guests and a group of students. **PICTURES:** Thajudheen



Shura Council partakes in Asian Parliamentary Meeting in Baku

QNA
Baku

The Shura Council is taking part in the meeting of the Standing Committee on Social and Cultural Affairs of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly, which began yesterday in the Azeri capital, Baku, and will conclude today.

Members of the Shura Council Eng Ahmed bin Hitmi al-Hitmi and Nasser bin Mutrif al-Humaidi, are representing the council at the committee meeting.

On the first day of the meeting, members of the bureau were

elected, and the report of the secretary-general of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly on the work of the committee was reviewed.

The meeting will consider a number of draft resolutions, including: measures to promote cultural diversity and protect cultural heritage in Asia, Asian integration through information and communications technology, and co-operation in the field of health justice.

The agenda also includes draft resolutions on "Asian parliamentarians against corruption," "Women parliamentarians in the Asian Parliamen-

tary Assembly," "Promoting dialogue and harmony among followers of world religions," and "Legal and legislative co-operation in combating the smuggling of cultural materials" in addition to "Effective co-operation in combating illicit drug trafficking in Asia."

Representatives of the councils and parliaments of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries, had earlier held a meeting chaired by Eng Ahmed bin Hitmi al-Hitmi, with the aim of co-ordinating positions and visions among representatives of the Gulf councils participating in the meeting.

The Winter King, a timeless legend

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

The *Winter King*, an exclusive series on TOD, showcases the timeless legend of King Arthur and his mythical knight's round table. Adapted from Bernard Cornwell's acclaimed *Warlord Chronicles* trilogy, the series portrays the drama and magic of the quest to reunite a then-fractured Britain. It portrays the high drama of friendships, rivalries, magic, myths, intrigue, and devastating betrayals.

The *Winter King* viewers are transported to a realm of breathtaking landscapes, castles and kingdoms and epic adventure escapism where Arthur Pendragon transforms from a humble exile to a reluctant leader. While the first episode sets the stage, the full story quickly unfolds with heart-pounding action and heroic battles.

"It's got all the familiar mythical characters – Merlin and Nimue – but in a more human way. There are sword fights, horses, big set-piece landscapes, and romance. Themes and emotions in this story are timeless," said Iain De Caestecker, who portrays Arthur Pendragon.

At its core, *The Winter King* revolves around Arthur's unwavering quest to reunite Britain. His journey is filled with all the challenges and self-discovery which



has enraptured generations down the ages. Otto Bathurst, director and executive producer, encapsulates the series' essence, stating: "My ultimate ambition is for people to watch this and go 'Oh, so that was the real Arthur story! What we're doing is going back to the story's roots and telling the truth of this legendary King in a more authentic, believable, accessible, and raw version."

Kate Brooke, the series' writer,

and executive producer says: "This is full on a wonderful epic soap opera. This is love. This is revenge. This is a betrayal of best friends. This has romance at the heart of it between Nimue and Derfel, the two key characters.

"It's obviously got Arthur and Guinevere. So, although we've talked about the historical realism of it, it is also fantastic entertainment. I would say switch on for a roller-coaster ride."

Remnants of a bygone era



The Yagi-Uda antennas, remnants of the early days of television, continue to be seen across many Doha rooftops despite becoming redundant decades ago with advances in broadcast technology. These antennas, developed by Japanese inventor Shintaro Uda and his colleague Hidetsugu Yagi in 1926, were in use all over the world for several decades. In Doha, these forgotten equipment serve as bird perches. **PICTURE:** Gulf Times news editor Bonnie James.

300 students participate in QCSC orientation webinar



Science India Forum Qatar recently conducted an orientation webinar for more than 300 students and guide teachers participating in the Qatar Children Science Congress (QCSC) 2023-24 programme.

During the opening session, SIF Qatar president Ravikumar Narayanan described QCSC as an ideal and innovative programme for children to inspire, empower and expand their minds to scientific research.

It carries the spirit and mandate of Education for Sustainable Development of Unesco.

The programme is catalysed and supported by the National Council for Science & Technology Communication, government of India.

Since 2015, SIF Qatar has been conducting QCSC, based on various theme and sub-themes. The theme for this year is 'Understanding Ecosystem for Health and Well-being'.

The webinar was conducted by Dr Jagdish Sharma, SIF adviser and former vice-president who explained the focal and sub themes and guidance on project selection.

Dr Sharma emphasised that the guide teacher should help students generate an idea all by themselves and develop it further in the science project.

Students who missed the orientation programme can access the recording at www.sifq.org. The last date for online registration is September 30.



IIS trio win prizes in poster designing

Humayd Manzoor, Zainab Ahmad, and Gauri D R of Ideal Indian School excelled in the Poster Design Competition organised by Norva-Qatar, a socio-cultural forum, on the occasion of World Environment Day. In the junior category, Humayd Manzoor and Zainab Ahmad secured the second and third prizes, respectively, while Gauri won the second prize in the senior category. The principal, staff and students of Ideal Indian School congratulated the students on their achievement.

The nation with 37 official languages

By Shafqat Nabi

N11. Which country has a whopping number of 37 official languages, recognised by Guinness World Records as the country with the most official languages?

N12. MICE – a counter-intelligence acronym for treasonous motivations – stands for money, ideology, compromise and what?

N13. A sufferer of rhinotillexomania is a person who compulsively performs what action?



the bright idea to call it thus because the colour of the foam mixed with the coffee resembled the pale brown colour of robe of a particular order Franciscan monks.

N110. Identify the event from its emblem (pictured below), as below. Known as the "Surging Tides", it is designed to resemble a hand fan, a running track, the Qiantang River, and radio waves (symbolising wireless connectivity).

N14. Bibi ka Maqbara in Aurangabad (India), Siddiqua Fatima Zahra Mosque in Kuwait and the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City (inaugurated in 1990 by its owner, Donald Trump) in New Jersey are all inspired by which famous monument?

N15. In which famous annual race is the last man given the 'lanterne rouge'?

N16. Due to a naming conflict with a takeaway food shop in Adelaide, all Australian locations of which fast food giant are called Hungry Jack's?

N17. Which country has a traditional system of 72 microseasons – such as "Distant thunder", "Frogs start singing" and "Hens start to lay eggs" – to mark out the year?

N18. What capital city, considered the oldest capital in the world, is dubbed, poetically, the City of Jasmine?

N19. Which special beverage literally means "little hood" in Italian? The popular story is that someone got

Answers

N11. Bolivia. The Indian constitution recognises 22 major languages of the country in what is known as "the 8th Schedule" of the Constitution, making India second in the list.

N12. Ego.

N13. Picking one's nose.

N14. The Taj Mahal.

N15. Tour de France. The rider who has taken most time is called the lanterne rouge (red lantern, as in the red light at the back of a vehicle so it can be seen in the dark).

N16. Burger King.

N17. Japan. This traditional system of 72 microseasons (ko), consist of 24 solar terms (seki) each divided into three sets of five days. Each ko has traditional customs, festivals, foods, flowers and birds associated with it.

N18. Damascus, the capital of Syria.

N19. Cappuccino.

N110. The 2022 Asian Games, officially the XIX Asian Games, and branded as Hangzhou 2022.



Tribe Nl.yays

In cricket what does the term 'dolly' mean?
A very easy catch.

(Sanu Kumar, Al Khor)

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



Over 200 attend QU's Chemistry Festival

Over 200 female and male students from a number of middle and high schools participated in the fifth edition of the Chemistry Festival organised by Qatar University's (QU) American Chemical Society (Student Chapter) in co-operation with QU's Career Guidance and Counselling and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

The event aimed to encourage students' interest in the field of chemistry, as well as introduce them to the university and the many specialisations available for them.

Students were able to conduct chemistry experiments and have hands-on experience, as well as participate in a variety of competitions.

In her opening speech, Prof Siham Alqaradawi, pro-



QU holds Chemistry Festival in its 5th edition.



The Chemistry Festival saw the presence and participation of a number of middle and high schools.



The event aimed to encourage students' interest in the field of chemistry.

fessor of Organic Chemistry, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) said: "The Chemistry Festival is a significant event where professionals, professors, teachers and students gather and participate in activities aimed at demonstrating and emphasising

the importance of chemistry in our daily lives.

"Qatar is making tremendous efforts and great investments in the field of STEAM, we are also working hard with them in this field to encourage students to enter scientific fields in

general and chemistry in particular."

Professor Mazen Khaled, professor at the department of chemistry and earth sciences CAS and head of the department pointed out the importance of empowering students in chemistry, as

this specialisation is one of the disciplines currently in great demand in Qatar.

Ali Bukamal, student recruitment specialist at QU was on hand to deliver a presentation about QU and all its offerings, as well as answer student questions.

IIS launches Gavel Club



Ideal Indian School has launched a Gavel Club to enhance students' public speaking skills. The new club is one of the US registered Gavel Clubs in Doha and a sister concern of Toastmasters International. A total of 45 students from classes VII to XII have enrolled. The activities of the club are being co-ordinated by Boys' Section assistant headmaster Sajid Shamim and the department of English head Lipsy Sabu. The executive committee members are: Mary Stancia Fernando (president), Farha Naaz, Amna Hafiz, Shreya Saravanan (vice-presidents), Uzma Sharmeen (treasurer), Luqman Hakim (secretary), Mohamed Arsh (sergeant at arms), Mohamed Sajid Shamim (counsellor), Lipsy Sabu (teacher in-charge). Principal Sheikh Shamim congratulated the Gavel Club members and office-bearers.



Communication Project Day at OIS



Olive International School, organised a 'Communication Project Day' which allowed students to showcase their talent and expertise in communication skills. Students from grade I to VIII participated in the event. The day ended with lots of appreciation and positive comments by parents and judges. The winners from different categories were recognised and a best speaker from each class were selected by the judges.

Grade X toppers feted at DPS-MIS



DPS-Modern Indian School organised an 'Academic Award Ceremony' to felicitate the meritorious students from Grade X CBSE Board Examination 2022-23. A total of 210 students were awarded certificates, badges, blue blazers, blue ties, and medals. In her speech, principal Asna Nafees announced that the institution is set to receive the 'Award of Academic Excellence' for the 11th year in a row. Vice-president Yasir Nainar was the chief guest and director Rocky Fernandes the guest of honour.

8th Qatar Malayalee Conference set to begin on November 2



The organising committee of the 8th Qatar Malayalee Conference has announced that preparations are underway for the event, scheduled to take place in Doha on November 2 and 3, 2023.

Under the theme 'Let's preserve the shore of harmony', the conference promises to be a landmark gathering celebrating the rich cultural heritage of Kerala, India, a statement said.

The itinerary will be diverse and engaging, including an inaugural session, cultural presentations, a student session, family

meet, youth activities, a closing session, and an art evening. Distinguished personalities from both Kerala and Qatar will grace the event, sharing their insights and expertise.

As a part of the conference, various sports competitions, art contests, and health awareness classes are scheduled to be held in the coming days.

The organising committee meeting was presided by chairman Sharaf P Hameed. General convenor Shameer Valiyaveetil, chief patron A P Manikandan, advisory committee chairman Ab-

raham Joseph, chief co-ordinator K Mohamed Easa, vice-chairman K N Sulaiman Madani, and representatives of several organisations such as Shanavas Bava, Dr Samad, Sameer Eramala, Ahmad Kutty, S A M Basheer, Juttas Paul, Muneer Mankada, Varkey Boban, Dr Sameer Moopan, Jopachan Thekkoot, Noufal Paleri, Faisal Salafi, Aboobacker Madappat, Khaleel A P, various sub-committee officials Dr Sabu K C, Ziyad Kottayam, Ashiq Ahmad, Zareena Ahad, Ameenu Rahman, Mini Siby, D Biju Gafoor, Abdul Latheef Nallalam and others were present.

MES students honoured



Three students from MES Indian School were awarded with certificates and a memento for their presentation of a model on Smart Homes at an Engineer's Day event celebrated by the Karnataka Sangha Qatar in association with the Indian Cultural Centre to commemorate the birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Sir M Visvesvarayya. Rabeaman, Adeem Shihabudin, and Rithesh Manoj were the achievers. Indian ambassador Vipul was the chief guest. Ram Kumar S from the department of computer science and engineering graphics was the teacher in charge of the students representing MES Indian School. Principal Dr Hameeda Kadar congratulated the achievers.

Tamil essay winner

Ilakkiya Velmurugan (XI-J) of MES Indian School won the first prize in an essay writing competition titled 'Indian Independence and Forgotten Tamil Freedom Fighters' conducted at Shantiniketan Indian School by the United Tamil Forum. MES principal Dr Hameeda Kadar congratulated her.



Large turnout at NAM Onam 23 celebrations



NAM College Alumni Association Qatar chapter celebrated the popular Kerala festival, Onam, at a grand event titled 'Onam 23' with traditional fervour. The event was attended by a large number of NAM alumni members and their families. The event featured a traditional onasadhya and a number of cultural performances and games. Anchor Jesna Lipin and programme co-ordinator Ashik C T conducted the cultural performances and games. Senior alumni member Maneesh Thovarayi was honoured by committee officials. General secretary Saleem Ali welcomed the gathering, president Jasar Achoth presided and treasurer Abdul Raof proposed a vote of thanks.





ESPIONAGE

UK to charge five Bulgarians with spying for Russia

Five Bulgarian nationals suspected of spying for Russia will be charged with conspiracy to conduct espionage, UK prosecutors said yesterday. Three men and two women “will be charged with conspiring to collect information intended to be directly or indirectly useful to an enemy for a purpose prejudicial to the safety and interest of the state”, the Crown Prosecution Service said in a statement. The charges relate to alleged offences that took place between August 2020 and February 2023, the CPS added. Orlin Roussev, 45, Bizer Dzhambazov, 41, Katrin Ivanova, 31, Ivan Stoyanov, 31, and Vanya Gaberova, 29, will appear at Westminster Magistrates’ Court in London on Tuesday.

LAW AND ORDER

Former UK soldier denies prison break

An ex-British army soldier yesterday pleaded not guilty to escaping from a London prison where he was being held on terror charges. Daniel Khalife, 21, is accused of absconding from London’s Wandsworth prison on September 6, allegedly by clinging to the bottom of a delivery van. Following a huge manhunt, he was rearrested three days later on a canal towpath in west London after being pulled off a bike by a plain-clothes officer. Khalife appeared at London’s Old Bailey court via video-link from the high security Belmarsh prison wearing a blue and yellow sweatshirt. “I am not guilty,” he told the court.

DISCLOSURE

Radioactive metal stolen from Fukushima: Japan

Construction workers stole and sold potentially radioactive scrap metal from near the crippled Fukushima nuclear power plant, the Japanese environment ministry said yesterday. The materials went missing from a museum being demolished in a special zone around 4kms from the atomic plant in northeast Japan knocked out by a tsunami in 2011. Although people were allowed to return to the area in 2022 after intense decontamination work, radiation levels can still be above normal and it is surrounded by a no-go zone. Japan’s environment ministry was informed of the theft by workers from a joint venture conducting the demolition work in late July.

DEFENCE

China seeks graduates for warplane pilot roles

The Chinese navy wants to hire highly educated graduate students to fly shipborne aircraft, and is raising the age limit to expand its search, as it seeks to improve the qualifications of its air personnel and build a “strong army”. Besides upgrading its hardware from warships to warplanes, China is also trying to improve the calibre of its recruits, as the military is a career path traditionally favoured by the less educated. In an advertisement on social media platform WeChat, the People’s Liberation Army Navy said it was seeking graduate students who hold science and engineering master degrees and who are below 26 years old to pilot aircraft from ships.

India stops new visas for Canadians, asks Ottawa to downsize missions as row grows

Reuters
New Delhi

India yesterday suspended new visas for Canadians and asked Ottawa to reduce its diplomatic presence in the country, sharply escalating a spat triggered by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s accusations linking New Delhi to a Sikh separatist’s murder. The Indian foreign ministry said Canada has not shared any specific information in connection with the allegations Trudeau made and that New Delhi was willing to look at it if provided. A blanket suspension of new visas by India for a Western country is unheard of and marks the lowest point of India-Canada relations. The announcement came hours after Canada’s high commission in India said it would temporarily “adjust” staff presence in the country after some diplomats received threats on social media platforms. But Indian foreign ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said Ottawa had been asked to reduce numbers at its diplomatic missions in India to bring parity between the missions of the two countries. Bagchi said India suspended issuing new visas to Canadian citizens due to “security threats” to its staff in its consulates in Canada. India has not provided any evidence or given details of the nature of such security threats, and Canada’s Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc said in response on Wednesday that Canada was a safe

country. “You are aware of the security threats being faced by our high commission and consulates in Canada. This has disrupted their normal functioning,” Bagchi told reporters at a weekly briefing yesterday. “Accordingly our high commission and consulates are temporarily unable to process visa applications,” he said, adding that the security situation would be reviewed regularly. Canada is the fourth largest source of foreign tourists with 350,000 visitors in 2019, a number which fell following the Covid-19 pandemic, according to Indian government data. The unprecedented tensions flared up on Monday after Trudeau said Ottawa was investigating “credible allegations” about the potential involvement of Indian government agents in the June murder of Hardeep Singh Nijjar in British Columbia. Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government denied any links to the alleged murder. Canadian officials have so far declined to say why they believe India could be linked to Nijjar’s murder. The two countries, whose relations have been fraying in recent years over the issue of Sikh separatists, have since announced tit-for-tat expulsions of senior diplomats and issued tit-for-tat travel advisories. Bagchi said India was “willing to look at any specific information, we have conveyed this to the Canadian side, made it clear to them... but so far, we have not received any such specific information”. Canada

has discussed the issue with key allies such as the Five Eyes intelligence sharing alliance, which includes the US, Britain, Australia and New Zealand, with Washington, London and Canberra expressing concern. Asked if any of these countries, with whom India also enjoys close ties, had raised the issue with New Delhi, Bagchi said: “We have been discussing with them, we have conveyed our position how we see these developments.” Bagchi also said Canada should be worried about damage to its reputation and not India, when asked about the risk posed by the row to New Delhi’s global standing. “If there is any country that needs to look at it, it is Canada, its growing reputation as a safe haven for terrorists, extremists and for organised crime,” he said, adding that India had in vain sought action against more than 20 individuals. Canada has the largest population of Sikhs outside the northern Indian state of Punjab, with about 770,000 people reporting Sikhism as their religion in the 2021 census. A bloody Sikh insurgency in the 1980s and 1990s in Punjab killed tens of thousands of people before it was suppressed. The separatists wanted the creation of an independent Sikh state called Khalistan. Although there is hardly any support for the insurgency left in India, small groups of Sikhs in Australia, Britain, Canada and the US support the separatist demand and occasionally stage protests outside Indian embassies.

Japan royals in Vietnam to mark 50 years of ties



Japan’s Crown Prince Akishino and Crown Princess Kiko take part in a event to mark 50 years of diplomatic relations between Vietnam and Japan at the International Conference Center in Hanoi yesterday. Japan’s Crown Prince and Princess have arrived in Hanoi for their first visit to Vietnam since 1999 to mark the two country’s 50th anniversary of diplomatic ties.

UK’s Sunak defends climate policy shift

AFP
London

Britain’s Prime Minister Rishi Sunak yesterday insisted he was “not slowing down efforts” to tackle climate change, a day after softening green policies aimed at achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. He spoke out after his rethink in green policy was met with a backlash from opposition lawmakers, environmental cam-

paigners, the car industry and even some MPs from his Conservative Party. Sunak had told a news conference on Wednesday that the UK was adopting a more “pragmatic, proportionate and realistic” approach to meeting the net zero target. The new strategy will include the pushing back of a ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2030 to 2035. The prime minister also announced an easing of energy efficiency targets for rental prop-

erties and backtracked on plans to make homeowners replace gas boilers with heat pumps. The chief executive of the independent Climate Change Committee, Chris Stark, called his policy shift “wishful thinking” and said the UK now didn’t have the policy package to hit its targets. But Sunak said in an interview with the BBC: “We are absolutely not slowing down efforts to combat climate change. I am very proud of our country’s leadership.”

Commissioners to run ‘bankrupt’ Birmingham

British minister Michael Gove said the government had been forced to intervene in the day-to-day running of Birmingham, which earlier this month effectively declared bankruptcy. Gove said he would appoint commissioners to take over the running of Birmingham City Council – the largest local authority in Europe – having determined that the council had failed to comply with its duties. “I’m proposing the transfer to the commissioners of the exercise of all functions associated with the council’s governance and scrutiny of strategic decision making, all functions associated with its financial governance,” Gove, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, told parliament. On September 5, Birmingham issued a ‘Section 114 notice’, effectively declaring itself in financial distress and no longer solvent as it faced spiralling liabilities relating to historic equal pay claims.

Teachers protest in Nepal



Police stand guard as the Nepal Teachers Association protests near the parliament in Kathmandu yesterday, against a new school bill which will empower the local authorities to define the teachers’ terms of service instead of the federal government.

Filipino activists accuse Marcos of persecution

AFP
Manila

Filipino activists accused President Ferdinand Marcos Jr’s government of carrying out a “witch-hunt” against rights defenders as they held rallies for the 51st anniversary of the imposition of martial law yesterday. Hundreds of people marched in Manila calling for the release of victims of forced disappearances and the abolishment of an anti-communist task force, set up by former president Rodrigo Duterte, that has been accused of targeting government critics. Rights group Karapatan said the Marcos Jr administration was using the task force to “witch-hunt activists, human rights defenders and other dissenters”, while enabling the military and police to “perpetuate repression reminis-

cent of the martial law era”. Marcos Jr’s dictator father, Ferdinand Marcos, imposed martial law in 1972, unleashing his security forces on rivals, critics and dissidents. Amnesty International estimates thousands of people were killed and tens of thousands tortured and imprisoned in the brutal crackdown. Activists said rampant human rights abuses have continued under Marcos Jr, who has kept up Duterte’s deadly war on drugs, as well as his National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict. Rights groups say eight activists have been “disappeared” since Marcos Jr became president in June 2022. There have been more than 400 drug-related killings during the same period, according to a monitoring group.

S Korea lawmakers vote to pave way for opposition leader’s arrest

The vote means Democratic Party leader Lee Jae-myung will face court to contest his arrest over the charges

Reuters
Seoul

South Korea’s opposition-controlled parliament in a surprise move yesterday voted to allow prosecutors to serve an arrest warrant against the main opposition leader

who is facing an investigation into bribery and breach of duty charges. The vote means Democratic Party leader Lee Jae-myung will face court to contest his arrest over the charges. The motion was accepted by a margin of 149 to 136, with six abstained votes and four invalid in a secret ballot with 295 votes cast. Separately, parliament voted to dismiss Prime Minister Han Duck-soo for a slew of government policy failures including the deadly Halloween crush, inadequate response to heavy rains and flooding, and the much-criticised World Scout Jamboree.

It is the first time such a motion has passed against a prime minister in South Korea though it is not binding. President Yoon Suk-yeol is expected to exercise his power to reject it. Lee was hospitalised on Monday while on a hunger strike protesting what he called policy failures by Yoon’s government, including economic mismanagement and not doing enough to stop Japan’s Fukushima wastewater release. The justice minister had described the strike as a bid to evade his arrest. Members of parliament have immunity against arrest when the assembly is in session unless its members vote to rescind

it with a simple majority. Lee’s Democratic Party holds 167 seats in the 297-member parliament. Lee is accused of asking a company to illegally transfer \$8mn to North Korea when he was the governor of Gyeonggi Province. He is also accused of breaching his duty over losses of 20bn won (\$15mn) by a municipal development corporation during his time as mayor of the city of Seongnam. Lee has denied any wrongdoing, calling the allegations “fiction” and a “political conspiracy”. He and other democrats have criticised the charges against him as a political witch hunt,

even as the investigations began under a former president from their own party. Thousands of Lee’s supporters gathered outside parliament hours before the vote and called for rejecting the motion. Angered by the result, they unsuccessfully sought to enter parliament and then the Democratic Party headquarters, decrying not only ruling party members but also democrats who voted to pass the motion, prompting police to block some streets and nearby metro exits. Lee narrowly lost to Yoon, a former chief prosecutor, in the presidential election last year. On Wednesday, Lee urged

lawmakers to vote against the motion and stop what he called “prosecution dictatorship” by the Yoon government in a social media post, despite having promised earlier not to use his parliamentary immunity. “Over 300 raids have been conducted (by the prosecution). But nothing has come out,” Lee said. Lee was not present in the plenary session to vote. He has been on hunger strike since August 31. President Yoon is currently in New York to attend the United Nations General Assembly. South Korea’s next parliamentary elections are scheduled for April next year.

Zelensky wins US air defence arms but faces aid battle

AFP
Washington

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky won a promise of “significant” new air defence weapons from the White House yesterday but warned that Kyiv could lose the war with Russia if Republican lawmakers cut the flow of billions of dollars in US military aid.

Wearing his trademark olive green military-style shirt, Zelensky huddled with members of Congress before stopping at the Pentagon and the White House, where President Joe Biden greeted him with an honour guard.

“Very important,” he told reporters when asked about how vital his talks with Biden would be.

This was his second wartime visit to Washington, but Zelensky faced a trickier political landscape than when he arrived to a hero’s welcome in December 2022.

Biden warmly received the embattled Ukrainian leader. However, the White House said there was no deal to provide the long-

range missiles that Zelensky has repeatedly requested.

And in Congress, Republican and Democratic leaders are locked in a bitter spending battle that could spark a US government shutdown, with a \$24bn aid package for Ukraine at risk.

The hard-right faction dominating the Republican Party is increasingly adamant that the aid spigot should be turned off, with Congress having already approved \$100bn in aid to date, including \$43bn in weaponry.

“To win, we must all stand together and work together,” Zelensky said on social media, adding that he counted on “constant support” from the United States against Russia.

The Ukrainian leader arrived right after another wave of Russian missile strikes. The attacks – hitting cities across the country – killed at least three people in Kherson and wounded many in other areas.

Democratic Senate leader Chuck Schumer, a major supporter of Biden’s pro-Ukraine policies, said Zelensky had told him “if we don’t get the aid, we

will lose the war.”

As part of his bid to win over Washington, Zelensky went to the Pentagon where he laid a wreath at a memorial for victims of the September 11, 2001 attacks.

White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said he was confident that the deep US political divide would not stop the flow of aid to Ukraine.

“I continue to remain of the view that when all is said and done... there will be strong bipartisan support to continue funding Ukraine,” Sullivan told reporters.

Biden was set to announce a major new arms package including “significant air defence capabilities to help Ukraine,” Sullivan added.

But in a blow to Zelensky, he said Biden had rejected for now a request for longer-range ATAC-MS missiles that can strike up to 300km away.

Zelensky said he had “great dialogue” on Capitol Hill earlier, despite the lack of fanfare compared to his visit nine months ago.

He got a notably discreet welcome from the Republican

Speaker of the House of Representatives, Kevin McCarthy, who is having trouble keeping a lid on internal party squabbling over US spending in Ukraine.

Some Republicans say the money could be better spent on US border security, while there are also concerns about the pace of Kyiv’s counteroffensive and that corruption in Ukraine means the money will go to waste.

The doubts are being fuelled by messaging from former president and likely 2024 candidate Donald Trump, who has opposed more funding and frequently expressed admiration for Russia’s Vladimir Putin.

It’s a trend that has also reached parts of the generally more pro-Ukraine Republicans in the Senate, where Senator Roger Marshall said Congress should not be “sending another blank check to Zelensky.”

A group of six senators led by Republican JD Vance issued a joint letter declaring that “enough is enough” and vowing to block all future funding requests.

Earlier this week, Zelensky attended the UN General Assembly



US President Joe Biden meets with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, DC, yesterday. (AFP)

meeting in New York where he urged the world to stand firm with Ukraine against Russia’s “genocide.” His warning came a day before Poland said it would no longer arm Ukraine in a mounting

row over grain exports.

But yesterday, the Polish prime minister said he had been “misinterpreted” and Warsaw clarified that it would fulfil existing arms supply deals.

Trudeau wants India to co-operate in murder probe, refuses evidence

US denies rift with Canada

Reuters
New York

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau yesterday called on India to co-operate with an investigation into the murder of a Sikh separatist leader in British Columbia and said Canada would not release its evidence.

Trudeau said on Monday that Ottawa had credible allegations linking Indian government agents to the murder of Hardeep Singh Nijjar in June, prompting an angry reaction from New Delhi. Nijjar, 45, was a Canadian citizen.

Traditional Canadian allies have so far taken a relatively cautious approach to the matter. Analysts says this is partly because the United States and other major players see India as a counterweight to the growing influence of China.

“There is no question that India is a country of growing importance and a country that we need to continue to work with ... and we’re not looking to provoke or cause problems,” Trudeau said in a press conference in New York on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly. “But we are unequivocal around the importance of the rule of law and unequivocal about the importance of protecting Canadians.”

“That’s why we call upon the government of India to work with us to establish



Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau takes questions from reporters during a press conference on the sidelines of the UNGA in New York, yesterday. (Reuters)

processes to discover and to uncover the truth of the matter.”

The United States is in touch with both Canada and India over Ottawa’s allegations, US national security adviser Jake Sullivan said yesterday, confirming for the first time that Washington was talking to New Delhi about the matter.

“There’s not some special exemption you get for actions like this,” Sullivan told reporters when asked about Trudeau’s state-

ment about possible Indian involvement.

“It is a matter of concern for us, it is something we take seriously.”

The Indian foreign ministry said Canada had not shared any specific information about the murder. Nijjar supported a Sikh homeland in the form of an independent Khalistani state and was designated by India as a “terrorist” in July 2020.

“As a country with a strong and independent justice system, we allow those

justice processes to unfold themselves with the utmost integrity,” Trudeau replied when asked when Canada would release the evidence it had.

India yesterday suspended new visas for Canadians and asked Ottawa to reduce its diplomatic presence in the country. Trudeau did not respond when asked about these measures. Speaking separately, an Indian trade official said there was no reason for Canadian pension funds to back out of investing in the country.

Meanwhile, the White House yesterday insisted there was no “wedge” between the United States and Canada over Ottawa’s charges that India had a hand in the killing of a Sikh separatist on its territory.

“I have seen in the press some efforts to try to drive a wedge between the United States and Canada on this issue,” said Jake Sullivan, national security adviser to President Joe Biden.

“I firmly reject the idea that there is a wedge between the US and Canada,” he told reporters, noting that “we have deep concerns about the allegations.”

The *Washington Post* reported, in an article that was later corrected, that Canada had unsuccessfully asked its allies, particularly the United States, to publicly condemn the assassination of the Sikh leader, pointing the finger at New Delhi.

The development is a sensitive issue for Washington, a neighbour and historic ally of Canada which is currently trying to forge closer ties to the Indian government led by Narendra Modi as part of its strategy to contain China’s rising power.

Bus carrying high school band rolls over in NY

A bus carrying members of a high school marching band on a trip to a music camp rolled over and crashed on a highway in New York state yesterday, killing at least one person and injuring dozens of others, authorities and news outlets reported.

New York Governor Kathy Hochul released a statement confirming a single fatality, which NBC’s New York affiliate station, citing an unnamed source familiar with the situation, said was an adult.

CNN, citing emergency officials, reported one person died and 49 students were injured, three of them severely. The network reported 45 of the students suffered minor bumps and bruises and were seen walking around the scene after the crash.

Few official details were immediately available. The crash occurred in early afternoon along Interstate 84 near the town of Wawayanda, about 75 miles northwest of New York City near the border with New Jersey. The New York State Police said in a posting on social media that the highway was closed at that point.

Rescue authorities in Orange County, New York, said they were dealing with a “bus rollover” that they described as a “mass casualty” incident, without providing details. Photos from the crash scene posted on social media showed the coach-style bus on its side down an embankment, surrounded by trees and brush.

Murdoch hands empire to son Lachlan

Rupert Murdoch announced yesterday he will step down as chairman of his global media empire, a conservative behemoth that shaped politics across continents, and hand control over to his son Lachlan.

The Australian-born mogul, who built a global entertainment and news juggernaut instrumental in events from the Margaret Thatcher era to the rise of Donald Trump, will step back at the age of 92, starting mid-November, Fox Corp. and News Corp announced.

With a letter to colleagues saying he’d decided to “transition to the role of Chairman Emeritus,” Murdoch drew a line under a remarkable career that saw him rise from local news in Adelaide, Australia, to amassing a stable of legacy newspapers in Britain and the United States, before launching into broadcast media.

Aggressive tabloids like *The Sun* and *New York Post*, storied dailies *The Times* and *Wall Street Journal*, and big-hitting television networks like Fox and Sky have turned the Murdoch family into some of the world’s most influential figures.

But the operation’s news division has drawn frequent criticism under his leadership for blurring the line between commentary and journalism.

Fox News anchor Bill Hemmer offered gratitude, saying Murdoch’s “contributions are both innumerable and extraordinary.” Critics such as Angelo Carusone, CEO of Media Matters for America, a liberal group, painted a different picture.

“In Fox News, Murdoch created a uniquely destructive force in American democracy and public life, one that ushered in an era of division where racist and post-truth politics thrive,” Carusone said. “The world is worse off because of Rupert Murdoch.”

Murdoch was typically unapologetic, taking a parting shot at what he called the “elites” who



Rupert Murdoch (left) and his son Lachlan attend the first day of the annual Allen and Co. media conference in Sun Valley, Idaho in this July 8, 2015 file photo. (Reuters)

had “open contempt” for outsiders.

“Most of the media is in cahoots with those elites, peddling political narratives rather than pursuing the truth,” he said.

The tycoon leaves behind a trail of media scandals.

In 2011, the company suddenly shuttered the *News of the World*, a popular British weekly tabloid following public revulsion over its journalists’ practice of hacking the phones of celebrities and crime victims to get scoops.

Then in 2016, Rupert Murdoch ousted powerful news chief Roger Ailes following a sexual harassment scandal later dramatised in the Oscar-winning 2019 movie *Blockbuster*. But every controversy paled in comparison to fallout from the Murdoch empire’s relationship with Trump, peaking in coverage of the Republican populist’s campaign to persuade tens of millions of people that he was cheated in the 2020 election.

In April, Fox News agreed to pay a \$787.5mn settlement in a defamation case brought by voting machine maker Dominion. It alleged

that the network knowingly and repeatedly promoted Trump’s false narrative that the voting machines were part of a conspiracy to rob him of victory against Joe Biden.

A week after the settlement, Fox ousted conservative firebrand Tucker Carlson, one of several prominent Fox figures who had publicly championed Trump, while privately disparaging the conspiracy theory peddling Republican.

The transition of leadership to Murdoch’s son Lachlan, executive chair and chief executive officer at Fox Corporation, follows a period of intense speculation about the media empire’s leadership plans that proved inspiration for the fictionalised and highly-rated *Succession* series on HBO.

Third Bridge analyst Jamie Lumley said the transition could boost the odds of a merger between Fox and News Corp.

The company still faces litigation over the Smartmatic suit on the 2020 election, said Lumley, adding “questions also remain about how Fox will approach its programming and coverage of the 2024 election cycle, a year which will be flush with political ad dollars.”

In 2020, Lachlan’s younger brother James Murdoch, who had been in the running to lead the empire, resigned from the News Corp. board, alluding to “disagreements over certain editorial content.”

James Murdoch and his wife Kathryn have also become significant donors to Democratic candidates and progressive environment and voting rights groups.

However, under the terms of the Murdoch family trust that controls the media empire, Lachlan and James, along with sisters Elisabeth and Prudence, will have an equal vote on the business after the death of Rupert Murdoch.

“The scramble for control will happen when he dies,” New York University professor Jay Rosen said on X.

Microsoft all set to offer OpenAI’s Dall-E 3 in Bing

Microsoft yesterday said it would integrate OpenAI’s soon to be released Dall-E 3 image creation tool into its Bing search engine, in its latest effort to use artificial intelligence to compete with the powerful Google.

Two versions of Dall-E were developed by OpenAI and presaged the massive explosion of interest in generative AI that came when it released ChatGPT late last year. Dall-E uses machine learning technology to generate digital images from natural language descriptions and the third version, due to be released in October, will use ChatGPT to make it easier for users to get what they want.

Microsoft had already added the ChatGPT-like generative AI interface to Bing in February, empowering the search engine to receive conversational responses to their queries rather than just links to websites.

Dall-E has not come without controversy, drawing lawsuits from artists who say that OpenAI illegally used their work in building their technology. In an effort to reassure potential clients, Microsoft in September said it will pay any legal damages for customers using Copilot, Bing Chat, and other AI services as long as they use built-in safeguards.

Microsoft has bet big on AI, notably with a \$10bn envelope

dedicated to its partnership with OpenAI, and is now trying to monetise this technology by integrating it into its products.

The Redmond, Washington-based group also announced yesterday that the Bing bot was now able to draw on previous conversations to propose more appropriate responses to new queries from the same user.

This is a breakthrough, as generative AI software is often criticised for its lack of “memory,” forcing users to repeat information each time they use it, something they wouldn’t do when interacting with a human.

The lack of memory was understood to be a safety feature and Microsoft said the update would be optional.

Also yesterday, Microsoft announced that its “Copilot” AI assistant, also backed by OpenAI technology, would be available on November 1.

Integrated into the Microsoft 365 software suite and the Windows 11 operating system, Copilot uses generative AI to suggest a response to an e-mail, summarise meetings or create a document comparing internal company data with information gathered on the Internet.

In a similar announcement, archival Google on Tuesday said it had integrated Gmail, YouTube and other tools into its Bard AI chatbot.

Pakistan poll commission sets vote for Jan '24

■ Uncertainty hangs over whether Imran Khan, the country's most popular leader, will be allowed to contest

By Asif Shahzad and Sajjad Tarakzai
Islamabad

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) yesterday announced a general election for January, almost three months later than scheduled, removing political uncertainty over the timing to help salvage a falling economy.

Elections in the politically and economically troubled South Asian nation were due to be held in November but were delayed due to fresh demarcation of constituencies under a new census.

An ECP statement said the vote will take place late in January after the conclusion of a process that includes filing nomination papers, appeals and campaigning.

Pakistan is currently being run by a caretaker government under interim Prime Minister Anwaar ul Haq Kakar that is meant to oversee a general election. Originally, elections were to be held within 90 days of the dissolution of the lower house of parliament in August.

Kakar, in New York for the annual UN General Assembly, told an event hosted by the Council on Foreign Relations that the process of delimiting constituencies by the Election Commission of Pakistan and public consultations on this would probably take another three, or three and a half months.

"That's where we are looking for, and probably somewhere by the end of January, we're going to go and vote for the new government," he said.

Odds against Khan

The election commission has already questioned the impartiality of the caretaker government led by Kakar, who comes from a pro-military party, saying it appears to be aligned with the opponents of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan.

With the odds heavily stacked against the defiant former premier Khan, the country's most popular political leader by



UNDER A CLOUD: Former PM Imran Khan and his party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf are currently out of favour with the powerful military despite riding a popular wave.

a country mile according to several opinion polls, it appears unlikely he would be able to contest after being barred from public office for five years after a controversial and hotly disputed corruption investigation.

Asked at CFR if all parties would be able to take part in the election, Kakar said: "I do not have any confusion in my mind, or in the government, that all the parties who are registered with Election Commission of Pakistan are legally, politically, morally, allowed, and they will participate in the political process."

The powerful armed forces have ruled the country for over three decades of its 76-year history and wield enormous influence in politics, including making and breaking civilian governments.

Election results are rarely accepted across the board in Pakistan and perceptions of bias could cast a further shadow

over the credibility of the process.

Despite the delay, the announcement eases political uncertainty about when the polls would be held as the country struggles to stay on a narrow stabilisation path under a \$3bn bailout plan by International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Analysts and political parties have been demanding that the elections be held as soon as possible to boost confidence in the ailing \$350bn economy, which is currently suffering from high inflation, low growth and a weak currency.

The Asian Development Bank also endorsed this view in a report this week, saying a smooth election process would help bring the economy back on track.

Pakistan's benchmark index KSE100 shot up more than 550 points immediately following the announcement, closing up 0.7%.

"News on the election is a major posi-

tive, which is expected to restore investor confidence in the system," said Fahad Rauf, head of research at Ismail Iqbal Securities.

Conversely, Pakistan's dollar-denominated government bonds slipped by as much as 1 cent yesterday after the announcement that the elections will be delayed.

The main contenders

Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) will hope to ride on a popular wave and repeat its 2018 victory. But amidst a continuing standoff with the military, the PTI's prospects hinge on a detente with the generals, which looks unlikely.

There are two other main contenders to lead the next government: the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) of the last prime minister Shehbaz Sharif and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP).

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, 34, the young chairman of the PPP and son of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto, is another key candidate.

Shehbaz Sharif is currently in London consulting with his brother Nawaz Sharif, a three-time former premier, who is expected to return to Pakistan next month following four years in exile after being granted medical bail from his own jail sentence.

But with a corruption conviction against Nawaz still in force, Shehbaz remains a front runner to return to power.

The ECP announcement cheered political analysts and the business community.

"The announcement of a date is a positive and significant sign, however Pakistani politics is so unstable that one can't predict what will happen after three months," political analyst Hasan Askari Rizvi told AFP.

"But all the sufferings of the common people due to inflation and price hikes will have a direct bearing — provided all parties are allowed to campaign and contest elections," he said. Pakistan Business Forum official Ahmad Jawad told AFP the

announcement came as a relief.

"It's been a demand of the business community to announce the election date to overcome the instability which is eating us like a termite," he said.

"Pakistan's economy needs complete political stability."

Khan's controversial ouster as prime minister in April last year sparked months of political drama, with the former international cricket star staging a defiant campaign against the powerful military culminating in a major crackdown on his party.

Two normally feuding dynastic parties — the PPP and PML-N — teamed up to form the next government, but cracks are already showing in their shaky alliance and they are likely to be bitter opponents in the next election.

With much of Khan's PTI leadership in jail, in hiding, or having abandoned the party, it remains unclear how much of a threat they will pose.

Teacher Ijaz Ahmad, 25, said it was vital all parties were allowed to contest the election.

'Let the people decide'

"It is also important to release all political leaders and let everyone be given a chance to participate in the elections," he told AFP in the northwestern city of Peshawar.

"Let the people decide which party they want to see in power next time."

The election commission said an official campaign period would last nearly two months.

"The final list of constituencies will be published on November 30. After that, the elections will be held in the last week of January 2024, after a 54-day election programme," it said in a statement.

Information Minister Murtaza Solangi told private TV channel Dunya: "We will provide all the resources to the Election Commission and ensure that all registered political parties have equal opportunities" — **Reuters, AFP**

Booker Prize shortlist offers 'terrors', 'joys'

AFP
London

The shortlist for the 2023 Booker Prize was announced in London yesterday, with the final six books offering "terrors, pleasures, joys and consolations."

Twice-shortlisted novelist Esi Edugyan, who chairs the judging panel, said the chosen novels "offer a full range of human experience" that "transport us not just outside reality but outside the common language of the everyday."

The prestigious literary prize is open to works of fiction by writers of any nationality, written in English and published in the UK or Ireland between October 1, 2022 and September 30, 2023.

The final list is made up of authors from the US, Ireland, Kenya and Canada.

The six novels were drawn from 158 works, which were then reduced to a 13-strong longlist.

Among them is Irish author Paul Murray's *The Bee Sting*, which looks at the role of fate in the travails of one family in a tragicomic saga.

Kenyan writer Chetna Maroo's moving debut novel *Western Lane* about grief and sisterhood, which follows the story of a teenage girl

for whom squash is life, also makes the cut.

Taking a dark turn, dystopian work *Prophet Song*, set in Dublin as Ireland descends into tyranny, earned Paul Lynch his first appearance on the Booker shortlist.

The novels were selected by a five-person panel, which included actor and writer Adjoa Andoh, poet Mary Jean Chan, professor of English at Columbia University James Shapiro and actor and comedian Robert Webb.

The panel also selected *If I Survive You* by US writer Jonathan Escoffery, which follows a Jamaican family and their chaotic new life in Miami.

He was joined by fellow US author, Paul Harding, whose *This Other Eden* — inspired by historical events — tells the story of Apple Island, an enclave off the US coast where society's misfits flock and build a new home.

Canada is also represented on the shortlist in the shape of *Study for Obedience* by Sarah Bernstein.

The unsettling novel explores the themes of prejudice and guilt through a suspicious narrator.

The winner, to be announced in London on November 26, will receive a £50,000 (\$69,000, €59,000) prize and a huge boost in their profile.

Ukraine foresees 'difficult' winter after Russia hits

Ukraine yesterday warned that difficult winter months lay ahead after a massive Russian missile barrage targeted civilian infrastructure, killing three in the south and wounding many across the country. Russia launched the strikes as Ukraine prepares for a third winter during Moscow's 19-month long invasion and as President Volodymyr Zelensky made his second wartime trip to Washington. "Most of the missiles were shot down. But only the majority. Not all," Zelensky said, calling for the West to provide Kyiv with more anti-missile systems. The fresh attack came as Poland said it would honour pre-existing commitments of weapons supplies to Kyiv, a day after saying it would no longer arm its neighbour in a mounting row between the two allies. Moscow hit cities from Rivne in western Ukraine to Kherson in the south, the capital Kyiv and cities in the centre and northeast of the country. Kyiv also reported power cuts across the country — in almost 400 cities, towns and villages — as Russia targeted energy sites, but said it was "too early" to tell if this was the start of a new Russian campaign against its energy sites. Last winter many Ukrainians had to go without electricity and heating in freezing temperatures as Russia hit Kyiv's energy facilities.

Azerbaijan, Karabakh separatists hold 'constructive' peace talks



Azerbaijani delegation lead by Deputy of the Azerbaijani Parliament Ramin Mammadov (centre) attends talks with Karabakh delegation in the Azerbaijani town of Yevlakh yesterday. (AFP)

AFP
Yevlakh

Azerbaijan and Armenian separatists from the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh held their first direct peace talks yesterday, after Baku claimed to have regained control over the breakaway region in a lightning military operation.

The separatists agreed to lay down their arms on Wednesday as part of a Russian-brokered ceasefire plan that halted Azerbaijan's 24-hour offensive to retake

land at the centre of decades of conflict.

Azerbaijan's presidency said the two-hour meeting had been "held in a constructive and peaceful atmosphere" in the presence of Russian peacekeepers, and both sides expressed readiness to hold more talks.

Baku's negotiators presented plans for the "reintegration" of Karabakh's Armenian population into Azerbaijan and pledged to provide urgently needed fuel, humanitarian supplies, and medical care to residents.

While the meeting was happening, gunfire rang out in the

separatist stronghold of Stepanakert, despite the truce deal.

"There was a small exchange of fire outside the city," Arutyun Gasparyan, a businessman and father of two, told AFP. "We are sitting at home and waiting for the results of the talks."

The breakaway authorities accused Azerbaijan of violating the ceasefire, but Baku denied the allegation.

Russia's defence ministry also said it observed "five ceasefire violations" in the areas of Shusha and Mardakert.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Armenia and Azerbaijan have fought two wars over the small mountainous region. Now, there are concerns of a fresh refugee crisis as Karabakh's Armenian population fears being forced out. Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said the ceasefire was holding overall and he did not see a "direct threat" to the civilian population.

Nonetheless he said Yerevan was prepared to host 40,000 families from the region, which is estimated to hold up to 120,000 ethnic Armenians.

The European Union said it was ready to provide "urgent humanitarian assistance", urging Azerbaijan to allow access to the enclave.

Charles pushes joint action to combat climate 'emergency'

AFP
Paris

King Charles III yesterday said France and the UK should team up on a new pact to battle the climate emergency, as he hailed the "indispensable" cross-Channel partnership in a rapturously received speech at the French Senate.

Charles won a standing ovation from lawmakers after deftly mixing English and French as well as personal and political reflections in his speech, the highlight on day two of his three-day state visit.

The visit, Charles' second abroad as monarch after a trip to Germany, has so far been seen in British and French media as a success, with occasional calls of "Vive le roi!" ("Long live the King!") even heard on the streets of Paris and a glittering Palace of Versailles dinner hosted by

President Emmanuel Macron on Wednesday.

In his speech, Charles recalled his mother Queen Elizabeth II, whom he succeeded upon her death one year ago, describing her legacy for France-UK relations as a "golden thread which will forever shine brightly" and saying the royal family was "moved beyond measure" by tributes to her from France.

"For the time that is granted to me as King, I pledge to do whatever I can to strengthen the indispensable relationship between the United Kingdom and France," he said.

"Quite simply, the United Kingdom will always be one of France's closest allies and best friends," he said, speaking from a lectern adorned with British, French and EU flags. Charles suggested that France and Britain join forces to tackle the climate and biodiversity emergencies with a new version of the Entente Cordiale, the 1904 pact that

sealed the friendship between Paris and London.

"I would like to propose it also becomes an 'Entente pour la Durabilite' (Partnership for Sustainability) in order to tackle the global climate and biodiversity emergency more effectively," he said.

He also vowed that London and Paris were "steadfast in our determination Ukraine will triumph" in fighting the Russian invasion.

"Just as we stand together against military aggression, so must we strive together to protect the world from our most existential challenge of all — that of global warming, climate change and the catastrophic destruction of nature," said the king, known for campaigning on environmental issues in the past decades.

By coincidence, Charles' latest call on the environment came a day after Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak watered down green policies

aimed at achieving net zero carbon emissions by mid-century.

His speech will also be etched in history as the first British monarch to speak in the main chamber of the Senate: his mother spoke in a conference hall within the Senate in a 2004 speech.

"Applause we can only dream of in our chambers!" said Senate speaker Gerard Larcher after lawmakers rose to their feet in unison after the speech as lower-house speaker Yael Braun-Pivet laughed in agreement.

Charles then rejoined Queen Camilla and French first lady Brigitte Macron — who even briefly played ping-pong together while visiting a sports centre.

Later on the Ile de la Cite on the river Seine, Charles — a keen gardener who once admitted he talked to his plants — toured a flower market named after Queen Elizabeth II on her last state visit in 2014.



Britain's King Charles III and his wife Queen Camilla pose as they arrive to visit the central Paris Flower Market, named after her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth during her state visit in 2014, in Paris yesterday. (AFP)

CHAIRMAN

Abdullah bin Khalifa al-Attiyah

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Faisal Abdulhameed al-Mudahka

Deputy Managing Editor

K T Chacko

- 📍 P.O.Box 2888, Doha, Qatar
✉ editor@gulf-times.com
☎ 44350478 (News),
☎ 44466404 (Sport),
☎ 44466636 (Home delivery)
📠 44350474
📘 facebook.com/gulftimes
🐦 twitter.com/gulftimes_Qatar
📷 instagram.com/gulftimes
📺 youtube.com/GulftimesVideos

GULF TIMES

Consumer goods firms' pricing woes may spread beyond France

Consumer goods firms like Nestle, Lindt and Unilever may face increased pressure across Europe to cut prices after being singled out by French retailers and politicians, industry experts say.

Ahead of contract talks due to start by next month, supermarket chain Carrefour has slapped price warnings on products to pressure top consumer goods suppliers including Nestle, PepsiCo and Unilever to reduce inflation.

France is a crucial country for consumer goods companies, having long outstripped Germany, Italy, Spain and others as the European Union's biggest market for groceries by supermarket revenues, according to research firm IBISWorld. The French government is considering bringing forward annual price negotiations between food producers and supermarkets, and aims to have secured price cuts by mid-January.

Its actions could encourage other countries within the EU to follow suit, industry experts say. Retailers' bargaining positions are also strengthened by international alliances with each other that increase their clout with suppliers.

That means consumer groups will face pressure to rein back prices across the European Union.

Consumer groups will face pressure to rein back prices across the European Union

"It's not only about the impact on the French market — it's about the potential ripple effect," said Laurent Thoumine, Europe lead for consultancy Accenture's retail industry practice.

Thoumine expects price negotiations in France to be the toughest the industry has faced for a decade.

"There are some brands that are untouchable — you cannot remove those brands from your shelves," Thoumine said, naming Ferrero's Nutella, Pernod Ricard's Ricard aperitif and Coca-Cola's sodas as particularly strong.

But if a product is not "essential" talks will be difficult, he added, because they can be replaced easily with private label alternatives.

French grocer Systeme U is part of Epic Partners, one of several European international purchasing groups. Germany's Edeka, Switzerland's Migros, Italy's Esselunga and Belgium's Colruyt are also reported to be part of the alliance.

Because these supermarkets are in different countries and do not compete with one another, they often combine forces to negotiate with consumer goods makers.

That has prompted accusations of collusion, which retailers deny.

"We buy as a group, not to evade any law but in order to have sufficient clout against manufacturers," Philippe Michaud, co-president of supermarket group E. Leclerc, told French lawmakers on Wednesday. E Leclerc is part of Eurelec, another buying alliance.

French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire in June urged 75 consumer companies to cut prices. After a new round of meetings last month, Le Maire called out Unilever, Nestle and PepsiCo for not "co-operating."

"I don't think this is just localised to France," Richard Saldanha, a portfolio manager at Britain's Aviva Investors, said. "There is pressure and I think governments are starting to look at this more closely."

Nestle and Unilever did not comment, while Lindt did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The retailers mentioned in this story did not respond to requests for comment, except Systeme U, which confirmed it was part of Epic Partners.

Paris is not alone in Europe in its eagerness to bring down the price of food and other staples.

Reuters reported in July that Italy's government is trying to broker a deal with supermarkets and producers to control prices of essential consumer goods in a measure that would be implemented in the final three months of this year.

The Greek government said on Wednesday that big supermarkets there will need to share with authorities their price lists for basic foods.

Consumer goods makers have for more than two years grappled with sky-rocketing input, supply chain and labour costs that they have either absorbed — taking a hit to margins — or passed on to retailers. Those cost pressures are easing off now, however, and investors have voiced concerns that raising prices will alienate shoppers and hit sales volumes.

"What's going on in France is interesting as you're starting to see higher costs rollover," Saldanha said. "The key for us from an investor standpoint is trying to understand: are these price increases justified?" — Reuters

To Advertise

📧 gtadv@gulf-times.com

Display

☎ 44466621
📠 44418811

Classified

☎ 44466609 📠 44418811
📧 gtcad@gulf-times.com

Subscription

📧 circulation@gulf-times.com

© 2023 Gulf Times. All rights reserved

Reynold
GULF TIMES
22-09-2023

Winds of Change



A tragedy is unfolding in the poorest countries

By Indermit Gill and M Ayhan Kose
Washington, DC

The poorest countries are in desperate straits, and the rest of the world is looking the other way. Doing so comes easy, because low-income countries (LICs) matter little to the fate of the world in the near term. At the end of June, the combined GDP of the 28 countries in this group was roughly \$500bn — a drop in the \$100tn ocean that is the global economy. The world's poorest countries are also nobody's ideal export markets: the average annual income is barely \$1,000, and conflict and instability are the norm for about half.

Nonetheless, 700mn people live in these countries, and about half of them are in extreme poverty. Very poor people have long been accustomed to neglect from their own governments, which often have other priorities. For example, they spend about 50% more on war and defence than they do on health care. Nearly half their budgets go toward public-sector wages and interest payments on debt, while a mere 3% of total government spending across LICs goes to support the most vulnerable citizens. That is one-tenth the average for developing economies more broadly.

It therefore should surprise no one that a human tragedy is now unfolding in these countries. Key indicators of human development in today's LICs are far worse now than they were in the LICs of 2000, before many of the latter had ascended to middle-income status. For example, maternal mortality is 25% higher now, and the share of the population with access to electricity has fallen from 52% to barely 40% across this cohort. Average life expectancy is now just 62 years, among the lowest rates in the world.

Making matters worse, the odds of these countries getting help from abroad have declined. Wealthier countries have chosen exactly the wrong moment to become less generous. Even before the pandemic, foreign-aid flows to the poorest countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, were slowing. Today, wealthier countries are redirecting more of their foreign-aid budgets to meet the surge of refugees arriving on their own shores. These developments have left few avenues for economic recovery: by the end of 2024, the average income of people in the poorest

countries will still be almost 13% lower than what had been expected before the pandemic.

Between 2011 and 2015, grants accounted for about one-third of government revenues in the world's poorest countries; but that share has since dropped to less than one-fifth. Poor-country governments have made up the difference by going deeper into debt — and at punishing interest rates. Government debt-to-GDP ratios in these economies soared from 36% of GDP in 2011 to 67% last year — the highest level since 2005 (with the exception of 2020). Fourteen LICs are now in debt distress or at high risk of it — more than double the number just eight years ago.

As they gather in New York for the United Nations 2023 SDG Summit, global leaders cannot afford to turn a blind eye to these developments. They must not forget the fundamental promise of the Sustainable Development Goals: "to reach the furthest behind first." Even as they remain generous to arriving refugees, wealthier countries should redouble their efforts to end the misery at the source.

That means enlarging the pool of resources available to multilateral development banks, so that they can increase grants and concessional financing for the poorest countries. Greater funding is not just a moral imperative to prevent a disaster in the poorest economies; it is a matter of self-interest for all countries with the means to help. Southern European countries struggling to manage migration flows should know that they will benefit from supporting development in poor countries such as Niger.

Wealthier countries, and all international financial institutions, should move decisively on three fronts. First, they must increase concessional financing for the poorest countries, with aid going to addressing emerging challenges such as climate change, economic fragility, and pandemics.

Increased aid also will help these countries invest in critical sectors such as health, education, and infrastructure, which will enhance their resilience and growth potential. Aid effectiveness (a major concern for donors) can be improved by strengthening donor coordination and building competent local institutions to select, manage, and monitor projects. International financial institutions, for their part, can help crowd in private finance in sectors that offer the promise of both development and profits.

Second, debt restructuring must be accelerated. The Common Framework for Debt Treatment Beyond the DSSI has struggled to deliver relief ever since the G20 announced it nearly three years ago. If finalised, Zambia's debt-restructuring agreement with its creditors will be a welcome development; but it was concluded three months ago, and the country is still waiting for debt relief.

The framework's glacial pace — and all the uncertainties that come with it — have deterred too many countries from seeking the relief they so urgently need. It is time to pick up the pace. For many lower-income countries, restoring long-term debt sustainability will depend on debt restructuring. Without it, they will remain paralysed, unable to attract the private financing they need to tackle the formidable development challenges of this decade — from creating jobs and improving welfare to making the planet more liveable.

Finally, we must double down on the reform agenda by ensuring that global initiatives to bolster the poorest countries are complemented by ambitious domestic measures. International financial institutions can make a difference by helping LICs mobilise domestic revenues and improve spending efficiencies and debt management. They can also support governments' efforts to improve institutional frameworks, build human capital, ease impediments to private investment, and harness the potential of digital technology, all of which will boost these countries' long-term growth prospects.

Time is running out. The growing hopelessness among citizens of the poorest countries will feed a vicious cycle that is already underway. Desperate to escape misery at home, many will risk everything to find refuge abroad. The suffering of millions of people in faraway lands is not as far away as it may seem. It is contagious, and it is already spilling over national borders, with unpredictable global consequences. — Project Syndicate

● Indermit Gill is Chief Economist and Senior Vice-President for Development Economics at the World Bank.
● M Ayhan Kose is Deputy Chief Economist and Director of the Prospects Group at the World Bank.

Greater funding is not just a moral imperative to prevent a disaster in the poorest economies; it is a matter of self-interest for all countries with the means to help



Celebrating the Prophet’s birthday is an innovation

People! Fear Allah the Almighty and know that the greatest favour He has ever conferred upon His servants is sending them Prophets as warners and bearers of glad tidings. Allah sent these prophets with scriptures so that He would judge between people in their disputes. The most effective and esteemed message of all of these was that of the Prophet Muhammad, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, whom Allah sent to guide all of mankind – and to seal prophethood.

Allah sent Muhammad, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, after a break in the series of His messengers, when people were in dire need of His guidance. It was through him that Allah guided people after they were astray; united them after their disunity; and sufficed them after they were needy. They thus became brothers and supported the religion of Allah, due to his grace and bounty. It was due to this that nations submitted to this religion and its adherents became a luminous series in the annals of history.

Due to the wholeheartedness of the early Muslims with regard to the comprehensive implementation of Allah’s laws in personal issues, financial transactions, and social and community affairs in accordance with the precepts laid down by this religions guide and leader, Muhammad, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, it naturally followed that they would be victorious in all their undertakings.

However, when the Muslims deviated from the correct path, the order and stability which they enjoyed collapsed, turning the Muslim nation into groups of disputing factions, whose enemies held as insignificant.

This nation will never regain its past power and dignity, nor will it re-live its glorious history, until and unless its people return to their religion and practice it in word as well as in deed, in compliance with the methodology of the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, and his companions, may Allah be pleased with them.

As a consequence of the comprehensive implementation of the religion of Islam, no devotional act or religious ceremonies can be initiated into it unless it has a basis in the conduct of the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*. Mankind have been commanded by Allah to do no more than the following: to worship Allah alone; to offer him sincere devotion; and to be true in faith. Thus, whoever attempts to worship Allah with any act that He has not prescribed will have that act rejected by Him. The Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, said: “He who performs any deed which is not according to what we are upon (i.e., the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, and his companions) then it is rejected.” Such acts are held as innovations in the sight of the lawgiver and every innovation is misguidance.

Among the innovations introduced into this religion is the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, which is celebrated in the month of Rabe’ Al-Awwal. People gather in the mosques or stay within their homes on the twelfth night of that month and send salutations upon the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, with innovated phrases as well as reciting laudatory poems and prose which concern him. These poems and prose are excessively commendatory and exceed the limits that were defined by the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*,. Some people even spend their nights cooking certain types of food, to be served on this occasion. Thus, they uselessly spend their time and money in matters that are not prescribed either by Allah or His Messenger, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*,. nor were practiced by the four rightly-guided caliphs after him, nor any other of the Muslims who were from the first three distinct generations, whose merit was attested to by the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*.

If these innovations were of any benefit, then surely the pious early Muslims would have preceded us in them? If they were meritorious then surely Allah would never have deprived the early Muslims, including



the rightly-guided caliphs of them? The fact of the matter is that this practice was first introduced by people who lived during the fourth Hijri century.

Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy upon him, said in his book *Iqtidaa’ As-Siraat Al-Mustaqeem Mukhaalafatu Ashaabu Al-Jaheem* [The Implication of the Straightforward Way Is to Contradict the Companions of the Fire]: “Some people, due to their imitation of what the Christians do on the claimed birth-date of ‘Eesaa (Jesus), peace be upon him, or because of their love of the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, or out of their wish to glorify him, celebrate the Prophet’s birthday. This is despite the fact that there is controversy among the scholars regarding the exact date of his birth. The early Muslims did not practice this, although there was good reason to honour and express their love of the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, and no preventing factors existed.

Thus, if the celebration of the Prophet’s birthday was something meritorious, they would have had a better right to precede us in this, as their love and esteem of the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, was far greater than ours. Also, they were far keener to perform good deeds in general than we were.

Loving and esteeming the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, was thus represented by the early Muslims in following his methodology, obeying him, applying his *Sunnah* inwardly and outwardly, propagating his mission and striving in this cause with their hearts, bodies and tongues.

Most of those who instigate religious innovations are heedless when it comes to the application of the well-known principles that were brought by the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*. They are like those who ornament the Qur’an but do not recite it, or recite it but do not follow its teachings.”

O Muslims! The innovation of celebrat-

ing the Prophet’s birthday, which is done on the twelfth night of the month of Rabe’ Al-Awwal, has no historical basis. In fact, historians have differed greatly on the actual birth date of the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*. Some have said that it was on the second of Rabe’ Al-Awwal , others said the eighth, ninth, tenth, twelfth, seventeenth or twenty-second; thus making up seven different opinions. None of these opinions have any evidence which would make them take priority over others.

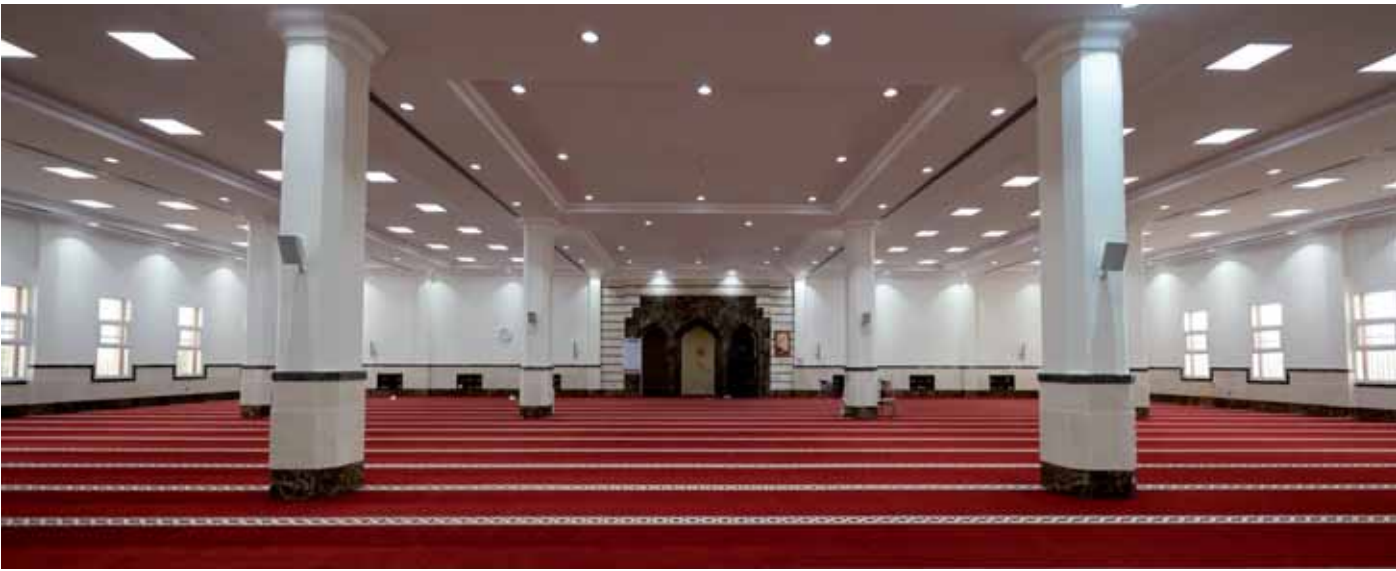
Moreover, the innovation of celebrating the birthday of the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, has no religious basis. Neither the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, nor any of his Companions or the followers did so. In fact, the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, said: “You must hold fast to my *Sunnah* and the *Sunnah* of the four Rightly-Guided Caliphs - cling to it stubbornly. Beware of innovations, for every innovation is misguidance.” (Abu Daawood, Tirmidhi).

Religious celebrations, festivals and other such occasions which glorify Allah and His Messenger are acts of worship. Only that which Allah has prescribed among these is considered to be from the pure Shari’ah, or Islamic law. None of these events can be taken as a means of devotion to Allah except those that have been sanctioned by Allah and His Messenger, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*.

The *Shari’ah* already contains the sufficient means with which a believer can glorify the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, and show his love to him. So fear Allah, O servants of Allah, and limit yourselves to Allah’s obligations and the Prophet’s *Sunnah*, to the exclusion of innovations.

Allah the Exalted and Almighty said that which translates as: “And verily this is my Straight Path, so follow it, and follow not (other) paths, for they will separate you away from His Path. This; He has ordained for you that you may become the pious.” (Al-An’aam: 153).

[By Shaykh Muhammad Saalih bin al-Uthaimin]



‘Whoever turns away from my Sunnah is not from me’

Anas, *radhiallah ‘anhu*, reported that: “Three men came to the houses of the wives of the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, and asked how his worship was. When they were informed, they considered their own worship to be insignificant and said: “Where are we in comparison to the Prophet when Allah has forgiven his past and future sins?” One of them said: “As for me, I shall offer prayer all night long.” Another said: “I shall observe fasting perpetually, never to break it.” Another said: “I shall abstain from women and will never marry.” The Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, then came to them and said: ‘Are you the people who said such things? I swear By Allah that I fear Allah more than you do, and I am most obedient and dutiful among you to Him, but still, I observe fasting (sometimes) and break it (at others); I perform (optional) prayer (at night sometimes) and sleep at night (at others); I also marry. So whoever turns away from my *Sunnah* (i.e., my way) is not from me.” [Al-Bukhari & Muslim]

Anas also reported: “A few of the companions of the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, inquired from his wives about his worship when he would be alone. When they found out, one of them said: “I shall abstain from women and will never marry.” Another said: “I shall never eat meat.” Another said: “I will always offer the night prayer and shall never sleep.” Later, the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, ascended the pulpit, praised and thanked Allah, and then said: ‘Why are some people saying such things? I perform (optional night) prayers (sometimes) and sleep at night (at others); I observe fasting (sometimes) and break it (at others); and I marry. So whoever turns away from my *Sunnah* (i.e., way) is not from me.”

“A few of the companions” in the narration means that there were between three to nine of them, and their asking: “Where are we in comparison to the Prophet when Allah has forgiven his past and future sins?” means that since they did not have this assurance that He had, then it followed that they would have to exert more effort in order to try to attain it; however, he explained to them that one may do the things that these men wished to refrain from and still be fearful of Allah and obtain a great reward.

The second narration of this story includes different things that the companions stated that they will abstain from, which proves that they were more than three in number.

Also, the speech of the Prophet, *sallallaahu*

‘alaihi wa sallam, in the first narration reflects that he spoke to them directly, whereas the second one indicates that he spoke generally, without directing his speech to them in particular. It may be that he first spoke to everybody in the congregation and explained that such abstention is impermissible, and then spoke to the men concerned in private, addressing them personally so as not to expose their identity to others, which may have caused them embarrassment.

The fact that the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, took an oath was in order to show these men that despite him being forgiven by Allah, he did not do what they planned to do, which was to exaggerate in their worship, and that reward from Allah could be attained without such exaggeration; this is because he who is moderate in his worship is more likely to continue whereas those who exaggerate will eventually become too weak to continue and give up.

His saying: “...my *Sunnah*...” did not refer to the Islamic categorisation which refers to recommended acts rather than obligatory ones. Rather, it refers to his complete manner in life and his approach to every matter. He instructed them that the one who worships in any way other than his is not from him, meaning, that he does not follow him; here, he was alluding to the methods that monks have, who innovated extreme ways of worship for which they have been dispraised by Allah.

The one who worships in a way other than that of the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, has not left the fold of Islam if he did it in ignorance or was mistaken in his interpretation of the *Sunnah*, but if he does it due to wishing to deliberately shun the way of the Prophet and thinks that his way and method is better, then he has committed an act of disbelief.

The following are some of many benefits that we can extract from this narration:

- The recommendation of imitating the ways of one’s seniors and following in their footsteps, and that if one is unable to find out about their way of doing things by means of inquiring from men, then it is permitted to inquire from women, provided that nobody will be subjected to temptation.

- The virtue of marriage and an encouragement of it.

- One may do righteous deeds openly and inform others about them, provided he feels secure from thereby becoming arrogant.

- Deeds that are Islamically permitted may become recommended, disliked or prohibited,

according to one’s intention.

- Imaam At-Tabari said: “This narration refutes the claim of those who forbid eating lawful foods and wearing permissible clothing, claiming that it is better to use harsh clothing and refrain from eating good food.” But, Imaam Ibn Hajar added to this saying: “The fact of the matter is that the one who gets himself accustomed to always consuming fine things (i.e., food and clothing) may become too habituated to them and therefore cannot live without them, and consequently, when he is deprived from them, he may commit prohibitions in order to attain what he is accustomed to. On the other hand, refraining from them from the perspective of prohibiting them for oneself contradicts the saying of Allah in the verse of *Surah Al-A’raaf* (which means): “Say: ‘Who has forbidden the adornment of [i.e., from] Allah which He has produced for His servants and the good [lawful] things of provision?...” [Qur’an 7: 32]

- The good deeds that are continuous are the dearest to Allah, even if they are few.

- The method of the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, is the very best one, whereby he would sometimes eat in order to preserve his strength, and fast at other times; he would also sleep at night sometimes in order to have the strength to pray at night on other occasions; also, he would marry in order to fulfil his desires, save himself from following his lusts, maintain his chastity, and increasing the number of Muslims.

- A warning against exaggeration in the matters of the religion because this leads to one stopping the deeds that he is performing. Also, one who exaggerates in acts of worship will eventually become apathetic, which may cause him to stop his obligatory acts of worship and not only the optional ones that he performs. Also, one who only performs the obligatory deeds is also in great danger; if he loses interest, he may abandon worship altogether; so the best way is to be moderate.

- Finally, There is an indication in this narration that knowing Allah and His rights and commandments is of a higher rank than simply worshipping Him without it, and that the deeds of the heart are essential for practising servitude to Allah.

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



Prophet’s manners and disposition

Allah Says (what means): “By the grace of Allah, you are gentle towards the people; if you had been stern and ill-tempered, they would have dispersed from round about you” [Qur’an, 3: 159]

About himself the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, said: “Allah has sent me as an apostle so that I may demonstrate perfection of character, refinement of manners and loftiness of deportment.” [Maalik and Ahmad]

By nature he, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, was gentle and kind hearted, always inclined to be gracious and to overlook the faults of others. Politeness and courtesy, compassion and tenderness, simplicity and humility, sympathy and sincerity were some of the keynotes of his character. In the cause of right and justice he could be resolute and severe but more often than not, his severity was tempered with generosity. He had charming manners which won him the affection of his followers and secured their devotion. Though virtual king of Arabia and an apostle of Allah, he never assumed an air of superiority. Not that he had to conceal any such vein by practice and artifice: with fear of Allah, sincere humility was ingrained in his heart. He, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, used to say: “I am a Prophet of Allah but I do not know what will be my end.” [Al-Bukhari]

In one of his sermons calculated to instill the fear of Allah and the day of reckoning in the hearts of men, he, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, said: “O people of Quraysh be prepared for the hereafter, I cannot save you from the punishment of Allah; O Bari Abd Manaaf, I cannot save you from Allah; O Abbaas, son of Abdul-Mutalib, I cannot protect you either; O Faatimah, daughter of Muhammad, even you I cannot save.” [Al-Bukhari & Muslim]

He, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, used to pray: “O Allah! I am but a man. If I hurt anyone in any manner, then forgive me and do not punish me.” [Ahmad]

He always received people with courtesy and showed respect to older people and stated: “To honour an old man is to show glorification to Allah.”

He would not deny courtesy even to wicked persons. It is stated that a person came to his house and asked permission for admission. The Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, remarked that he was not a good person but might be admitted. When he came in and while he remained in the house, he was shown full courtesy. When he left Aa’ishah, *radhiallah ‘anha*, said: “You did not think well of this man, but you treated him so well.”

The Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, replied: “He is a bad person in the sight of Allah who does not behave courteously and people shun his company because of his bad manners.” [Al-Bukhari]

He, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, was always the first to greet another and would not withdraw his hand from a handshake till the other man withdrew his. If one wanted to say something in his ears, he would not turn away till one had finished as reported in the books of Abu Daawood and At-Tirmidhi. He did not like people to get up for him and used to say: “Let him, who likes people to stand up in his honour, he should seek a place in hell!” [Abu Daawood].

He, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, would himself, however, stand up when any dignity came to him. He had stood up to receive the wet nurse who had reared him in infancy and had spread his own sheet for her. His foster brother was given similar treatment. He avoided sitting at a prominent place in a gathering, so much so that people coming in had difficulty in spotting him and had to ask which one was the Prophet. Quite frequently uncouth bedouins accosted him in their own gruff and impolite manner but he never took offence. [Abu Daawood]

He, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, used to visit the poorest of ailing persons and exhorted all Muslims to do likewise [Al-Bukhari]. He would sit with the humblest of persons saying that righteousness alone was the criterion of one’s superiority over another. He invariably invited people to be his slaves, servants or the poorest believers, to partake with him of his scanty meals. [At-Tirmidhi]

Whenever he, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, visited a person he would first greet him and then take his permission to enter the house. He advised the people to follow this etiquette and not to get annoyed if anyone declined to give permission, for it was quite likely the person concerned was busy otherwise and did not mean any disrespect.

There was no type of household work too low or too undignified for him. Aa’ishah, *radhiallah ‘anha*, has stated: “He always joined in household work and would at times mend his clothes, repair his shoes and sweep the floor. He would milk, tether, and feed his animals and do the household shopping.” [Al-Bukhari]

He, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, would not hesitate to do the menial work of others, particularly of orphans and widows [An-Nasaa’ee, Ad-Daarami]. Once when there was no male member in the house of the companion Khabaab Ibn Al-Arat who had gone to the battlefield, he used to go to his house daily and milk his cattle for the inhabitants [Ibn Saad].

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



Qatari street artist Mubarak al-Malik



The battoulah is central to the artist's creations.



Mubarak al-Malik's works goes beyond the four corners of the galleries.

Qatari street artist Mubarak al-Malik redefines creativity



Al-Malik's early experiences laid the foundation for his future endeavours, which resulted in a unique blend of both traditional and contemporary art expressions. (screengrab from YouTube video)

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

For renowned Qatari street artist Mubarak al-Malik, art is a dynamic force that knows no bounds and extends beyond the confines of traditional galleries. In the latest video released by Qatar Tourism's (QT) "Voices of Qatar" initiative, al-Malik sheds light on his creative process, highlighting the importance of breaking free from the ordinary. "Creativity for me is looking forward to something new, something out of the ordinary. Artistic ideas always appear in many places – sometimes on my bike if I'm riding long distances or when at home sitting in my studio," he said. Al-Malik's artistic journey began at the age of 10 when he enrolled in art classes that introduced him to Arabic calligraphy, painting, and sculpture. His early experiences laid the foundation for his future endeavours, which resulted in a unique blend of both traditional and contemporary art



Al-Malik's artistic vision has transformed public spaces into attractive masterpieces.

expressions. His artistic vision has transformed public spaces into attractive masterpieces. With a deep understanding of local culture, al-Malik breathes life into the city's thoroughfares, infusing them with energy and vitality. By making art accessible to all, he creates an inclusive cultural experience that resonates with both locals and visitors.

"When I had my exhibitions, the situation became boring, I saw the same visitors... the same people. So I said to myself, let me present street art. People pass by in their cars and see the work all year round. They can enjoy it all the time. "The cultural movement in Qatar has changed dramatically. All over the country, whether it is

street murals or sculptures, anyone who is going to work, or going for a ride can see the artworks. I think it is excellent," the street artist said. Central to al-Malik's work is the battoulah, a face cover worn by older Qatari women. Beyond its surface, he said the battoulah serves as a powerful symbol: "The battoulah is a symbol that I use in all my work, in many styles... For me, the battoulah is not just a symbol of Qatari women. It reflects the customs and traditions of the country. It is a symbol with many meanings". Launched recently by QT, "Voices of Qatar" underlines Qatar's local talents who are at the forefront of shaping the nation's cultural landscape. From master chefs to artists, innovators to sports champions, the series offers a behind-the-scenes look at their remarkable journeys. Through interviews and personal narratives, QT noted that viewers gain insight into the challenges faced, triumphs achieved, and transformations started by these cultural change-makers.

Qatar Tourism ensures continued operation of West Bay beaches

With a commitment to further enhance the West Bay waterfront experience for visitors and residents, Qatar Tourism (QT) has renewed the operating licences for Doha Sands, B12 and West Bay Beach, three prominent beachfront destinations situated in the heart of the city.

Discover Qatar has been granted the operating licence for Doha Sands and B12 for two years, while LoftA has also extended its partnership with QT to manage the West Bay Beach (WBB).

These initiatives are part of QT's continuous efforts to provide family-friendly beach experiences, complete with an array of activities, sports classes, and food and beverage options along the West Bay waterfront.

In a press statement, Aysha al-Mulla, head of Tourism Investment Policy at QT, said: "With a host of amenities across the beaches including a volleyball court, water sports, all-day food and beverage options and playgrounds, the West Bay beaches have become some of the city's most sought-after destinations for families and tourists."

"We are delighted to extend the operating licenses for these establishments to ensure we continue to build on Qatar's tourism offering. Qatar has a beautiful and extensive coastline and bringing the beach experience into the heart of the city, at a convenient and easily accessible location, strengthens Doha's position as a family-friendly holiday choice."

QT's extensive West Bay Beach project, which covers 40,000sq m of premium beachfront, includes Doha Sands, B12



QT's extensive West Bay Beach project covers 40,000sq m of premium beachfront. It includes Doha Sands, B12 and WBB, each of which offers a distinctly different experience.



and WBB, each of which offers a distinctly different experience. With Qatar set to be the Middle East's fastest-growing destina-

tion by 2030, QT continues to collaborate with its valued partners to build experiences and attractions across the country.



Shattered, 2023 by Felekan Onar, 1966. Damascus Room, Gallery 12, Museum of Islamic Art. September 20 to May 7, 2024.

QM's Museum of Islamic Art presents 'Shattered, 2023'

Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) presents Shattered, 2023 – artist Felekan Onar's latest installation that uses glass as the medium, running until May 7, 2024 at MIA's Damascus Room, Gallery 12.

Onar's latest work is hard-carved and gold painted mould-blown glass birds that signify human displacement caused by the recent earthquakes that devastated Southeast Türkiye and Northern Syria, resulting in over 55,000 casualties.

In a press statement, MIA Curatorial Affairs' deputy director Shaika Nasser al-Nassar said: "Felekan Onar's creative journey explores the profound impact political unrest, war, and natural disasters have on people. Her latest work Shattered, is an intervention into the interiors of the Damascus Room of MIA, which itself went through many years of reassembly and restoration and has over time provided a haven for the items that have historically inhabited the space, finding temporary refuge."

Building upon the success of her acclaimed project Perched, which debuted in the Aleppo Room at the Pergamon Museum, later exhibited at Victoria & Al-

bert and the Damascus Room at Dresden State Museums, Onar now returns to the language of birds with her latest work, and glass as her ideal medium.

Her mould blown birds mimic a traditional Japanese technique typically used for repairing ceramics. Known as Kintsugi, the technique joins fragments with gold, leaving the cracks visible. Onar associates these cracks with the damage caused by disaster, but in doing so, emphasises the beauty that arises from transformation and change.

"Birds serve as symbols of both fragility and strength and often undergo a similar process of repair and restoration following the effects of natural disasters", Felekan Onar said. "The glass birds echo the pain of human displacement but also show its resilience to emerge victorious, contrary to its surrounding circumstances and environment."

Born and raised in Türkiye, Onar works between Istanbul, Berlin, Venice, and New York. Originally emerging as an artistic reaction to population displacements resulting from political unrest and war, Onar's creative journey has evolved to encompass a reflection on the profound impact of natural disasters.

