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Amir patronises Police College graduation

QNA
Doha

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani patronised the graduation ceremony of the sixth batch of candidate students of the Police College, affiliated with the Police Academy, in Al Saliya yesterday.

The graduation ceremony was attended by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani and a number of Sheikhs and ministers.

The ceremony was also attended by Minister of Interior of the sisterly Sultanate of Oman Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal al-Busaïdi, Minister of Interior of the sisterly Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Mazin Abdallah Hilal al-Farrayeh, Minister of Interior of the sisterly State of Palestine Ziad Mahmoud Hab al-Reeh, Minister of Interior and Municipalities of the sisterly Republic of Lebanon Judge Bassam Mawlawi, Minister of Interior of the sisterly Republic of Yemen Ibrahim Ali Ahmed Haidan, Minister of Interior of the sisterly Republic of Tunisia Kamal Feki, and Minister of Interior of the friendly Republic of Rwanda Gasana Alfred, in addition to senior security and military leaders from a number of sisterly and friendly countries.

It was also attended by heads of diplomatic missions accredited to the state, senior officers of the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Interior, the Amiri Guard, the State Security Service, Lekhwiya Force, and senior security leaders, as well as guests of the ceremony.

The national anthem was played at the beginning of the ceremony. Then the commander of the graduates' queue came forward requesting His Highness the Amir to inspect the queue of the 107 graduates from Qatar, the State of Palestine, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Republic of Iraq, and the Republic of Tunisia.

After reciting verses from the Holy Quran and the march of the graduates' queue and the military parade, His Highness the Amir honoured the outstanding graduates. After that, the flag was handed over from the sixth batch to the seventh batch, the appointment order was read out, the parade's queue left, and the queue of the Police College friends from school student "Officers of Tomorrow" entered.

At the end of the ceremony, officers of the sixth batch took the oath and recited the college anthem.

Earlier, His Highness the Amir inaugurated the Police Academy building. **Pages 5, 12**



Qatar urges Iran, Pakistan to exercise restraint, start talks

Qatar affirmed that it is following with great concern the situation developments between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, urging both countries to exercise the utmost levels of self-restraint, give priority to the voice of wisdom, avoid escalation, and resolve differences through dialogue and diplomatic means. In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed Qatar's full support to all regional and international efforts aimed at defusing tensions and conflicts in the region through constructive dialogues that ultimately lead to comprehensive, consensual, and sustainable solutions. **(QNA)**

Week-long activities to mark Education Day

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) announced yesterday the launch of week-long activities, as part of Qatar's celebrations of the sixth International Day of Education. Held under the theme 'education is everyone's responsibility' from Jan 21-25, the celebrations feature an array of activities. **Page 2**

Today's Schedule

AFC ASIAN CUP QATAR 2025

Group: D
Iraq vs Japan, 2.30pm
at Education City Stadium

Vietnam vs Indonesia, 5.30pm
at Abdullah Bin Khalifa Stadium

Group: C
Hong Kong vs Iran, 8.30pm
at Khalifa International Stadium

COMMUNITY
See Pages 6 & 7

Deputy Amir visits National Archives of Qatar



His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani visited the National Archives of Qatar and Qasr Al Hukum Visitors' Center, affiliated with the Amiri Diwan, yesterday. The Deputy Amir was briefed on the books and historical manuscripts kept in the National Archives of Qatar. His Highness also listened to a demonstration explaining ways to index, collect, preserve, and supervise documents and archives. Following that, His Highness visited the Qasr Al Hukum Visitors' Center, where he was briefed on the efforts made to document the history of the Amiri Diwan, the history of the rulers of Qatar, and the architectural features of the Qasr Al Hukum. His Highness also viewed some maquettes showcasing the historical timeline of the Qasr Al Hukum and the development that occurred to it. **(QNA) Page 2**

Australia seal Round of 16 spot; Uzbekistan, Palestine impress

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Despite lacking their usual brilliance, Australia yesterday secured their place alongside hosts Qatar and defending champions Uzbekistan in the Asian Cup's knockout stage.

The Socceroos' journey to the last 16 was a workman-like affair, a narrow 1-0 victory over Syria yesterday courtesy of Jackson Irvine's goal proving sufficient.

In the day's final clash, gutsy



United Arab Emirates' Sultan Adil in action with Palestine's Mohammed Saleh at Al Janoub Stadium, yesterday.

Palestine yesterday shared points with regional giants the UAE in a 1-1 draw at Al Janoub Stadium.

As the Asian Cup group stage nears its climax, Australia and Uzbekistan sit comfortably atop Group B, with their fates firmly in their own hands. The Socceroos, with two wins, top the standings with 6 points, while Uzbekistan trail closely behind with a respectable 4 points from their opening encounters.

Syria occupy third place with a solitary point, clinging to a faint hope of qualification. **Sport Pages 1,3 & 4**

Qatar joins Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution Network

Qatar has joined the Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution Network, Ministry of Finance announced yesterday.

The Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (C4IR) in Qatar will be inaugurated in June this year, Ministry of Finance said.

Earlier, World Economic Forum had signed a collaboration agreement with Qatar, represented by the Ministry of Finance, to establish a Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (C4IR) in Qatar.

C4IR Qatar will be an autonomous non-profit organisation, leading on policy and governance for emerging technologies. The primary focus will be sustainable development and economic competitiveness, in line with Qatar's

national priorities and National Vision 2030.

"At a time of global fragmentation, innovation and technology promise to propel our shared priorities of sustainable development, co-operation and resilience, which has long been a key priority for Qatar's leadership," said Børge Brende, president, World Economic Forum.

"The new centre in Doha joins a growing network and platform, serving as a focal point for advancing innovation and unlocking growth opportunities in the region and beyond."

C4IR Qatar will be formed and hosted by the Ministry of Finance, which will collaborate with other national stakeholders from the private and public sectors. **To Page 2**



HE the Minister of Finance Ali bin Ahmed al-Kuwari with Professor Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum.

Qatari plane transports wounded Palestinians for treatment in Doha

A Qatar Armed Forces aircraft touched down in Al Arish City, the Arab Republic of Egypt, with nine tonnes of relief and medical supplies from Qatar Charity on-board, to be delivered to the Gaza Strip. This takes the total number of planes sent to 64 with a total 1,967 tonnes of aid. The aid is part of the State of Qatar's support for the brotherly Palestinian people, and its full support for them amid their current difficult humanitarian conditions. Meanwhile, a Qatari plane left Al Arish airport, carrying an eighth batch of wounded Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, in co-ordination with Egypt, France, and Italy to be treated in Doha, as part of His Highness the Amir's initiative to treat 1,500 Palestinians from the Gaza Strip. (QNA)



Deputy Amir tours National Archives of Qatar and Qasr Al Hukum Visitors' Center



His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani visited the National Archives of Qatar and Qasr Al Hukum Visitors' Center, affiliated with the Amiri Diwan, yesterday. During his tour, His Highness was briefed on the books and historical manuscripts kept in the National Archives of Qatar. His Highness also listened to a demonstration explaining ways to index, collect, preserve, and supervise documents and archives. Following that, the Deputy Amir visited the Qasr Al Hukum Visitors' Center, where he was briefed on the efforts made to document the history of the Amiri Diwan, the history of the rulers of the State of Qatar, and the architectural features of the Qasr Al Hukum. His Highness also viewed some maquettes showcasing the historical timeline of the Qasr Al Hukum and the development that occurred to it. (QNA)

Ahmed Bin Mohammed Military College holds felicitation ceremony for graduates



The Ahmed Bin Mohammed Military College honoured its 19th batch graduates at a certificate-distribution ceremony. HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Dr Khalid bin Mohamed al-Attiyah patronised the ceremony, which was attended by HE the Chief of Staff of Qatar Armed Forces Staff Lieutenant-General (Pilot) Salem bin Hamad bin Aqeel al-Nabit. The four-year course, which was attended by candidates from the State of Qatar and fraternal and friendly countries, included courses on military science, parachute jump, thunderbolt and diving. It also included majors of management, law, accounting, information systems and computer sciences, international relations, logistics and supply chain and Russian language. (QNA)

Qatar joins Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution Network

From Page 1

"Building on Qatar's longstanding partnership with the World Economic Forum and our commitment to sustainable development, we are delighted to be launching a Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution in Qatar. Over the past decade, Qatar has cemented its position as a global financial and innovation hub and the centre will further solidify the state's economic competitiveness by developing ground-breaking policy and frontier technology applications for the advancement of sustainable development locally, regionally and globally," said HE the Minister of Finance, Ali bin Ahmed al-Kuwari.

C4IR Qatar will be a platform through which Qatar will shape the development of local and national Fourth Industrial Revolution strategies in line with its national development strategy and contribute to the global trajectory of these technologies.

The centre is the third in the Arab world and it will become a hub of expertise to co-design and pilot future-focused policy frameworks that enable the development and deployment of technology regionally and globally. According to World Economic Forum, the Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution is a platform for multistakeholder collaboration, bringing together public and private sectors to maximise technological benefits to society while minimising the risks.

The World Economic Forum launched the first C4IR in San Francisco in 2017, shortly followed by centres in Japan and India. The network now includes centres in Austin (Centre for Trustworthy Technology), Azerbaijan, Brazil, Colombia, Detroit (US Centre for Advanced Manufacturing), Germany (Global Government Technology Centre), Israel, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Norway (HUB Ocean), Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, South Africa, Telangana (India), Türkiye and the United Arab Emirates.

Submissions invited for Art Omi Writers Residency

Hamad Bin Khalifa University Press (HBKU Press) has opened the submission cycle for its annual Art Omi Writers Residency. Organised in partnership with the educational centre Art Omi, the residency will select an aspiring Arab writer for the month-long programme in Ghent, New York. "More than a publisher of books, HBKU Press strives to empower talents and help them achieve their utmost potential as writers," executive director Bachar Chebaro said. "Our ongoing collaboration with Art Omi is a proud testament to our commitment regarding the Qatari and larger Arab literary communities, and our confident belief in their abilities and potential," he explained. Eligible Arab candidates are encouraged to apply from anywhere in the world, provided they have at least an intermediate grasp of English, as the residency will be conducted in this language. Writers may nevertheless develop their individual work in Arabic if preferred. "Supporting literature from various languages and cultural contexts is central to Art Omi's mandate," residency programme director D W Gibson added.

DI career fair set to begin on Monday

The Career Advising Services under the Deanship of Students' Affairs of the Doha Institute of Graduate Studies (DI) will be hosting the seventh career fair on January 22.

A total of 47 governmental and private organisations from different sectors including education, finance and business, journalism and media and services are to participate.

The event, at the DI headquarters will provide a great opportunity to assist DI's students and graduates learn about the most important and prominent job vacancies offered by the country's labour market.

Aliaa Chebaro, a career advising and skills development specialist at the DI, explained that the fair offers students and graduates



the opportunity to submit their CVs and apply for the vacancies advertised by the participating institutions. The ease of meeting with a number of institutions and partners in one day and under one roof provides a great chance to learn about the developments and trends of the Qatari labour market, and get educated on the most important and prominent vacant career opportunities and the required standards in this market, she added.

Week-long activities for International Day of Education



The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) announced yesterday the launch of week-long activities, as part of Qatar's celebrations of the sixth International Day of Education.

Held under the theme 'education is everyone's responsibility' from Jan 21-25, the celebrations feature an array of activities that involve students and teachers from all public and private schools and their families in a bid to promote social accountability and the role of education in developing lives of individuals and societies, said MoEHE's Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Affairs Maha Zayed al-Ruwaili in a press conference.

Al-Ruwaili added that the multiple activities by parents, students and community members within schools and the exchange of their educational experiences would enrich the culture of learning, motivate students, increase community awareness, and spotlight the educational development in Qatar.

The activities will include a panel themed 'Education is everyone's responsibility' on Monday that brings together an elite group of teachers and education enthusiasts, as well as a slew of educational, pedagogical, sports, artistic, theatrical, and technical activities and an exhibition.

Approved by the UN General Assembly in 2018 to

be celebrated annually on Jan 24, the celebration aims to highlight the importance of education in achieving development.

Al-Ruwaili said the celebrations would reflect the shared responsibility of parents and schools and highlight Qatar's active participation with the international community to achieve quality education, as a main goal of the UN agenda by 2030 - which consolidates Qatar's global educational position and distinguished educational partnerships.

In a related context, she said the MoEHE is keen to develop education, focus on the state's tendency to invest in it, and demonstrate the successes achieved in this regard, in line with the Qatar National Vision 2030. The celebrations will be held in partnership with the Civil Service and Government Development Bureau (CSGDB).

CSGDB's Director of Nomination and Replacement Department Dhabiya Ahmad al-Buainain announced that parents working in government agencies or their delegates would be granted a three-hour working hours reduction on the International Day of Education - a CSGDB's bid to boost the bonds between parents and their children and enhance the role of the family in the children's learning process.

Parents who would like to attend the celebrations can submit a three-hour permission request via the Mawared platform on the day of the event, and then return to the workplace.

This request can be applied only once during the week of the activities, al-Buainain said. Yet, she added that those working in public service posts that include shifts and require a mandatory presence and those who got their working hours reduced for breastfeeding and medical excuses are not included in the decision.



Shura Council participates in meeting of Arab Parliament's Palestine Committee

QNA
Cairo

The Shura Council participated in the meeting of the Palestine Committee in the Arab Parliament. The Member of the Shura Council and Member of the Arab Parliament Sheikhha bint Youssef al-Jufairi, represented the Shura Council at the meeting.

Held at the Arab Parliament headquarters in Cairo, the meeting discussed developments in events, the dangerous escalation taking place in the occupied Palestinian territories, and the continuing Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip. Addressing the meeting, al-Jufairi affirmed Qatar's unwavering firm position, under the leadership of His Highness the

Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, in supporting the Palestinian cause, pointing to Qatar's political and humanitarian role in alleviating the suffering of the besieged civilians in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and the rest of the occupied territories.

On that, she highlighted the efforts of the Shura Council in mobilising parliamentary support to urge governments to work to stop the daily massacres that claimed the lives of thousands of innocent people.

Meanwhile, the members of the Palestine Committee denounced, during the meeting, the crimes committed by the occupation authorities, its bloody escalation and racist practices against the Palestinian people and prisoners. They affirmed the Arab Parliament's

continued efforts to support Palestine, and the completion of its procedures regarding the lawsuit submitted by the Arab Parliament to the International Criminal Court, to investigate Israel's crimes.

The committee called on the international community and active parties to intervene immediately to stop the aggression and protect defenceless civilians, and to put pressure on the occupying force to stop attacks and provocative actions against the Palestinian people, adhere to the rules of international humanitarian law, and force it to submit to the will of peace based on international law.

The committee also emphasized the Arab Parliament's firm position in support of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

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Qatar Rail key connector for fans to attend AFC Asian Cup matches

Qatar Railways company (Qatar Rail) announced that more than 1mn passengers used the Doha Metro and Lusail Tram networks during the AFC Asian Cup 2023 first round of the group stage. In a press statement, Qatar Rail noted that the total number of passengers from January 12-January 16 reached 1,079,340, with 1,040,973 using the metro and 38,367 via tram.

The networks witnessed high demand particularly on the tournament's opening day, featuring the Qatar vs Lebanon match at Lusail Stadium. It saw a high turnout during the first day of the tournament, transporting 234,862 passengers. The metro provided connectivity to key event areas and attractions such as Souq Waqif, Lusail Boulevard, Katara, and Al Bidda Park, where the Expo 2023 Doha Exhibition is being held, directly connected to Al Bidda and Corniche stations on the Red Line.

Doha Metro's busiest stations were Lusail QNB, DECC and Msheireb, while Legtaifiya was the busiest stop along Lusail Tram.

"During the first round of the Asian Cup, we observed a high demand on Doha Metro services to reach the tournament stadiums. This was especially notable given the opportunity for match ticket holders to receive a complimentary Day Pass. We would like to emphasise the importance of

Qatar Rail carries more than a million passengers on board Doha Metro and Lusail Tram during AFC Asian Cup's first round of group stage

collecting the Day Pass at any station before the match day to save time. Additionally, the pass can be used throughout the day to travel to various destinations in the city of Doha, not just for attending the matches," Qatar Rail's Chief of Strategy and Business Development Aylan Eid al-Enazi said.

"We are pleased with this successful start and are delighted to once again experience the enthusiasm and football passion with the Asian fans at the Doha Metro stations," he added. For this tournament, Qatar Rail fully mobilised the entire fleet of 110 modern, comfortable, and secure Doha Metro trains. This includes the deployment of six-carriage trains on the Red Line, doubling the capacity to 1120 passengers per train, and offering a headway of 3 minutes between trains on all three lines not only during usual peak hours but also before and after the match times.



The advanced systems adopted by Qatar Rail and close monitoring through the Command Suite play a major role in providing real-time information from the stations about the movement of passengers before and after the matches.

The advanced systems adopted by Qatar Rail and close monitoring through the Command Suite play a major role in providing real-time information from the stations about the movement of passengers before and after the matches. This aims to facilitate safe operations of the network, efficient and optimal movement of customers and to deliver a world-class transport experience. Periodic maintenance of the trains is also carried out daily after the end of the daily service hours, ensuring their safety and readiness for service the next day with the same efficiency required to transport the masses. Qatar Rail also deployed additional staff at stations

to efficiently manage the flow of fans. A notable initiative is the provision of complimentary Day Passes to match-day ticket holders, enhancing the transportation experience for fans. These one-day tickets are available at any metro station.

Qatar Rail recommends that fans wishing to obtain the Day Pass to use the metro network should go to any of the metro station latest the day before the match to obtain their Day Pass to avoid queuing and save time when heading to the matches.

The Doha Metro network is uniquely positioned to support the Asian Cup stadium connectivity and the venues for the



events held during the tournament period, as the metro is directly connected to five of the nine stadiums designated for the tournament. These are Lusail QNB, Khalifa International, Ahmad Bin Ali, Education City, and Jassim Bin Hamad stadiums, through the Lusail QNB station, Sports City, Riffa Qatar Mall, Education City, and Sudan stations, respectively.

This connectivity is crucial in facilitating smooth fan movement between matches, particularly during the group stages. Stadiums that are not directly linked to the stations can be reached through the metro shuttle bus service provided by the local organising committee.



QM announces Art for Peace drive with QRCS in support of Palestine

Qatar Museums (QM), in collaboration with Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS), is launching a humanitarian initiative to champion peace and support the recent events unfolding in Gaza, Palestine.

The weekly fundraising event, Art for Peace, is set to commence today (January 19) at the Qatar Auto Museum within Expo 2023 Doha at Al Bidda Park and will continue every Friday until March 8 from 2pm-6pm. The campaign will take place across various QM entities, marking a significant collaboration between art, community, and humanitarian efforts.

Art for Peace's primary goal is to raise awareness and advocate for a nationwide fundraising initiative that employs the power of "Art & Creativity" to educate and engage Qatar's diverse population. The aim is to shed light on Gaza, Palestine, and extend unwavering support through artistic expressions and communal solidarity.

In a press statement, QM CEO Mohamed Saad al-Rumailhi said: "As advocates of cultural heritage at Qatar Museums, we understand the profound impact of art in uniting communities for a shared cause."

The eight-week campaign will feature an array of activities and initiatives including live painting, arts and crafts bazaar and com-

munity programmes. Today from 2pm-6pm, 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum (QOSM) and Dadu will run events at Expo 2023 Doha - Al Bidda Park. The 3-2-1 Sustainable Obstacle Race Challenge will feature a range of obstacles that will test the participants' strength, speed, agility, motor skills, co-ordination, and endurance. The objective is to promote physical activity and a healthy lifestyle, encouraging the community to stay active and fit.

All returns of the day for Dadu Garden, also located in Expo 2023 Doha, will go to the aid of Palestine. Artists will be invited to visit the Dadu garden to paint and create artworks, which will then be auctioned. The Museum of Islamic Art will hold a fashion show on February 2, from 2pm-6pm, in conjunction with 'Fashioning an Empire: Textiles, Trade, and Power in Safavid Iran' exhibition.

Fire Station: Artist in Residence will hold on February 9 an artwork sale from 2pm-6pm with artists donating 25% of their profits for the Palestine cause. The Fab Lab at Fire Station will produce unique key chains and stickers, the proceeds from which will also support the fund.

Local restaurants will offer food for sale during the event, pledging to donate a percentage (ranging from 15-25%) of their profits to

support the charitable cause. Artists Zainab al-Shibani and Aisha al-Abdullah will set up a screen-printing station during the event. They will produce and sell specially designed tote bags, with all profits directed towards the donation fund. Additional sticker and tote bag sales will be organised with profits supporting Palestine.

Artist AbdulAziz Yousef will lead a workshop to create a large mural. The participation fee will be entirely donated to support the event's cause. On February 16, Mathaf: Arab Modern Museum of Art, is organising a series of art workshops and drop-in activities to engage families and the public, from 2pm-6pm. The workshops include various creative exploration such as creating a collage with mixed media.

After attending the activities, the public will be encouraged to donate to the cause. The aim of the event is to raise awareness about the recent situation in Palestine and to advocate for a nationwide fundraising campaign, using "Art and Creativity" as tools to educate and engage residents in Qatar.

QRCS is the main partner in this endeavour, offering an online donation platform and fundraising boxes at the heart of the event every week. Approximately 250 volunteers will actively participate and contribute their efforts.

Maserati adds new Overseas Region

Maserati has announced the creation of the new Overseas Region, expected to give the Italian luxury manufacturer's markets a new business configuration, a statement issued by Alfardan Sports Motors Company yesterday said.

Hamdy Elshantoury is appointed head of the new region, with effect from January 1, 2024. With this latest addition, Maserati's new market organisation now consists of five regions, namely: US & Canada (North America), Europe, China, Japan & Korea, and the newly created Overseas, it was explained.

With the new Overseas Region, Maserati is redistributing some of markets that were previously part of the former regions and has merged them into a completely new one, with a relevant marketing team ready to act as a gateway for partners



Hamdy Elshantoury

and the dealer network in everyday activities and initiatives. Alongside Elshantoury - who is also maintaining an interim responsibility for MEA - Wong Yi Mui Wallace has been appointed responsible for SEAP & India markets and Marco Spadaro has taken responsibility for the East Europe and Latin American mar-

kets. The region head and the regional functions will be based in Italy, at Maserati's headquarters in Modena, to deeply connect the new Overseas Region leadership team with central management and make the support to markets and decision-making process faster and more effective. Conversely, the market management team will remain in the region with close contacts to their countries. Davide Grasso, Maserati CEO, said: "Maserati operates in more than 70 markets around the world and the creation of a fifth region confirms the intention to give our business an even more precise and specific configuration at a global level, to better cover and respond to individual market requirements, and to give each area the attention it requires to improve its development and efficiency."



The exhibition, housed at TheArsenale Mobility Lab in Sikkat Al Wadi, showcases digital interpretations of the artist's reflections on the question, 'Have We Arrived in the Future?' PICTURES: Thajudheen

Innovative art collaboration on show

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

A one-of-its-kind collaborative exhibition between TheArsenale, a renowned international design and mobility platform; and Qatari artist TheeNourah opened at Msheireb Downtown Doha yesterday (January 18).

The exhibition, housed at TheArsenale Mobility Lab in Sikkat Al Wadi, showcases digital interpretations of the artist's reflections on the question, "Have We Arrived in the Future?" TheeNourah, who also has a Master of Science in Engineering, told *Gulf Times* that the exhibition explores the perceptions of the '60s regarding the future, discovering the golden age of futuristic visions and the obsession with the 2000s.

"As you can see it's all gold and silver, and automated, and showing the way they vision us in the future," she pointed out, adding that such an exhibition aims to create a dialogue between the past and the



present. About the collaboration, TheeNourah credited creative director Sheikh Abdulaziz al-Thani as the driving force behind the partnership. She said she sees herself as a bridge between art and science, making TheArsenale a fascinating space for collaboration.

Founded in 2017 by French entrepreneur Patrice Meignan,

TheArsenale has become a global reference in design and mobility. The platform, accessible through www.thearsenale.com, highlights the latest trends and innovations in mobility, stressing sustainable and eco-friendly solutions.

Asked how digital interpretations in the exhibition address the question, "Have we arrived in the future," she said she posed the query of whether current reality aligns with their ('60s) visionary expectations. "I'm asking that question all over my head. Are we there yet? I think yes we are somehow," TheeNourah said, expressing optimism about the progress toward futuristic ideals, particularly in space exploration. About artificial intelligence (AI) in art, she underlined its significance as a creative tool that accelerates the artistic process. She stressed the importance of using AI creatively to enhance artistic expression and save time. However, she cautioned that AI alone cannot replace the creator's background knowledge and artistic sensibilities.

MoCI guidance on choosing right tyres

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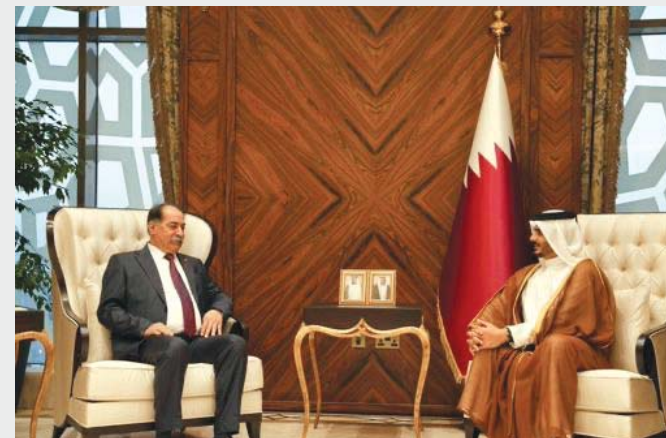
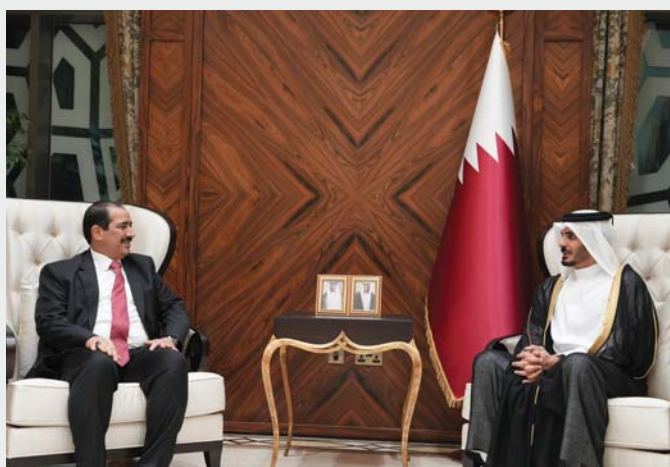
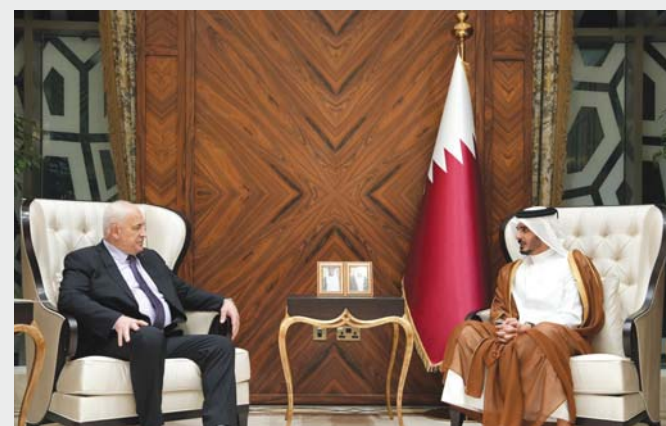
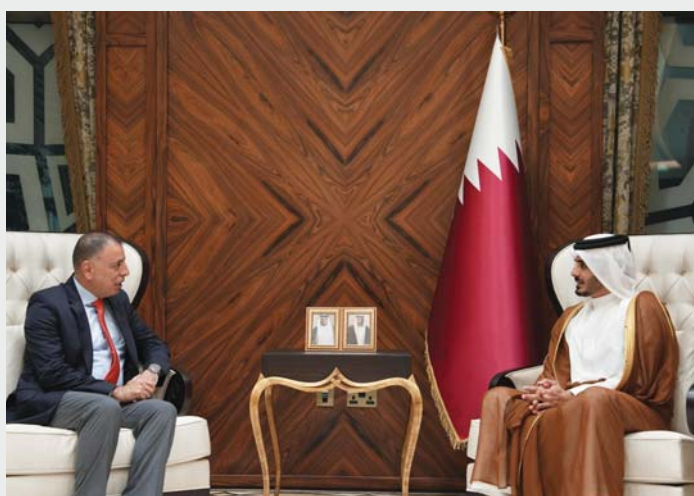
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The code '35' means the 35th week of 2022 (the year consists of 52 weeks).
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Interior minister meets with counterparts attending Police College graduation ceremony



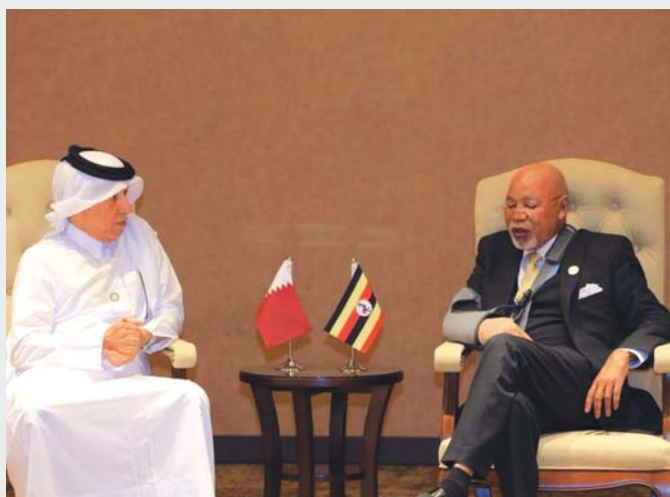
HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani met with Minister of Interior of the Sultanate of Oman Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal al-Busaidi; Minister of Interior of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Mazin Abdellah al-Farrayeh; Minister of Interior of the State of Palestine, Ziad Hab Mahmoud al-Reeh; Minister of Interior of the Republic of Yemen, Ibrahim Ali Ahmed Haidan; Caretaker Minister of Interior and Municipalities of the Republic of Lebanon, Judge Bassam Mawlawi; and Minister of Interior of the Republic of Rwanda, Gasana Alfred. The meetings came on the occasion of the

ministers' visits to Doha to attend the graduation ceremony of the sixth batch of candidate students of the Ministry of Interior's Police College. HE the interior minister discussed with the visiting ministers topics of common interest and security co-operation relations between these countries and Qatar and ways to support and develop them. Following the meetings, a number of the ministers visited the security command centre of the AFC Asian Cup Qatar 2023, where they were briefed on the progress of work, the security plans, and the mechanisms of coordination and communication among the various security, military and civil authorities

aimed at achieving the security and safety of all participants in the tournament. In a related context, Qatar and Rwanda sealed a security memorandum of understanding (MoU), which was signed on the Qatari side by Director of Public Security Staff Maj Gen Abdullah bin Mohamed al-Suwaidi and on the Rwandan side by Commissioner General Felix Namuhoranye, Inspector-General of Rwanda National Police. The MoU comes within the framework of boosting co-operation relations between the two friendly countries, in a way that serves both sides' common interests in relevant fields. **(QNA)**



Al-Muraikhi holds meetings in Kampala



HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi held separate meetings on Wednesday with Ugandan Foreign Minister Odongo Jeje Abubakar, Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar Than Swe, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Multilateral and Legal Affairs of Iraq Omar al-Barzanji and Deputy Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Bahram Aliyev. The meetings came on the sidelines of the preparatory ministerial meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit, held in Kampala. During the meetings, they discussed co-operation relations and several topics of common interest. **(QNA)**

44 finalists in Haddad Challenge at Marmi 2024

The Qatar International Falcons and Hunting Festival in its 15th edition (Marmi 2024) saw 44 finalists in the Haddad Challenge Championship yesterday. Marmi 2024, under the patronage of HE Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad al-Thani, continues until January 27. HE the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaia, visited the festival site. He appreciated the efforts of the Qatari Al Gannas Society in spreading environmental awareness, breeding, and protecting falcons. Marmi Festival Director Miteb Mubarak al-Qahtani, honoured the finalists and the winner of the Haddad Challenge.



Pioneering research at QU Health leads to game-changing cancer treatment

Pioneering research at the College of Pharmacy and the College of Medicine at QU Health, Qatar University, has culminated in a patent for a novel chalcone-based chemotherapeutic compound that holds immense promise in the fight against triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC).

The significance of the breakthrough lies in the fact that currently, there are no specific treatments against TNBC, a particularly aggressive and challenging form of the disease that does not respond to hormonal treatments, a statement said yesterday. The research team, consists of MSc pharmacy graduate Dana Elkhalifa and faculty members from QU Health College of Pharmacy Dr Ashraf Khalil, Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Dr Feras Alali, associate vice-president for Research and Graduate Studies and

the College of Medicine Dr Ala-Eddin al-Moustafa, Professor of Cell Biology.

"They designed and prepared novel chalcone analogs, which mimic the natural compounds but with different activity," it was explained. The natural products were used as a model to create 14 new analogs, one of them being DK 14. In tests, DK 14 turned out to be powerful. It stopped cancer cells from growing and moving, and made them die.

It also kept them from grouping together. Compared to common cancer drugs, DK 14 was even better at fighting cancer. What is exciting is that DK 14 could turn cancer cells into normal cells, suggesting it could be a promising new cancer treatment.

The scientists also studied how the compound affected the growth of blood vessels using chicken embryos as a model. The results were astonishing—DK 14

stopped 60% of new blood vessels from forming. This is significant because it suggests that DK 14 could slow down the spread of cancer. They also tested DK 14 on mice with aggressive breast cancer, and it reduced the cancer cells' growth by 50%.

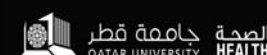
These outcomes in live animals aligned with what the research team observed in the laboratory, indicating that DK 14 appears to be a potent remedy for challenging cases of breast cancer.

The research endeavour aligns with the Qatar National Vision 2030, which emphasises the importance of research and innovation as drivers of societal progress and economic growth. A patent application has been filed to protect this innovative discovery, paving the way for its further development and future use.

The research was financially supported by QU through collaborative and student

grants (QUST-2-CPH-2017-16 and QUST-1-CPH-2018-18) and the Qatar National Research Fund (GSRA4-2-0418-17024).

Dr Khalil said: "We are dedicated to advancing our lead compound, DK 14. To enhance its effectiveness, we have developed a miniature version using a substance called liposomes, which are like small containers capable of carrying medicines, aiding them in working more efficiently. This innovation ensures better dissolution and targeted functionality within the body. Simultaneously, we are using our expertise to design a new series of novel compounds with improved activity against a range of cancers, including prostate, colorectal, and breast cancers. We believe our work will pave the way for pharmaceutical companies to develop a new generation of drugs capable of specifically targeting TNBC and other cancer subtypes."



From Lab to Hope:

QU Health's New Product (DK 14) Triumphs Against Breast Cancer!





Literary forum hosts seminar on Ghalib

Bazm-Urdu-Qatar (BUQ), the oldest literary organisation in Qatar and established in 1959, organised a seminar dedicated to the legendary classical Urdu and Persian poet Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib (1797-1869) along with a poetry symposium recently.

Many poetry and art enthusiasts attended the event presided over by BUQ general secretary and popular poet, Iftekhar Raghib. A noted scientist and leading expert in public health microbiology at the University of Hyderabad, Professor Dr Niyaz Ahmed, who came from India, and Bazm's patron and chairperson of Pakistan Cultural Forum Qatar, Dr Khalil Shibli who is a senior consultant and training director at Hamad Medical Corporation, were the chief guests.

Toronto-based Abid Raza Naqvi, a literary enthusiast and retired judge from the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, was the guest of honour. BUQ president Mohamed Rafiq Shad Akolvi initiated the proceedings. Dr Shibli, a well-known short-story writer, opened the seminar, which featured notable presentations, starting with Bazm member and poet Wazir Ahmed delving into Mirza Ghalib's poetry and the Guzergah-e-Khayal Forum's initiatives in organising symposiums on Ghalib on a regular basis.

Akolvi, winner of a BBC worldwide poetry contest held in the 1990s, a poet and prose-writer as well as patron of several literary forums in Qatar, followed with a research paper emphasising



ing Ghalib's multidimensional poetry and its relevance across various aspects of life.

Raghib, a civil engineer by profession and a poet with five books to his credit, shared an academic essay on the scientific aspects of Ghalib's poetry, an area of long-standing research. Ghalib, known for his progressive mindset, held a strong passion for expanding his knowledge and greatly admired the scientific progress made by Europeans in the 18th and 19th centuries. Raghib's research focused on unveiling the scientific ideas embedded in Ghalib's couplets and establishing a connection between fundamental scientific concepts and Ghalib's poetic expressions. Dr Shibli, while introducing the final speaker of the seminar, Dr Faisal Hanif, highlighted the latter's in-depth understanding of classical literature and described him as his "literary lifeline" on matters of seeking knowledge on the historical work of the masters in Urdu poetry and prose.

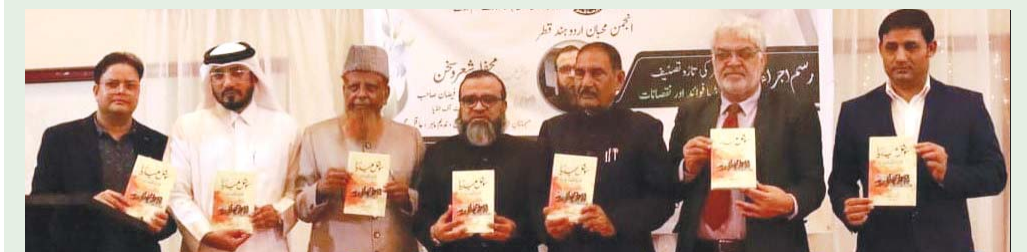
Dr Hanif, an economist, researcher, writer, chairman of Bazm, and founder of Guzergah-e-Khayal Forum and Iqbal Academy Middle East, offered a unique piece of literary fiction. His essay, infused with humour, crafted a scenario where Mirza

Ghalib arrives in Doha in December, accompanied by Dr Hanif to a literary symposium (mushaira). Ghalib, a figure from the past, grapples with reconciling the changes that have occurred in the institution of mushaira over the past two centuries, providing exciting commentary accordingly. The essay unfolds through a scripted conversation between Mirza Ghalib and Dr Hanif in the classical Urdu language of Delhi and Lucknow of the 19th century, adorned with rich vocabulary and unique idiomatic expressions of that era.

Akolvi conducted the poetry symposium (mushaira). Raghib, Mansoor Azemi, Muzaffar Nayab, Wazir Ahmed Wazir, Dr Wasi Bastavi, Jamshed Ansari, Fayaz Bukhari Kamal, Inam Azmi, Samreen Nadeem Samar, Shabbar Ali, Shahzeb Shahab, Sanwal Abbasi and Baijnath Sharma Manto presented their selected poetry and received applause from the audience.

Bazm's patrons and members, including Afsar Asemi, Irshad Ahmed, Shamsuddin Rahimi, Feroz Khan and Waseem Ahmed, were also present. Communication secretary and treasurer Irshad Ahmed proposed a vote of thanks.

Urdu book launched



Noted Urdu poet in Doha, Nadeem Mahir, recently launched an Urdu book titled *Social Media pros & cons* under the banner of Anjuman Muhiban-e-Hind. Indian Supreme Court lawyer Z K Faizan presided over the event which also had a farewell to Majlis Farogh e Urdu Adab president Qamaruzman Bhatti. In addition, there was also a poetry mushaira. Ibrahim Khan Kamal, Atiq Anzar, Ahmed Ashfaque, Aziz Nabli, Obaid Tahir, Aqil Mehmoud, Osama Shamsi and Dr Moin were among those present.

QIAF announces new officials



From left: Dr Sabu K C, Hussain Kadannamanna, Ansar Arimbra, Ashraf Madiyari, Shreekala Ginan, Shamna Asmi, Shafi P C Palam

Qatar Indian Authors' Forum (QIAF), an organisation of Indian expatriate authors, has announced new office-bearers for 2023-2025.

They are: Dr Sabu K C (president), Hussain Kadannamanna (general secretary), Ansar Arimbra (treasurer), Ashraf Madiyari, Shreekala Ginan (vice-presidents), and Shamna Asmi, Shafi P C Palam (secretaries).

Executive committee members: Subair Velliyyod, Thanseem Kuttiadi, Abdul Salam Mat-tummal, Amal Farnis, Faisal Aboobacker, Mohamed Hussain Vanimel, Majeed Puthupparamb, Ram Mohan Nair, Smitha Adarsh and Shamla Jafar.

Advisory board: Mahmood Mattool, Abdul Azeez Manjiyil, Dr Saleel Hassan, Sheela Tomy, Mansoor Moideen, Shobha Nair,

Gijoy George and Ashraf Acoth.

The forum was officially formed in 2021, to promote the objectives of writing and allied creative skills, strengthening Indo-Qatar cultural and literary collaborations; and developing human brotherhood through creative writing. Membership is open to Indian expatriates residing in Qatar and those who have published at least one book.

Annual gathering held



Hijragama Welfare Association Qatar (HWAQ) conducted its annual winter gathering under the leadership of president Fawzan Rafeek to discuss its annual event calendar and future activities. The president delivered the welcome speech following the Qirat and spiritual speech on the topic of "Importance of unity in a society" by Moulavi Nuski Zahri. Azwar Ziyad spoke about "The importance of a welfare organisation for its members".

ICC Film Club activities launched



The Indian Cultural Centre (ICC) and ICC Film Club recently launched the activities of the latter.

Malayalam film *Corona Dhanwan's* producer James was the chief guest.

ICC president Manikantan A P, vice-president Subramanian Hebbagelu, general secretary Mohan Kumar, ICC Film Club president Vimal Kumar, general secretary Biswajit Banerji and executive members of both organisations were present. ICC managing committee member and Film Club co-ordinator advocate Jaffar Khan introduced the Film Club executive members. The ICC Film Club logo was also launched. Cultural performances were the highlights of the event.



DPS-MIS fetes star swimmer



DPS-Modern Indian School (DPS-MIS) celebrated the accomplishments of its star swimmer, Abha Vijay Harne, who won a bronze medal in 50m freestyle at the CBSE National Swimming Championship 2023-24 at Rishikul Vidyapeeth School in Sonapat, India. She was also in the finals for both 50m and 100m breaststroke and 50m butterfly events. Abha also secured individual championship (Best Swimmer Award) in the CBSE Qatar Cluster Swimming Competition 2023-24 (under-19 category). The school management and principal Asna Nafees have congratulated the achiever.

QTS presents cultural performances



Qatar Tamizhar Sangam (QTS), an associate organisation of Indian Cultural Centre (ICC) presented cultural performances under the theme 'Muthamizh Thiruvizha' as part of ICC's Wednesday Fiesta recently. Popular south Indian actor Suman was honoured on the occasion. ICC president A P Manikantan, general secretary Mohan Kumar and other senior community leaders were present. ICC's cultural activities head Sumaa Mahesh Gowda anchored the event.



Capacity building programme for CBSE teachers held



As part of India's Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)'s initiative, a three-day capacity building programme for teachers of affiliated schools in Qatar was organised.

At the inaugural session at Podar Pearl School (PPS), S Dharini Arun, joint secretary, affiliation,

CBSE and Monica Chawla, resource person, were introduced by country training wcco-ordinator and PPS principal Manjari Recriwal and welcomed by the management.

Day-long sessions on National Curriculum Framework - Foundational Stage, followed. The sec-

ond day at DPS-Modern Indian School saw sessions on Learning Outcomes and Pedagogies. Birla Public School was the venue for the sessions on New Education Policy 2020.

Almost 200 teachers from 17 CBSE-affiliated schools in Qatar will benefit from the programme.



Cosy doves



A dove jumps into a cosy spot where its pair has started the nesting process atop a high wall in a Doha location. Doves and pigeons are adept in making the most out of minimum space and resources when it comes to nesting. The prolific breeders can put up a nest at any high spot they deem fit. **PICTURE:** Gulf Times news editor Bonnie James (Instagram: the.explorer7).

Mesis organises its annual sports meet



MES Indian School, Abu Hamour branch (Mesis) hosted its annual sports meet 'Infinito '23' recently.

The event was inaugurated by the chief guest, Qatar's hurdles champion Mohamed Rabbani.

The sports meet started with badminton, followed by basketball, football and the last event was track and field. Head boy Jonathan welcomed the gathering.

Principal Pramila Kannan spoke. Head girl Nayan Thambi proposed a vote of thanks. The house captains led the athletes in the march past. Another highlight of the opening ceremony was the Olympic torch relay in which the best athletes of the school who participated in the Qatar Cluster Competitions were led by the sports captain.

Topaz House (234) won the track and field championship trophy and the overall

championship trophy. Ruby (229) House and Emerald (185) House bagged the second and third positions, respectively. The day concluded with the distribution of medals, certificates and trophies to the winners by the principal.

Individual champions: Sub-junior - Alwin Babu Demis, Isra Kadeparambil Mohamed Riyas; Junior - Abdullah Mohamed Ali, Ameena Fathima; Senior - John Sajeev, Mithra Karthikeyan.



RPS students showcase skills on Annual Day

Rajagiri Public School (RPS) hosted its Annual Day Programme, Repertoire 2023, showcasing the multifaceted skills and accomplishments of students.

Indian embassy first secretary Sachin Dinkar Shankpal, the chief guest, urged the students to pursue their dreams with passion and perseverance. He praised the

school's commitment to holistic education and shared insights on the importance of a well-rounded academic experience.

Principal Joshy Abraham presented the annual report highlighting the school's achievements, milestones and future plans.

The school magazine was released by

the academic director Dr Prasant Palakkappillil.

The academic achievers and participants in CBSE national events were honoured on the occasion.

The cultural extravaganza witnessed socially resonant performances, shedding light on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Get familiar with Jamia Millia Islamia's founders

By Shafqat Nabi

NI1. Which is the first number, written in English, to have the first English alphabet 'a' in it?

NI2. This American actor and comedian celebrated his 62nd birthday last Wednesday. For the dark comedy, *The Cable Guy*, in 1996, he received the highest salary a male actor ever received for a film at the time, which stood at \$20mn, an event that changed Hollywood forever. In 2006, he received a Grammy award nomination for Best Spoken Word Album for Children. In 2013, he published his first book, a children's story titled How Roland Rolls, which was awarded a 2013 Gelett Burgess Children's Book Award. In 2020, he published his first novel, *Memoirs and Misinformation*, which he co-authored with Dana Vachon. Identify him.

NI3. Following a duel with a cousin, Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe – the last major astronomer to work without the aid of a telescope – had a metal prosthetic "what" attached?

NI4. This educational institution was originally established at Aligarh (in present-day Uttar Pradesh, India) during the British Empire in 1920. It was founded by a former president of India, Dr Zakir Hussain, a famous industrialist and founder of Cipla, Khwaja Abdul Hamied, among others. Name this institution.

NI5. In 1989, what became the first Bond film to not use the title of an Ian Fleming story?

NI6. Which Persian legendary creature has the head of a man, the body of a lion, and the tail of a dragon or scorpion?



NI7. Meaning "bird", what is the shortest French word with all five vowels?

NI8. Which capital city lies at the confluence of Gombak River and Klang River and means "muddy confluence" in Malay?

NI9. Which organ has a unique capacity to regenerate itself after damage - it can regrow to a normal size even after up to 90% of it has been removed?

NI10. It was founded in 1906 in Rochester, New York, as The Haloid Photographic Company. Initial logos are pictured (**below**) here. Searching for a term to separate its new structure, Haloid instituted a term from two Greek roots signifying "dry writing." Haloid changed its name to its current name in 1961. Identify this company.

Answers

NI1. One Thousand.

NI2. Jim Carrey.

NI3. Nose. It was kept in place with paste or glue and said to be made of silver and gold.

NI4. Jamia Millia Islamia.

NI5. Licence to Kill. Originally titled Licence Revoked, the name was changed during post-production due to American test audiences associating the term with driver's licence.

NI6. Manticore or mantichore. There are some accounts that the spines can be launched like arrows.

NI7. Oiseau.

NI8. Kuala Lumpur.

NI9. Liver.

NI10. Xerox Holdings Corporation, also known simply as Xerox.



1906 - 1938



1938 - 1948

Tribe NI.yays

Which two sitting US presidents died at the White House?
William Henry Harrison and Zachary Taylor.

(Sabika Ahmed, Muscat)

Do you have some interesting bytes to share? And, does your vibe attract you to the 'Tribe NI.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').



Crippled spaceship set for fiery reentry into Earth's atmosphere

A crippled American spaceship is set to burn up in the atmosphere over a remote region of the South Pacific, bringing a fiery end to its failed mission to land on the Moon.

Astrobotic's Peregrine lander was launched on January 8 under an experimental new partnership between the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa) and private industry intended to reduce costs for American taxpayers and seed a lunar economy.

However, it experienced an explosion shortly after separating from its rocket and has been leaking fuel ever since – making it impossible to reach its destination.

"Astrobotic has positioned the Peregrine spacecraft for a safe, controlled reentry to Earth over a remote area of the South Pacific," the Pittsburgh-based company said in an update on Wednesday night, providing co-ordinates a few hundred miles south of Fiji.

Reentry is expected to occur around 2100 GMT, mid-morning today in the local time zone.

Astrobotic added it intentionally executed a series of small engine burns to position the robot over open water and "minimise the risk of debris reaching land" – AFP

Polish top court rejects government plan to overhaul public media

Reuters
Warsaw

A top Polish court has rejected as illegal a plan to liquidate the country's state radio, television and news agency, which the new pro-EU coalition government said had become propaganda outlets for the previous administration.

The Constitutional Tribunal's ruling underlines the challenges Prime Minister Donald Tusk's coalition faces in rolling back reforms introduced by the previous Law and Justice (PiS) cabinet.

Poland's culture ministry swiftly branded the ruling invalid due to what it said were irregularities in the hiring of the Tribunal's judges, all of them appointed under PiS, exacerbating a conflict between the Tusk government and supporters and allies of the former ruling party, who include President Andrzej Duda.

The ministry also evoked past resolutions by the European Court of Human Rights, saying that the Tribunal as currently set up was "not an independent and impartial" court and that its rulings therefore "do not have universally binding force".

Its stance further fuels the legal confusion and it was not immediately clear how the situation might be resolved.

In its ruling, the Tribunal said any decisions on public broadcasting companies should be based on the Broadcasting Act and not on the Code of Commercial Companies, thus making the minister's decisions invalid.

"The right to dismiss members of the management (of state media outlets) lies solely with the National Media Council," it added, referring to an institution created under PiS and manned by several of its current or former lawmakers.

Tusk's government accuses PiS of packing courts, regulatory bodies and other

institutions with its supporters during its eight-year rule, when it often drew criticism from the European Union over rule of law concerns.

The EU froze billions of euros in funds earmarked for Poland and Tusk has vowed to reverse the PiS government's judicial reforms in order to unblock that cash.

PiS argued at the time that it had the right to overhaul national institutions in line with its democratic mandate and it accused the EU of exceeding its powers.

While many lawyers share doubts about the validity of verdicts issued by the Tribunal in its current lineup, some such as the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights have also questioned the legality of the ministry's moves on public media.

Poland's culture minister announced in December that he was moving to liquidate the state television, radio and news agency after Duda vetoed the new government's spending plans for public media financing.

Polish state TV, radio and the PAP news agency are still functioning but with new programmes and journalists.

The current government has signalled that after liquidation it wants to recreate them as new legal entities under fresh management.

The clash over the government's right to liquidate the public media companies is just one of several between the current and previous administrations.

Two former PiS ministers went on hunger strike this month after being jailed for abuse of power in previous roles.

Former interior minister Mariusz Kamiński described himself as a "political prisoner".

Tusk's government and its supporters say this is nonsense and say they are determined to bring Poland back into line with EU democratic standards and unblock the frozen funds after years of conflict between Warsaw and Brussels.

Trump demands criminal immunity even if crossing 'the line'

Donald Trump said yesterday that his claim of "total" presidential immunity against criminal prosecution should extend even if his actions "cross the line".

Trump is running for a White House comeback in November while simultaneously fighting 91 criminal charges in four separate cases that include allegedly seeking to overturn his 2020 election loss and hoarding top secret documents at his golf resorts.

In a social media post sent at 2am, Trump argued that as president he enjoyed complete immunity from prosecution – and he urged the Supreme Court to rule in his favour.

"EVEN EVENTS THAT 'CROSS THE LINE' MUST FALL UNDER TOTAL IMMUNITY, OR IT WILL BE YEARS OF TRAUMA TRYING TO DETERMINE GOOD FROM BAD," Trump wrote on his Truth Social website, using his customary all-caps style throughout the statement.

Trump suggested that US presidents need immunity to be able to make hard decisions, and that this need outweighs the danger from presidents who break the rules.

The Republican likened the situation to the police, who must keep working despite the "occasional 'rogue cop'".

"Sometimes," wrote Trump, "You just

have to live with 'great but slightly imperfect'."

He said that the Supreme Court, which has tilted to the right since Trump appointed three new justices during his presidency, would have an "easy decision".

A federal appeals court in Washington is currently considering Trump's claim to immunity against prosecution over his role in efforts to change the results of the 2020 election, in which Democrat Joe Biden defeated the incumbent Republican.

If Trump's appeal is denied, as expected by most legal experts, the case will likely go for a decision before the Supreme Court. – AFP

Quebec leader urges Trudeau to stem refugee inflow

Quebec Premier Francois Legault urged Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to stem the flow of refugees into the province and to compensate it for costs, claiming that Quebec's services were close to a "breaking point" due to the rising number.

The influx has led to overflowing schools, worsened housing scarcity, and packed homeless shelters, Legault said in a letter to Trudeau on Wednesday.

"Unfortunately, we are close to the breaking point because of the excessive number of asylum-seekers arriving in Quebec month after month," the centre-right nationalist added. "The situation has become unbearable."

Nearly 60,000 new asylum-seekers were recorded in Quebec in the first 11 months of 2023 and another 65,000 are expected in 2024, Legault said. "On a per capita basis, Quebec has accepted three times as many asylum-seekers as the rest of Canada."

Canada struck a deal with the United States last year to stem the flow of asylum-seekers entering from the US through unofficial border crossings, like the Roxham Road crossing into Quebec from New York state.

That crossing was closed. However, five months after the deal, the overall number of people filing refugee claims in Canada had increased, Reuters reported.

"The organisations that host and support asylum-seekers are no longer sufficient to the task and are requesting assistance as was the case last year at the height of the Roxham Road crisis," Legault said.

The Trudeau-led Liberal government in Ottawa is coming under pressure for its immigration policies because they have exacerbated a housing crunch, and because some services provided by the provinces, like education and healthcare, are struggling to keep up with population growth.

Trudeau's popularity has slumped in recent months amid complaints about housing affordability and the high cost of living.

Trudeau, who represents a Quebec constituency in the House of Commons, is trailing Opposition Conservative Party leader Pierre Poilievre in opinion polls.

The closing of the Roxham Road crossing momentarily slowed the flow of asylum-seekers in Quebec, Legault said, but arrivals from other countries continued to grow in airports.

The predominantly French-speaking province is historically sensitive on the issue of immigration, with nationalists and separatists often pushing for measures to protect local culture.

Canada's Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc, commenting on Legault's letter, said that Ottawa is committed to working with the Quebec government "to find solutions to the challenges posed by the significant number of asylum-seekers".

"We are taking the most recent financial request from the Quebec government very seriously," LeBlanc said in a statement. – Reuters

'Critical failures' in Texas school massacre response: DOJ report

Reuters/AFP
Washington

The US Justice Department (DOJ) found "critical failures" in the delayed police response to the 2022 school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, that left 19 children and two teachers dead.

A DOJ review released yesterday found shortcomings in "leadership, decision-making, tactics, policy and training" that led to a confused police response and a delay in confronting the gunman at Robb Elementary School.

The report concluded officers should have immediately breached a classroom to stop the shooting, but instead treated the gunman like a barricaded subject and allowed him to remain in a classroom with victims for more than an hour.

The report details the results of the department's "critical incident review" of the law enforcement response, a review which began days after the shooting at the request of Uvalde's mayor.

The police response to the massacre came under intense criticism following reports that law enforcement waited in a hallway for more than an hour while the gunman remained holed up in a classroom and students made panicked 911 calls.

A US Border Patrol-led tactical team ultimately burst into the classroom and killed the gunman.

A July 2022 report from Texas lawmakers described an "atmosphere of chaos" at the scene and concluded that law enforcement "failed to prioritise saving the lives of innocent victims over their own safety".

A total of 376 officers – border guards, state police, city police, local sheriff departments and elite forces – responded to the massacre, a Texas state lawmakers' report said in July 2022.

However, the situation was "chaotic" due to the officers' "lackadaisical approach" to subduing the gunman, the DOJ report charged.

"The shooter was not killed until approximately 77 minutes after law enforcement first arrived," it said.

The Justice Department review is aimed at providing an independent analysis and identifying lessons for authorities responding to other mass shootings.

The department's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services led the assessment with the help of outside experts in emergency management, active shooter response and school safety.

Investigators "identified several critical failures", the DOJ report said, and "the most significant failure was that the responding officers should have immediately recognised the incident as an active shooter situation".

"In summary, the response to the May 24, 2022, mass casualty incident at Robb Elementary School was a failure," said the crit-



This picture taken on Wednesday shows artist Abel Ortiz giving Attorney-General Merrick Garland and Associate Attorney-General Vanita Gupta a tour of murals of the Uvalde shooting victims, in Uvalde, Texas.

Pennsylvania 'cannot bar adults under 21 from carrying guns': court

A federal appeals court has ruled that Pennsylvania laws that ban 18- to 20-year-olds from carrying firearms in public during a state of emergency are unconstitutional, citing a landmark US Supreme Court ruling that expanded gun rights.

The Philadelphia-based 3rd US Circuit Court of Appeals on a 2-1 vote held that the right to keep and bear arms under the US Constitution's Second Amendment extended to adults under 21.

It marked the latest instance of a court striking down a gun law after the Supreme Court's conservative majority changed the landscape of firearms regulation with its June 2022 ruling in New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v Bruen.

That ruling recognised for the first time that the Second Amendment protects an individual's right to carry a handgun in public for self-defence, and established a new test for assessing firearms laws, saying that restrictions must be "consistent with this nation's historical tradition of firearm regulation".

US Circuit Judge Kent Jordan wrote that the "words 'the people' in the Second Amendment presumptively encompass all adult Americans, including 18- to 20-year-olds, and we are aware

of no founding-era law that supports disarming people in that age group".

His opinion was joined by a fellow appointee of Republican former president George W Bush, US Circuit Judge D Brooks Smith.

US Circuit Judge L Felipe Restrepo, an appointee of Democratic former president Barack Obama, dissented, saying the Second Amendment did not cover individuals under 21.

The ruling was a victory for the Second Amendment Foundation and Firearms Policy Coalition, gun rights groups that along with several Pennsylvanians filed a lawsuit in 2020 challenging the state restrictions on 18- to 20-year-olds carrying guns.

Under Pennsylvania law, individuals must be at least 21 to apply for a licence to carry concealed firearms.

While typically unlicensed individuals could still carry guns openly, a state statute barred people from carrying firearms on public streets or property if a state of emergency was declared unless they had a licence or fell into a different category of exceptions. – Reuters

ical incident review which is more than 550 pages long. "The painful lessons detailed in this report are not meant to exacerbate an already tragic situation."

"As a consequence of failed leadership, training and policies, 33 students and three of their teachers – many of whom had been shot – were trapped in a room with an active shooter for over an hour as law enforcement officials remained outside,"

Attorney-General Merrick Garland said in a statement.

School shootings have become a regular occurrence in a country where about a third of adults own a firearm and regulations on purchasing even powerful military style rifles are lax.

Polls show most voters favour stricter controls on the use and purchase of firearms. However, the gun-ownership lobby

is highly influential and the courts have ruled that the constitutional right to bear arms applies to private owners (see accompanying report above).

Investigators compiling yesterday's report, which does not name the shooter, collected and reviewed "more than 14,100 pieces of data and documentation, including policies, training logs, body camera and CCTV video footage".

Two arrested after assassination of Ecuadorean prosecutor looking into TV station attack

Two suspects have been arrested in connection with the murder of Ecuadorean prosecutor Cesar Suarez who was allegedly targeted by a gang, police said yesterday, as security forces continued interventions in prisons.

Ecuador is reeling from a wave of violence, with President Daniel Noboa declaring 22 gangs as "terrorist" groups and a 60-day state of emergency.

Incidents this month have included an attack by armed gunmen on the TC televi-

sion station, the hostage-taking of more than 200 prison staff and the kidnapping of police officers.

A prosecution source told AFP that Cesar Suarez had been in charge of finding the gang responsible for the attack on state-owned TC Television, carried out in Guayaquil by hooded assailants armed with guns and explosives.

Suarez, who was primarily focused on pursuing organised trans-national crime in Guayas province, was attacked as he

drove in northern Guayaquil by gunmen in two cars, the city's police chief General Victor Herrera told journalists at a press conference.

Suarez was in charge of investigating the television station attack, when journalists and others were briefly held hostage, as well as cases connected to corruption and drug trafficking, Herrera said.

"The hypothesis that the national police have is that these criminals belonged to the terrorist group ChoneKiller, the motiva-

tion (for the crime) is still under investigation," Herrera said.

Police have collected 18 ballistic pieces of evidence and conducted raids in various homes, locating one of the vehicles.

The other was found burned in another part of the city, Herrera said.

Suarez had not had permanent police protection since May 2023 and had not requested protection for a hearing on Wednesday because it was virtual, authorities said.

Police detained 13 people in connection with the television station attack.

Security forces were carrying out an operation at the Guayaquil prison that was the site of an escape by Adolfo Macias, the leader of the Los Choneros gang, earlier this month.

The raid is not connected to Suarez's killing, Herrera said.

Widespread security force operations have resulted in nearly 2,000 arrests since last week. – Reuters/AFP

Nato to launch biggest drills since Cold War, involving 90,000 troops

Reuters/AFP
Brussels

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) is launching its largest exercise since the Cold War, rehearsing how US troops could reinforce European allies in countries bordering Russia and on the alliance's eastern flank if a conflict were to flare up with a "near-peer" adversary.

Some 90,000 troops are due to join the Steadfast Defender 2024 drills that will run through May, the alliance's top commander Chris Cavoli said yesterday.

More than 50 ships from aircraft carriers to destroyers will take part, as well as more than 80 fighter jets, helicopters and drones and at least 1,100 combat vehicles including 133 tanks and 533 infantry fighting vehicles, the military alliance said.

The exercise, composed of a series of smaller individual drills, will span from North America to Nato's eastern flank, close to the Russian border.

Cavoli said the drills would rehearse Nato's execution of its regional plans, the first defence plans the alliance has drawn up in decades, detailing how it would respond to a Russian attack.

Nato did not mention Russia by name in its announcement.

However, its top strategic document identifies Russia as the most significant and direct threat to Nato members' security.

"Steadfast Defender 2024 will demonstrate Nato's ability to rapidly deploy forces from North America and other parts of the alliance to reinforce the defence of Europe," Nato said.

The reinforcement will occur during a "simulated emerging conflict scenario with a near-peer adversary", Cavoli told reporters in Brussels after a two-day meeting of national chiefs of defence.

The last exercises of a similar size were Reforger - during the Cold War in 1988 with 125,000 participants - and Trident Juncture in 2018 with 50,000 participants, according to Nato.

The troops taking part in the exercises, which will involve simulations of getting personnel to Europe as well exercises on the ground, will come from Nato countries and Sweden, which hopes to join the alliance soon.

Allies signed off on the regional plans at their 2023 Vilnius summit, ending a long era in which Nato had seen no need for large-scale defence plans as Western countries fought smaller wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and felt certain post-Soviet Russia no longer posed an existential threat.

During the second part of the Steadfast Defender exercise, a special focus will be on the deployment of Nato's quick reaction force to Poland on the alliance's eastern flank.

Other major locations of the drills will be the Baltic states which are seen as most at risk from a potential Russian attack, Germany - a hub for incoming reinforcements - and countries on the fringes of the alliance such as Norway and Romania.

The US-led alliance has dispatched thousands of troops to its eastern flank and drawn up its most extensive plans since the collapse of the Soviet Union to protect itself from a Russian attack.

Admiral Rob Bauer, the chair of Nato's military committee, said the scale of the

exercise was a demonstration of the alliance's new readiness.

"That is a record number of troops that we can bring to bear and have an exercise within that size, across the alliance, across the ocean, from the US to Europe," he said.

Bauer also warned that civilian societies in Nato's member countries needed to better prepare for a potential future war with Russia.

"We have to realise it's not a given that we are in peace and that's why we have the plans, that's why we are preparing for a conflict," he said. "We're not seeking any conflict, but if they attack us we have to be ready."

The senior Nato commander said that Russia's land forces had been severely degraded by the war in Ukraine, but its navy and air force remained "considerable" forces.

German lawmakers toughen asylum rules to blunt influx

German lawmakers have passed new restrictive rules for asylum-seekers, streamlining the deportation process as Europe's biggest economy faces a major influx of applicants.

As a bitter migration debate roils the country and the far-right AfD hits new heights in the polls, Olaf Scholz's unpopular centre-left-led government championed the measures as a means of curbing new arrivals.

"We will ensure that people without the right to stay will have to leave our country faster," Interior Minister Nancy Faeser said of the draft law "to improve repatriations".

She said sending those without a right to asylum back to their countries of origin would free up resources for those most in need of refuge.

The tough measures give the police new powers to search for those ordered to leave the country and to establish the identity of migrants.

In addition, the maximum amount of time people may be held in pre-expulsion detention will increase to 28 days from 10 currently to allow authorities time to organise deportations.

Rights groups attacked the hardened policy as inhumane and excessive, with the Association of German Lawyers calling it "hardly in the realm of proportionality".

"We are horrified that people who are fleeing and those who offer them humanitarian aid can be threatened with prison sentences," sea rescue group SOS Humanity said.

The legislation sets out tougher penalties for people-smuggling.

However, it includes language limiting prosecution to assistance on land, which the coalition says will exempt non-governmental organisations that aid migrants at sea - a claim some charities dispute.

The government estimates the bundle of measures will lead to an addition 600 deportations per year.

Faeser noted that firmer implementation of existing policy had last year created a 27% rise in deportations to 16,430.

A surge in arrivals in recent months, mainly from Syria and Afghanistan, has reignited a fierce immigration debate in Germany, with local authorities saying that they are overwhelmed by the number of asylum-seekers.

On the back of such concerns, the anti-migration AfD's poll ratings have soared to around 22%, well ahead of Scholz's Social Democrats at 14%. - AFP

Pakistan hits targets in Iran, two days after Iranian attack

Reuters/AFP
Islamabad/Tehran

Pakistan launched strikes on targets inside Iran yesterday, in a retaliatory attack two days after Tehran said it struck the bases of another separatist group within Pakistani territory.

Iranian media said several missiles hit a village in the Sistan-Baluchestan province that borders Pakistan, killing at least nine people, including four children.

The strikes took place around 4.30am (0100 GMT), with three drones destroying four houses in a village near the city of Saravan, IRNA news agency said, citing Alireza Marhamati, deputy governor of Sistan-Baluchestan province.

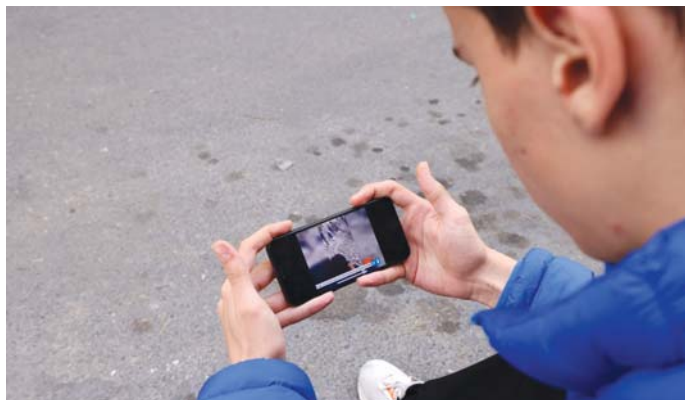
Iranian media carried images showing severely damaged homes, with one video showing people gathered around a crater.

All those killed were Pakistanis and investigations were under way to determine why they were in the Iranian village, Marhamati said.

The tit-for-tat strikes are the highest-profile cross-border intrusions in recent years and have raised alarm over wider instability in the Middle East since the war in Israel erupted following the events of October 7.

While Iran and Pakistan often accuse each other of allowing militants to operate from the other's territory, cross-border operations by government forces have been rare.

Both sides appeared to signal a desire to keep the situation contained.



A man in Tehran watches the news on his phone about Pakistan's air strike.

Right: People gather near rubble in the aftermath of Pakistan's military strike on an Iranian village near Saravan, in Iran's Sistan-Baluchestan province, in this screen grab from social media video.

Iran's foreign ministry said yesterday that it is committed to good neighbourly relations with Pakistan, but called on Islamabad to prevent the establishment of "terrorist bases" on its soil.

The ministry underlined that Iran understood that Pakistan's "friendly and brotherly government is separate from armed terrorists".

"Iran always adheres to its neighbourly policy and does not allow its enemies and terrorist allies to break these relations," it said.

Pakistan issued a similar statement.

"The sole objective of today's act was in pursuit of Pakistan's own security and national interest, which is paramount and cannot be compromised," the foreign ministry said.

"A number of terrorists were killed during the intelligence-

based operation," the ministry said, describing the strikes as a "series of highly co-ordinated and specifically targeted precision military strikes against terrorist hideouts".

Tehran strongly condemned the strikes, saying that civilians were killed, and summoned Pakistan's charge d'affaires, its most senior diplomat in Iran, to provide an explanation.

"The information received indicates that four children, three women and two men, who were foreign nationals, have been killed in the explosion that occurred in a village," Iran's Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi told state TV.

In Islamabad, a foreign ministry spokesperson said Pakistan's caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-haq Kakar would cut short a visit to the World Economic Forum in Davos.

"The precision strikes were carried out using killer drones, rockets, loitering munitions and stand-off weapons," a Pakistani military statement said.

It said the targets were bases used by the Baloch Liberation Front (BLF) and the associated Baloch Liberation Army.

Iran said on Tuesday that it had hit targets inside Pakistan that it alleged were bases of Jaish al Adl (JAA).

All the targeted groups are ethnically Baloch, but it was unclear if the JAA has links with the other two.

Nuclear-armed Pakistan said civilians were hit and two children killed.

Islamabad recalled its ambassador from Iran on Wednesday in protest against a "blatant breach" of its sovereignty.



Against the backdrop of the war in Gaza, Iran and its allies had been flexing their muscles in the region, even before its cross-border incursion into Pakistan.

Iran launched strikes on Syria against what Tehran said were Islamic State sites, and Iraq, where it said it had struck an Israeli espionage centre.

The Iran-backed Houthi militia in Yemen have targeted shipping in the Red Sea since November, saying that they are acting in solidarity with Palestinians.

Pakistan and Iran had appeared to be improving ties, with Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and Pakistan's Kakar meeting at Davos this week.

However, analysts warned of the threat of escalation.

"Iran's motivation for attacking Pakistan remains opaque, but in light of broader Iranian behaviour in the region it can escalate," Asfandyar Mir, a senior expert on South Asia security at the US Institute of Peace, told Reuters. "What will cause anxiety in Tehran is that Pakistan has crossed a line by hitting inside Iranian territory, a threshold that even the US and Israel have been careful to not breach."

Russia's foreign ministry called on Pakistan and Iran yesterday to show maximum restraint and solve their differences through diplomacy.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan

Fidan said after speaking with his counterparts from both countries that neither side wanted to escalate tensions.

China has offered to mediate between the neighbouring countries, both close economic partners of Beijing.

The European Union expressed concern about the "spiral of violence in the Middle East and beyond".

Meanwhile Afghanistan - which borders both Iran and Pakistan, and is home to a small Baluch minority - said that the violence between its neighbours was "alarming" and urged them to "exercise restraint".

The targeted militant groups operate in an area that includes Pakistan's southwestern province of Balochistan and Iran's southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan province.

Both are restive, mineral-rich and largely underdeveloped.

The BLF, which Islamabad targeted inside Iran, is waging an armed insurgency against the Pakistani state, including attacks against Chinese citizens and investments in Balochistan.

The Jaish al Adl, which Iran targeted, is also an ethnic militant group, but with Sunni Islamist leanings that primarily Shia Iran sees as a threat.

The group has carried out attacks in Iran against its powerful Revolutionary Guard Corps.



A man in Islamabad reads the front page of the English-language newspaper Dawn displaying news on Iran's air strike.

Kyiv 'running out of ammunition' as allies launch 'artillery coalition'

AFP
Paris

Ukraine has warned that its army faced a "very real and pressing" ammunition shortage in its grinding near-two-year battle against Russia, as Western allies met in Paris to agree new artillery supplies.

The meeting yesterday came as Russia claimed its forces had pushed Kyiv's troops out of Vesele, a village near the hard-fought city of Bakhmut in eastern Ukraine.

AFP was unable to verify the defence ministry's claims.

Meanwhile, a Ukrainian security source told AFP that Kyiv was behind an overnight drone attack on an oil depot in northern Russia.

"A shortage of ammunition is a very real and pressing problem that our armed forces are facing," Defence Minister Rustem Umerov posted on X (formerly known as Twitter) after speaking by video link to

the gathering led by France and the United States.

"The artillery coalition is aimed at solving this issue," he said.

A 23-nation effort, the "artillery coalition" is part of the so-called Ramstein contact group, which gathers more than 50 countries supporting Ukraine.

Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky said on X that he thanked French President Emmanuel Macron "for launching the artillery coalition" and for its manufacture of guns and ammunition.

The two leaders also discussed the "need to further strengthen Ukraine's air defence", he said, as it is targeted by Russian drones and missiles almost nightly.

Macron stressed France's "unwavering support" for Ukraine, the Elysee presidential palace said in a statement.

"He condemned Russia's intensification of strikes against Ukrainian cities and indiscriminate bombardment of civilians," the French statement added.

Yesterday Paris denied a Russian claim that a strike on the eastern city of Kharkiv

on Tuesday had killed "French mercenaries", saying it did not employ guns-for-hire.

Umerov told the Paris gathering that "there is no alternative to modern artillery, we have to keep up our efforts and increase munitions production".

Supply of the 155mm shells used in Western artillery has become a critical issue.

The European Union had promised to deliver 1mn shells by spring this year, but European Parliament lawmakers say only 300,000 have been delivered so far.

A French Senate report published on Wednesday said that Paris and other European governments were "not up to the challenge" of meeting Ukraine's ammunition requirements, calling on Kyiv's allies to "step up a gear".

Senate foreign affairs committee chief Cedric Perrin said that Ukraine was burning through 5,000-8,000 shells per day, compared with up to 15,000 on the Russian side.

France's defence ministry said on

Wednesday that its artillery ammunition output since Russia's invasion of Ukraine was expected to triple to a monthly rate of 3,000 this year.

France has also promised it can produce 78 new Caesar truck-mounted guns for Ukraine by early 2025, with six paid for by Kyiv to be delivered "in the coming weeks", the defence ministry said.

Paris will pay for a further 12 of the cannons at a cost of €50mn (\$54mn), Defence Minister Sebastien Lecornu said yesterday. Costs for the remaining 60 guns amount to around €250mn, to be shared among other allies, he added.

France has already sold or donated 30 truck-mounted Caesar guns to Ukraine, with a further 19 from Denmark.

The Caesar can fire a 155mm shell over a distance of 40km (25 miles) before quickly changing position to avoid return fire from enemy artillery.

On Tuesday Macron said he would visit Ukraine in February, the second time since Moscow invaded in 2022.

Almost two years into the war, the front

line has been largely fixed for months after a Ukrainian counteroffensive failed to make territorial gains last year.

France is "in the process of finalising an agreement" on security with Kyiv, similar to the 10-year deal signed with Britain last week, Macron added.

Zelensky said he and Macron had told advisers "to expedite negotiations on the bilateral agreement" and were already discussing "items for France's next military aid package".

French Foreign Minister Stephane Sejourne said in Ukraine on Saturday that France could work with Kyiv to "strengthen Ukraine's capacity to produce (arms) on its own soil".

On Tuesday Macron announced further deliveries of "around 40" long-range SCALP missiles and "several hundred bombs".

Lecornu said France would provide around 50 AASM bomb guidance kits per month, which could also be adapted to be launched from Soviet-era planes used by the Ukrainian air force.



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Biden antitrust wins help us all

Competition is what makes markets work (when they do). But firms don't like competition because it tends to drive down profits. For the typical businessperson, whose objective is reaping gains above the normal return on capital, that is no fun. As Adam Smith observed 250 years ago, "People of the same trade seldom meet together, even for merriment and diversion, but the conversation ends in a conspiracy against the public, or in some contrivance to raise prices."

For at least 130 years, the US government has been trying to ensure competition in the marketplace. But it has been a constant battle. Firms are always coming up with new ways to circumvent competition; their lawyers are always devising new methods to avoid the reach of the law; and the government has failed to keep up with either of these practices, let alone with rapid advances in technology.

Hence, there is now overwhelming evidence of an increase in market power in the United States. That means bigger corporate profits (far exceeding risk-adjusted returns), higher market concentration in sector after sector, and fewer new entrants. Americans like to think that they have the most dynamic economy the world has ever seen, one that is now on the cusp of a new innovative era. But the data refute such claims.

Consider the standard measure of innovation: total factor productivity, which refers to the growth in output beyond that which can be explained by an increase in inputs like labour and capital. In the 15 years prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the overall growth of TFP in the US economy was only one-third of what it had been in the preceding 15 years. So much for entering an innovation age!

Making matters worse, rising market power is also a key factor contributing to increased inequality, as argued in the book *People, Power, and Profits*.

The sustained high returns accruing to dominant platforms have become obscene

Fortunately, in this era of never-ending dismal news, there has been a positive development on this front. Efforts by US President Joe Biden's administration to sustain and enhance competition seem to be bearing fruit. For example, owing to pressure from federal antitrust authorities, a \$20bn merger between Adobe and Figma (a "collaborative web application for interface design") has been called off. Moreover, the biotech corporation Illumina has agreed

to divest itself from GRAIL, after the US Federal Trade Commission alleged that the pair-up "would diminish innovation in the US market for multi-cancer early detection (MCEd) tests while increasing prices and decreasing choice and quality of tests" - a view affirmed last month by the US Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Even more significantly, the FTC and the Department of Justice have issued updated merger guidelines that demarcate important new boundaries that remain firmly embedded in US antitrust legal traditions. For example, the guidelines cite the 1914 Clayton Act, which was designed to nip anticompetitive situations in the bud by prohibiting mergers and acquisitions whose effects "may be to substantially lessen competition." That "may" is crucial, because nothing can be foreseen with absolute certainty. In 2012, one could have been quite confident that Facebook's acquisition of Instagram would reduce competition. But Barack Obama's administration was not as alert to the agglomeration of market power as the Biden administration is.

The new guidelines also place a greater emphasis on entrenchment, the idea that acquisitions and mergers may deepen, expand, and prolong a firm's market power. This change implies that competition will be viewed as a dynamic phenomenon, as it should be. Importantly, not only horizontal mergers (between firms in the same line of business) but also vertical ones (where a firm acquires a critical supplier or client) will be subject to greater scrutiny.

We have long known that under conditions of limited competition (which is the reality in many sectors across many countries), such mergers can have powerful adverse effects. Yet "Chicago economists", insisting that markets are naturally competitive, argued that antitrust authorities should focus only on horizontal mergers and acquisitions, and the courts generally agreed. The Illumina/GRAIL decision suggests that judges have begun to recognise the dangers posed by vertical mergers.

By the same token, the new guidelines will help antitrust authorities deal with the big platforms where much of today's anticompetitive behaviour is occurring - from credit cards, airline booking, and theatre tickets to ride sharing. The sustained high returns accruing to dominant platforms have become obscene. It is especially important to nip the growth of market dominance here in the bud; the new guidelines' dynamic approach could be particularly effective. - Project Syndicate

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From one of the many mass graves somewhere in GAZA

Sudan: Increasing violence and prospects for peace

Mohamed al-Baroudi

January 15 marked nine months since the war started in Sudan, and fighting is still going on and spreading particularly in the states of Khartoum, Darfur, Aljazeera and Kordofan. The suffering of civilians is increasing owing to food crisis, scarcity of clean water, disrupted electricity service, and collapse of 70% of hospital and healthcare services.

Doctors without Borders and Care International have warned of a "catastrophic failure to meet rising medical needs."

Random and deliberate killing of civilians is rising, with estimates of death toll reaching 15,000 in regions affected by war. The shelling of residential areas, transport stations, and marketplaces has repeatedly resulted in the loss of civilian lives and the destruction of families' homes.

The recent invasion by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) of Aljazeera state marked another serious development in the war between Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and RSF. The strategic significance of Aljazeera has been corroborated by geographic location between the two Niles, its capital Madani as the second largest city after Khartoum, and it also comprises Aljazeera Agriculture Project, the largest single agriculture unit in Africa established by the British to produce cotton for the textile industry in Lancashire and Manchester - with some similarity to potatoes growing schemes in Northern Ireland. The state is also known as the 'Middle Region' and inhabited by mixed tribes from all over the country.

Following the offensive on Aljazeera, civilians are leaving the neighbouring state of Sinnar in their thousands, fearing imminent attack by RSF forces. Sinnar also borders the states of Kordofan and White Nile. Another vulnerable state is Gaddarif between Madani and Kassala towards the eastern parts of the country and on the border with Ethiopia. However, the RSF is expected to face tougher resistance in River



Members of the Sudanese armed popular resistance, which supports the army, raise their weapons on a pick up truck during a meeting with the city's governor in Gedaref on Tuesday amid the ongoing conflict in Sudan between the army and paramilitaries. (AFP)

Nile and Northern states, as well as the Red Sea state and the city of Port Sudan.

In South Kordofan, the SPLM/N forces of Abdulaziz Alhiu moved into the strategic city of Dilling, and when RSF forces attacked the city SPLM/N united with the Sudan army in defending Dilling and succeeded in thwarting Hemedti forces' attempt to take the city. RSF has earlier occupied the rich agricultural district of Habila, 45km from Dilling.

The UN Security Council last week expressed alarm at the spreading violence and deteriorating humanitarian situation in Sudan, condemning the reported attacks against civilians, and the expansion of fighting into areas hosting large populations of internally displaced persons, refugees and asylum seekers.

Mediators are making intensive connections in an attempt to bring warring parties back to the negotiating table and resume talks. The Jeddah initiative and the African Union aim at achieving a ceasefire agreement and securing safe corridors for humanitarian assistance. However, all eyes are fixed this week on the IGAD's meetings in Entebbe, Uganda, where the subregional organisation has invited General Burhan and General Hemedti for an urgent session. The UN Secretary-General's Personal Envoy to Sudan, Ramtane Lamamra of Algeria, has arrived in Sudan on Saturday and met with officials and civilian groups in Port Sudan. Lamamra has previously assumed the position of African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security.

Global debt rush hope for strained developing states

A \$30bn gush of debt issuance by developing countries since the start of the year is sparking hope that some of the more pressed emerging market nations might be able to regain market access in 2024.

Recent falls in global interest rates combined with a relatively lean couple of years for EM borrowers has seen the usual January parade of governments embarking on their funding rounds turn into something of a frenzy.

Oil-rich Saudi Arabia has already issued \$12bn of dollar-denominated bonds and the world's largest EM borrower, Mexico, scored its biggest ever debt sale at a punchy \$7.5bn.

Poland, Indonesia and Hungary have all been in the market too while companies have been busy flogging nearly \$2bn of their own debt, taking overall EM issuance past the \$50bn mark.

The eagerness to frontload issuance highlights uncertainty over how fast and furiously the Federal Reserve, European Central Bank and their peers will cut interest rates, and also sets the stage for some big year-end numbers.

Analysts at Morgan Stanley estimate almost \$165bn of EM sovereign debt will be issued this year, roughly 20% - or \$30bn - more than in 2023.

Apart from Saudi Arabia, at least five other countries are each expected to issue at least \$10bn, namely Indonesia, Poland, Turkiye, Israel and Mexico, with the latter potentially reaching \$18bn.

While the combined total will be well below 2020's Covid-era record of \$234bn, the potential \$125bn just from 'investment grade' - rated EM nations would be the second highest in history.

"Calmer markets are always a good time for these countries to come and issue debt" said Victoria Courmes an emerging market portfolio manager at investment firm GMO.

"With US rates (bond yields) now lower there is obviously an opportunity for them to do that and they will do more as rates come down even further."

Though EMs are having to compete with richer governments for buyers, demand for their debt appears strong so far on hopes that it could be a good year to

be invested in higher-yielding developing world bonds.

Mexico could have sold as much as \$21bn last week while Saudi could have issued as much as \$30bn their order books showed.

Beyond the impressive numbers, the question is whether better market conditions will allow more stretched developing countries, that also have bond repayments coming due, to regain market access.

Barely any sub-Saharan African countries or poorer ones in Asia and Latin America have been able to borrow on international markets since the pandemic, leaving them reliant on their own reserves or help from the IMF.

But in many cases, their bond spreads - or the premium investors demand to buy their bonds rather than those of the United States - have improved substantially over the last 6-12 months.

The prime contenders to test the market's risk threshold and appetite for debt yielding 10% are Angola, Kenya, Nigeria and El Salvador, say analysts at Morgan Stanley.

"While 10% would be expensive (for borrowing countries) versus history, alternative funding options are not always there," they said in a note this week.

"For all, we think it would be credit positive if they are able to issue." Countries need to be able to borrow at manageable interest rates - traditionally judged to be below 10% at a bare minimum - to avoid the kinds of crises suffered by Zambia and Sri Lanka in recent years. Kenya has a \$2bn bond maturing in June which makes it a potential test case if market conditions remain conducive.

Egypt is seeking additional IMF support as it also looks to refinance roughly \$25bn of external debt this year, with almost 75% of investors in a recent Citi poll viewing it as a major default risk in the next couple of years.

Abdrn portfolio manager Viktor Szabo said he thought the market was "not there yet" for the riskier countries.

But with the all-important ten-year US bond yield below 4% again despite firmer-than-expected inflation figures last Thursday there could be a chink of light. - Reuters



Asking questions is the key to knowledge

The fact that Jibreel, 'alaihis-salaam, asked questions to Allah's Messenger, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, about Islam, eemaan and hisaan, the Last Hour and its signs, contains proof that asking questions is the key to knowledge and this is stated in the Mighty Book:

Ask the people of the Reminder, if you do not know. *Surah an-Nahl* (16):43 and *Surah al-Anbiyaa* (21):7.

Also Allah's Messenger, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, stated that it is a cure for ignorance, as occurs in the *hadith* of the man who had the head fracture, where he said, "Why didn't they ask when they were ignorant? Indeed the cure for not knowing is to ask." And since the matter is as I have explained, then asking questions in a good way will assist in that matter, because whoever asks a question in a good way will learn. Therefore the great scholar, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, may Allah have mercy on him, said in *Miftaah Daaris-Sa'adah*:

"And knowledge has six levels. The first of them is asking questions in a good manner ... there are some people who are prevented from it (knowledge) because they do not ask questions in a good manner, either because they never ask questions, or because they ask a question about something when something else is more important than it. Like the person who asks about superfluous things ignorance of which will not harm him, but leaves those things which are essential for him to know. This is the condition of many of the foolish students."

Mujaahid said, "Knowledge will not be learnt by one who is too shy, nor one who is too proud."

Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee said in his book, *Al-Faqeeh wal-Mutafaqqih* (2/143), "And it is befitting that shyness should not prevent a person from asking questions about something that has happened to him. But if he does become too shy and embarrassed to ask a question to the scholar, then he should give his question to one he feels at home with or one he feels relaxed with for him to ask the scholar on his behalf and to inform him about its ruling."

So in summary, whoever wishes to reach the levels of the scholars let him begin by asking questions. How fine is the saying Allah has caused the scholar Ibn al-'Arabee to say, "How close the things are to being attained when they are given their due worth, and how far from attainment when they are not given their due worth. So ask the scholar you will be a scholar like him. Whoever attains wide knowledge must spend the dowry for that. So carefully consider the knowledge which you give a ruling with, there is no good in knowledge without careful consideration. For a person may strive and still be falling short, and the efforts of a person may be frustrated, even though he doesn't fall short. The men whose actions we take as an example have gone and those men who censure every evil action also. I am left within the later people who seek to adorn one another to hide each others shortcomings."

Know that asking questions in a good manner will help the scholar to give the answer, as Maymoon ibn Mihran said: "Asking questions in a good manner is half of knowledge."

Therefore it is essential to explain the knowledge of how to ask questions, because being ignorant of



that will lead to confusion. Maalik ibn Anas said, "Ibn 'Ajaan came to Zayd ibn Aslam to ask him about something but he became confused in it, so Zayd said to him, 'Go away and learn how to ask questions and then come and ask.'"

(i) The question should be a question to find something out, it should not be asked to cause trouble, nor should it be to show someone's ignorance, and it should not be made as a test for someone. Because this is the condition mentioned in the Book of Allah: Ask the people of the Reminder, if you do not know. *Surah an-Nahl* (16):43 and *Surah al-Anbiyaa* (21):7. So one who does not know then he asks in order that he may be taught. However, it is permissible for one who knows that he asks the scholar in order to teach those people who are sitting round about. Because this is what Jibreel, 'alaihis-salaam, did with Allah's Messenger, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, his questions were asked in order to teach the Companions, *radhiallahu 'anhum*, who were sitting around the Prophet.

(ii) It is not allowed to ask questions about something which there is no need of, things whose answers will trouble the one who is asking the question. Anas, *radhiallahu 'anhu*, said, "Allah's Messenger, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, gave a *khutbah* and I have never heard the like of it. He, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said, 'If you knew

what I know, then you would certainly laugh only a little, and you would weep a lot.'" So the Companions, *radhiallahu 'anhum*, covered up their faces and they were weeping, so a man said, "Who is my father?" He said, "Your father is so and so." So this *ayah* was sent down: Do not ask about things, which, if they are made plain to you may cause trouble to you.

(iii) Likewise, it is not allowed to ask questions about things which may cause difficulty and cause hardship to the questioner or for other Muslims. Sa'd, *radhiallahu 'anhu*, said that the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "The severest of the Muslims in sin with regard to the Muslims is one who asks about something that was not forbidden but it is made forbidden due to his asking the question."

(iv) Therefore the Companions, *radhiallahu 'anhum*, and the Taabi'een used to hate asking questions about things before they happened and they would not answer those questions. Since this is going to excess which is something Allah has forbidden and He has declared His Prophet free from it. He ordered His Prophet to say: Say, 'I do not ask you for any reward for it and I am not one of the ones who goes beyond bounds.' *Surah Saad* (38):86.

Ar-Rabee' ibn Khuthaim said: "O servant of Allah, whatever knowledge Allah has given to you in His Book, then give praise and give thanks to Allah for that. Whatever knowledge He has kept concealed from you, then leave it to the One who knows it and don't go to excesses, because Allah, the Mighty and Majestic said to His Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*: I do not ask you for any reward for it and I am not one of the ones who goes to excesses. It is just a reminder for all of men and jinn. And you will certainly know the news of its truth after a short while (after death and the Resurrection). *Surah Saad* (38):86-88.

Ibn 'Abdul-Barr said in his book, *Jaami' Bayaanil-'Ilm wa Fadhihi* (2/138-139) "A group of the people of knowledge said, 'The opinion (Ra'y) hat is blameworthy, criticised, abandoned and which it is not allowed to look into, nor to occupy oneself with, is innovated opinion and its like from the innovated types.' But others say, and they are the majority of the people of knowledge, 'Blameworthy opinion that is mentioned in these narrations by the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, and from the Companions and the Taabi'een is speaking about the rulings of the *Shari'ah* based upon personal opinion of what is good, and based upon surmise, preoccupying oneself with intricate and difficult matters, and with thorny questions, referring details of happenings to each other and making analogy based upon that without referring them back to their origins and looking at their causes and taking that into consideration.'

Applying one's opinion before things actually occur and then laying down details to follow on from this and resultant side issues before anything happens and speaking about this before these things occur. This is like pure speculation. They say: So preoccupying oneself and delving into these things is an abandonment of what occurs in the *Sunnah*.

It involves looking into things which the *Sunnah* is silent about, and it means abandonment of occupying oneself with that which is essential from the *Sunnah*

and the Book of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, and its meanings." I say: and even if the excuse given for this hair-splitting, this laying down of details, this giving hypothetical answers, was that it is used just to train oneself upon the matters of fiqh, then it is still the same as is pointed out by Haafiz ibn Hajr al-Asqalaanee, may Allah have mercy on him, in his book, *Fath al-Baaree*.

(v) Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee, may Allah have mercy on him, in his book, *Jaami' li-Akhlaaqir-Raawee wa Adaabis-Saami'*, (1/211-214) brings a number of chapters in this regard and we will mention the most important of these headings due to their importance:

From correct manners is that when the scholar of *hadith* narrates a *hadith* and then something appears to the student while he is narrating and he wants to ask about that thing, he should not ask about it at that time. Rather he should have patience until the narrator has finished narrating his *hadith* and then he can ask about whatever he wants to ask about.

He should avoid asking the narrator of *hadith* when his heart is preoccupied.

It is not befitting that he should ask him when he is standing up, nor when he is walking, because there is a saying appropriate to each place, and there are places appropriate for the narrating of *hadith* - and they exclude the streets and lowly places.

It is obligatory that the questioner should mention to the scholar of *hadith* those chains of the *hadith* which he wants to hear narrated from him, and if a *hadith* has many chains the questioner should specify the best of them and should specify the points of benefit he wishes to hear narrated by him. If the scholar of *hadith* responds and grants his request to narrate to him, then the student should be easy upon him and he should not trouble him.

(vi) It is permissible to ask a scholar about his proof. Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee said in his book, *Al-Faqeeh wal-Mutafaqqih*, (2/149), "And if the scholar gives him an answer to his question it is permissible for him to ask him about his answer, did he say it based upon a narration or did he say it based upon opinion?"

(vii) It is hated to keep repeating a question to the scholar in a troublesome manner. Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee said in his book, *Al-Faqeeh wal-Mutafaqqih*, (2/149), "And if he asks the scholar to explain and he explains it to him and then he repeats again and asks him to explain again, it is allowed for the scholar to add more. If he asks him again after that then it is allowed for the scholar to hold his tongue because frequent repetition will vex him. However it is recommendable for the scholar to be mild and treat with tolerance and make allowance for the people."

(viii) It is allowed for him to ask about speech that is unclear to him. 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ood, *radhiallahu 'anhu*, said: "I prayed along with Allah's Messenger, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, one night and he stood for a very long time until I thought about doing something bad." A student said to him, "What did you think of doing?" He said, "I thought of sitting down and leaving him."

[Excerpted from *The Manners Of The Scholar and the Seeker of Knowledge* by Shaikh Saleem ibn 'Eed al-Hilaalee As-Salafee al-Atharee]

Innovations during the month of Rajab

Allah Almighty bestows favours and grants bounties upon His slaves, during all times, to help expiate their sins, elevate their ranks and make up for their shortcomings. Allah Almighty legislated for us a month during which we observe fasting, another which we perform pilgrimage in, and one or two extra days to fast during the remaining months. He also legislated prayer during the night and the Witr prayer, the *Ud'hayah* (Eid sacrifice), and the *Aqeeqah*, (birth sacrifice) and many other virtuous deeds. All of these are ways of opening different channels for righteous deeds and methods to energise us by shifting from one form of worship to another, and therefore, not become weary, but continue to worship Allah Almighty. This is indeed a great favour from Allah upon us.

Moreover, we find that any act of worship which causes the people to come closer to Allah Almighty is mentioned in His Book or in the *Sunnah* of His Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam* (may Allah exalt his mention). The problem is in those people who try to come close to Allah and gain His reward by looking outside these two sources, and thus, divert from the right path.

The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said during his farewell pilgrimage, "I have left with you that, which if you adhere to, you will never go astray, the Book of Allah".

And Allah Says (what means): "... And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty." [Qur'an: 59:7]

Allah Almighty dispraised the Arabs during the pre-Islamic period because they interfered in that which they had no right in, and started changing what is lawful to unlawful, and what is unlawful to lawful, and recommending that which Allah Almighty did not. They used to shift around the times of the sacred months and change the names of the months because they did not want to wait for this long period to finish.

Ibn Katheer, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: "Dealing with the legislations of Allah with one's corrupt mind and reasoning, and changing the rulings of Allah according to their desires, and deeming lawful what is unlawful, were some of the things for which Allah dispraised the disbelievers."

The Arabs had also forbidden upon themselves slaughtering certain animals, by setting some laws which Allah Almighty did not legislate, so Allah Almighty dispraised them for that. Thus we know that worshipping Allah Almighty is something which is not permitted except through that which He The Most High has legislated Himself and through His Messenger, *sal-*

lallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam. Anyone who wants to draw closer to Allah and gain His reward, love and pleasure through other channels, will get the contrary result, because Allah Almighty does not accept from people except that which He legislated for them.

During the month of Rajab, which is one of the sacred months, some Muslims make some wrong practices through which they intend to come closer to Allah Almighty and gain His forgiveness, love and pleasure. But they seek that through acts of worship which He did not permit nor legislate, and although they are seeking something good, they do not achieve it.

The point is not only in having a sincere and good intention, but the deed itself must be legitimate, or else it will be rejected. Who dare say that a deed is rejected by Allah Almighty? Who told him that the deed is rejected? The one who told us this is the truthful Prophet Muhammad, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, who said: "He who introduces any deed into our matter (Islam) which is not from it then it is rejected." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

'Aa'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, narrated that 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 and his Companions) then it is rejected." [Muslim] Therefore, any deed which is not in accordance with what Islam has come with is rejected.

One of the practices during the month of Rajab which was done during the pre-Islamic period, is to offer sacrifices and call it 'Far'a' and 'Ateerah'. The Muslims scholars may Allah have mercy upon them said Islam voided this practice. Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Prophet *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam* said: "No 'Far'a' No 'Ateerah." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

Ar-Raghaa'ib prayer is another thing which people innovated which was never legislated by Allah nor His Messenger, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*. The scholars may Allah have mercy upon them said: "There is no authentic *Hadith* regarding a special prayer during the month of Rajab, and all the narrations concerning Ar-Raghaa'ib prayer are fabricated lies." They also said: "This prayer was innovated after the fourth century and was never known before that, and no one from the scholars during the first virtuous generations ever mentioned it."

People fast all the month of Rajab although there is no authentic *hadith* in this regard and so this practice should be abandoned. On the other hand, those who are in the habit of fasting regularly, even in during other months, may fast. Moreover, the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi*

wa sallam, never fasted any month in full other than Ramadan, as narrated by 'Aa'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, "The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, used to fast so much until we would think that he always fasts, and would stop fasting until we would think that he never fasts. I never saw the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, fast a full month except during Ramadan, and he never fasted more than fasting during the month of Sha'baan." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

It was narrated that 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, used to hit men's hands until they would start using them to eat during the month of Rajab, and he would say, "What is the virtue of Rajab? It is a month which the people during the pre-Islamic period used to honor, but when Islam came, people gave this up."

Abu Bakrah, may Allah be pleased with him, saw his household preparing during the month of Rajab, and said to them, "Did you make Rajab like Ramadan?" Then he threw the baskets and broke the cups.

Another innovation is what they call the Rajabiyyah, which is an 'Umrah during Rajab which has no evidence proving it. As a matter of fact, the only month during which 'Umrah would have a certain prescribed reward is the month of Ramadan. The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "'Umrah during Ramadan equals performing Hajj", in another narration he said, "Equals Hajj with me."

Therefore, anyone who performs 'Umrah during Rajab for the sake of Rajab has committed a mistake. Moreover, the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, never performed 'Umrah during Rajab even though he has performed 'Umrah four times.

A Muslim should know that if he seeks the pleasure of Allah, and wants to adhere to obedience, he would find many acts to perform, so there is no need to add to what the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, instructed us to do; let us perform what he, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, taught us, and he who does that, is guaranteed to succeed and prosper with this life and the Hereafter.

Ibn Mas'oud, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "Imitate and do not innovate (in religion)! Therefore, we should not add anything to the religion baselessly, and we should adhere to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*. Some of the scholars said, 'Sunnah is like to Noah's Ark, anyone who sticks to it would be rescued.'"

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Why we say Allah creates our actions?

Some people may feel confused when we say, our actions that we freely commit and our sayings that we voluntarily utter are all created by Allah. The confusion unravels when we understand that both our actions and sayings emanate from two things: One is our power to perform these actions, the other is our will to opt for them. However, our very power and will are actually created by Allah. In other words, Allah creates both the cause and its effect. For example, it is by our power and will that we perform ablution, *Salah*, *Siyaam*, Haj, obey or disobey Allah, and so on. Yet, it is Allah Who created the power we possess and the will within us that enables us to take these actions. In final analysis, it is He Who created these and any other actions that we undertake. We can, however, attribute any action to its doer as long as the latter has the power to perform such an action. For example, we say, "fire burns"; because according to the physical laws of matter, its nature is to be hot and burning. However, fire in itself does not burn. Rather, it is Allah Who causes it to burn. That is, He created in fire the action of burning. As such, Allah can block, alter or even reverse this action, making it cooling instead of burning. That is exactly what Allah did to the fire in which Ibrahim, 'alayhis salam, was thrown. Allah said to it, "O Fire! Be cool and peaceful for Ibrahim." [21:69]. And so it was, it did not burn Ibrahim in the least. To conclude, we say to believe in *Qadar* is to believe in its four levels: Knowledge, Recording, Will and Creation. That is, to believe that Allah's knowledge has encompassed all that is in the Heavens and earth and that His knowledge is eternal. He, Most High, knows what has happened, what will happen, and how it will happen. He does not forget what He knows. He, Most High, has recorded in the Preserved Tablet what happened and what will happen in the universe until the Last Day. Whatever He wills, will take place; and whatever He does not will, will not take place. Nothing happens except by His will. And that He created all the creatures along with their qualities and attributes, their transformations, and all of their movements and actions. We can easily see, Praise be to Allah, that the issue of *Qadar* is crystal-clear and needs not be dwelt on. Yet many philosophies and deviant thoughts that emerged and spread through time have confused some Muslims about this tenet. A Muslim should submit to Allah as His Lord. Part of believing in Allah's Lordship is to believe in *Qadar*. In other words, any belief that does not embrace the belief of *Qadar* is not complete. More importantly, any belief in *Qadar* not conforming to Allah's Book and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, is invalid, and therefore not accepted by Allah.

Kinds of actions that occur in the universe

All actions that happen in the universe are one of the following kinds. The first kind is actions that Allah Himself applies on His creatures. Sending rain, making plants grow, giving and taking lives, causing illness and granting health are examples of this kind of actions. Undoubtedly, man, and all creatures for that matter, have no will or power to avoid such actions. Allah, the Unique, the All Mighty, is the One who creates, applies and controls all these acts. The second kind is actions committed by all creatures endowed with will. These creatures generate their actions through their own free will that Allah has granted them. Allah says in the Qur'an, "Verily, this is no less than a message to (all) the Worlds; to whoever among you wills to go straight." [81:27-28]. He also says, "Among you are some that desire the world and some that desire the Hereafter..." [3:152]

Anyone can distinguish between the two kinds of actions, they are, actions that we do by our own free will, and actions that are imposed upon us. Hence, when one goes down the stairway, he knows he is freely doing so. To the contrary, if one accidentally falls from a balcony, he knows that he had no control over his fall. Similarly, if one suffers from Parkinson's disease, he knows that he cannot control his hands movement. But if he is healthy, he does with them whatever he chooses. These are two examples that clearly illustrate the differences between the two kinds of actions.

There is a type of action, which is worth mentioning, since it illustrates Allah's infinite mercy over his creatures. These actions are the like of the second kind, yet Allah counts them to be of the first kind and therefore, independent of man's will. Such are acts committed by a person in his sleep or in a state of forgetfulness. Allah says about the people of the cave, "You would have thought them awake while they were asleep, and we turned them on their right and on their left sides." [18:18]. Obviously, turning on one's right or left while asleep is, in a sense, by one's choice. However, Allah attributed the actions to Himself, saying, "And We turned them," because in reality, a sleeping person cannot control his actions.

Similarly, if one forgets, Allah will not make him accountable for his actions. The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said, "If a fasting person eats or drinks forgetfully, let him resume his fasting, for it is Allah Who fed him and gave him a drink." In this instance, Allah also attributes to Himself the eating and drinking of this fasting person because both actions occurred in a state of forgetfulness and thus, with no choice, or free will.



Amir meets guests attending Police College ceremony

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani met at the headquarters of the Police Academy in Al Saliya yesterday with Oman Interior Minister Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal al-Busaidi, Jordan Interior Minister Mazin Abdellah Hilal al-Farrayeh, Palestine Interior Minister Ziad Mahmoud Hab al-Reeh, Lebanon Minister of Interior and Municipalities Judge Bassam Mawlawi, Yemen Interior Minister Ibrahim Ali Ahmed Haidan, Tunisia Interior Minister Kamal Feki, and Rwanda Interior Minister Gasana Alfred, who called on His Highness the Amir to attend the graduation ceremony of the sixth batch of candidate students of the Police College. The meeting was also attended by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani. - QNA



Snapshots from the ceremony yesterday, which was attended by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani.

Police College training students to the highest standards: officials

Officials at the Ministry of Interior (MoI) have affirmed the keenness of the Police College to qualify its students in various academic, training and applied tracks in accordance with the latest international standards.

The legal adviser to the Minister of Interior and the general supervisor of the Police Academy, HE Major-General Dr Abdullah Yousef al-Mal, stated that they are proud to graduate the sixth batch of cadets nominated for the Police College to become officers distinguished by education and knowledge after being trained at the college.

He added that there is confidence that the graduates will hold their responsibilities and conduct their work with competence and professionalism.

HE Major-General Dr al-Mal said that despite the Police Academy being recently established, it has witnessed development in all academic, training and applied tracks according to the highest standards, making it one of the most rapidly progressed and distinguished police academies in the region.

Police Academy President Brigadier-General Abdul Rahman Majid al-Sulaiti said that as they celebrate the graduation of the sixth batch, they are moving ahead in all determination towards achieving the goals of the academy to prepare qualified and scientifically and practically trained cadres in the legal and security fields that the MoI requires.

He expressed the hope that the graduates will be a qualitative addition to the police and security services, and dedicate themselves to serving their country in a way that will be reflected in their knowledge, morals and work in the field as they join their predecessors.

The Police Academy vice-president and Police College director, Lieutenant-Colonel Fahd Saeed Abdullah al-Subaie, said that 10 years after the establishment of the Police College, they are now celebrating the graduation of the sixth batch.

He said that members of the sixth batch studied, dur-

Police College is distinguished for its academic, training programmes: minister

HE the Minister of State for Interior Affairs Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Faisal al-Thani sees the graduation of the sixth batch of students at the Police College as a continuation of the college's distinguished contribution in qualifying human cadres in accordance with the requirements of contemporary security work.

On the occasion of the graduation ceremony of the sixth batch of candidate students at the Police College, the minister said that the Police College continues to provide excellence at all levels by following the best academic and training methods and programmes at the international level of police colleges.

HE Sheikh Abdulaziz said that the graduates of the Police College are distinguished by their high academic and physical qualifications that enable them to work in various security fields as a result of carefully developed educational and training programmes.

He also pointed to the Ministry of Interior (MoI)'s great interest in the human element and qualifying it in accordance with the requirements of contemporary security work. - QNA

ing their four-year duration at the college, theoretical, applied and practical academic subjects, military and sports training, as well as advanced specialised courses, all according to the latest modern training methods.

Lieutenant-Colonel al-Subaie also stated that the



Jordanian minister praises Police College programmes

Jordan's Minister of Interior Mazin Abdellah al-Farrayeh has praised the Police College's efforts to graduate the sixth batch of candidates.

In press remarks, he expressed Jordan's appreciation and thanks for the distinguished level reached by the 16 Jordanian students who are part of the graduating batch, which he said is an unprecedented number, and called for more co-operation in this context.

Al-Farrayeh indicated that the graduation ceremony performances indicate the great interest in the level of physical fitness and academic education of the graduates.

He cited the quality of the performances at the "Officers of Tomorrow" parade. - QNA

Police College continues, through its cadres, to work to achieve the MoI strategy of developing the skills and capabilities of the human element by building an educational system that keeps pace with current international standards.

This system provides opportunities for students to develop their capabilities and provides them with the best types of advanced field training so that they can succeed when assuming their responsibilities in a world where maintaining security and safety constitutes a real challenge, especially in light of the spread of new and previously unknown forms of crime. - QNA

New batch of grads enhances homeland security: top official

The undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior (MoI), HE Abdullah bin Khalaf bin Hattab al-Kaabi, said that the sixth batch of Police College cadres represents an additional source of national security, embodying the MoI's vision and mission to achieve security, stability and performance excellence by developing the skills and capabilities of the human element.

In his remarks at the graduation ceremony of the sixth batch of candidate students of the Police College, affiliated with the Police Academy, in Al Saliya yesterday, HE al-Kaabi said that everyone is aware of the excellence that the Police College has achieved in graduating academically qualified and well-trained officers who support the MoI and participate with colleagues in maintaining security and achieving the MoI's goals.

He noted the comprehensiveness and integration of the Police College programmes that combine police and legal sciences with sports and physical training to graduate personnel capable of working in the various MoI departments. - QNA



Snapshots of the graduation ceremony.

