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WEDNESDAY Vol. XXXXIII No. 12906

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Uzbekistan's players celebrate after their AFC Asian Cup football match against Thailand at Al Janoub Stadium in Doha yesterday. Uzbekistan defeated Thailand 2-1 to reach the Asian Cup quarter-finals. South Korea beat Saudi Arabia 4-2 in a penalty shootout to advance to the Asian Cup quarter-finals. **Sport Pages 1, 4**

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New govt scholarship plan announced

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) announced the updated government scholarship programme for the academic year 2024/2025, in partnership with the Civil Service and Government Development Bureau and the Ministry of Labour. Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Higher Education Affairs at the MoEHE Dr Harib Mohamed al-Jabri said one of the goals of the new government scholarship plan, for which registration will be open from June 15 until Aug 15, is to ensure equal opportunities, diversity, inclusion, and talent development, stressing that the government scholarship is an opportunity for all Qatari students to obtain a government scholarship provided that the necessary and required conditions are met. **Page 4**

‘Good opportunity to end Gaza conflict as talks make headway’

QNA
Washington

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani stressed that there is progress in the ongoing negotiations for a hostage-prisoner exchange between Hamas and Israel, which could lead to a permanent ceasefire, calling on both parties to take this opportunity to end the war. In a discussion session at the Atlantic Council, HE Sheikh Mohamed said that talks were back on track. He said the new proposal has been relayed to Hamas and they are expected to engage positively and constructively in the process. He hoped that both parties would use this opportunity to stop the war and get the hostages back home. Considering the suffering and large-scale destruction in Gaza, Qatar, in its role as

HE Sheikh Mohamed speaking at the Atlantic Council session.

mediator, is trying to get a negotiated solution to end the conflict, he said. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs said a framework based on proposals and counter proposals made by Israel and Hamas has been reached to form a reasonable ground for future action. He said Qatar could not say what would be the response of Hamas and as mediator Doha can only facilitate talks but cannot impose anything on either side. “We are using our good offices to

Hamas studying new 3-stage truce plan

Hamas said yesterday it had received and was studying a new proposal for a ceasefire and release of hostages in Gaza, presented by mediators after talks with Israel, in what appeared to be the most serious peace initiative for months. A senior Hamas official said the proposal involved a three-stage truce, during which the group would first release remaining civilians among hostages it captured on Oct 7, then soldiers, and finally the bodies of hostages that were killed.

connect, to bridge gaps, to put solutions, to come up with some alternatives.” HE Sheikh Mohamed said this approach has been successful in reaching an agreement between Hamas and Israel in November. **Page 4**

Amir, Palestine president discuss ceasefire efforts

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani discussed with President of the sisterly State of Palestine Mahmoud Abbas, the regional and global efforts that call for immediate ceasefire and de-escalation in the occupied Palestinian territories, along with the need for the constant delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Gaza Strip to reinforce peace and stability in the region. This came during a phone call the Amir made yesterday with the Palestinian president. At the beginning of the call, the Palestinian president briefed His Highness the Amir on the latest developments in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories. Abbas thanked and appreciated His Highness the Amir for his unwavering support for the Palestinian cause, lauding Qatar’s enduring efforts and positions towards the just cause of Palestine. **(QNA)**

Amir, Trudeau review ties, Gaza developments

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani discussed with Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, the developments of the situation in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territories. This came in the phone call the Amir received from Trudeau yesterday. The call touched upon various issues and developments of mutual interest regionally and internationally, as well as the relations of co-operation and friendship between the two countries and the prospects for enhancing them. Trudeau expressed his gratitude and appreciation to His Highness the Amir for Qatar’s diplomatic and humanitarian efforts at both regional and international levels, particularly concerning the situation in Gaza. **(QNA)**

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Turkiye showcases investment options in agro-food industry



Dr Mustafa Goksu



Dr Halit Duran



Sinem Eglenen

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

The Investment Office of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye in Doha held yesterday a seminar on trade and investment opportunities in Türkiye agro-food industry with the participation of a number of major Turkish companies.

The event, in collaboration with the Turkish embassy in Doha was held at the Congress Centre at Expo 2023 Doha. Speaking on the occasion, ambassador Dr Mustafa Goksu stressed that Türkiye gives great importance to agriculture and food industry investment and it is one of the fastest growing business sectors.

“Qatar is a key investor in this sector in Türkiye and there is a brighter prospective for co-operation between the two friendly countries,” he said while thanking the organisers of Expo 2023 Doha for facilitating the seminar, which would facilitate some Turkish companies to reach out to potential investors from Qatar and further strengthen the business relations between investors from both countries.

The embassy of Türkiye in Doha has two commercial attaches, commercial counsellors and other senior officers that are ready to help anyone who want to explore the investment opportunities in Türkiye, he added.

Abdullah Deniz, country adviser, Presidency of Türkiye



A view of the audience at the event. PICTURES: Thajudheen

Investment Office, Doha, described the event as a testament to the strong bilateral ties and collaborative efforts between Türkiye and Qatar.

Dr Halit Duran, project manager, Presidency of Türkiye Investment Office, Doha, said that besides the high number of local consumers, the Turkish market provides free and easy access to around 1bn consumers across the European market, the GCC countries and North Africa and the Middle East.

In addition, Türkiye ranks among the highest for agriculture and agro-food production as well as exports in 2022 for various fruits, vegetables and nuts, and other processed products. Türkiye has arable land with seven climate zones suitable for various types of crops.

Accordingly, agro-food export makes up around 11% of Türkiye's exports recently. Further, he stressed that the government pro-

vides investors with various lucrative incentives in this field.

Sinem Eglenen, Turkish commercial counsellor, said Qatari agriculture investments in Türkiye are set for a much brighter future and are set to grow to up to \$55bn in bilateral trade value between the two friendly countries by 2030. She stressed that there are excellent opportunities for joint ventures between Qatari and Turkish companies in this field, to mutually benefit from the fast-growing agriculture and agro-food sector in Türkiye, building on the already strong and distinguished relations between them.

A number of Turkish entrepreneurs gave brief presentations on their companies' activities and what they would offer to potential investors. At the conclusion of the event, the participants were given the opportunity to get introduced to each other directly and to explore possible ways of mutual co-operation.

Travel procedures to be eased further at Abu Samra crossing

The revamping works of Abu Samra border will be completed during the current year so as to ease the border crossing between Qatar and Saudi Arabia, a senior official has said.

Addressing Qatar Radio's 'Police With You' programme, Capt Shafi Khaliwi al-Shammari, secretary of the Abu Samra Border Port Committee, said the works include expanding the port while increasing the capacity of vehicles and adding service buildings. “The crossing currently includes 166 immigration offices with 116 entry points and 50 exit points. Also, there are approximately 12 customs points. The inspection yard accommodates 60 vehicles,” he said.

The official explained that the procedures take 20 to 40 seconds. For GCC citizens and visitors, whose entry is registered at Metrash 2 or the Hayya platform, the proceedings are completed in 10 seconds.

“The pre-registration service



through Metrash 2 for Qataris and Qatar residents is in place. As for GCC residents and visitors, registration is through the Hayya platform. This is to facilitate travel procedures and to avoid crowding,” al-Shammari said, adding that this service has proven its quality in facilitating and simplifying travel procedures.

The registration process starts

with entering the application, choosing the travel procedures icon or the pre-registration icon for the Abu Samra crossing, and then choosing the type of movement, whether entry or exit. The process includes identifying the driver, whether the vehicle owner or the driver, and mentioning the accompanying passengers, the official added.

Doha Institute hosts Remena workshop

The Doha Institute (DI) hosted a workshop for the Special Commission on Social Science Research in the Mena, known as Remena.

The three-day event concluded on Monday.

The project, based at Columbia University for the last three years, is devoted to developing guidelines for the conduct of responsible, ethical and constructive social inquiry in the Mena.

A group of about 25 social scientists from the Middle East, West Africa, Europe and North America discussed ethical dilemmas confronting research in the Mena, especially disparities in publication access and research dissemination, methodological biases, power asymmetries in research collaborations, as well as more conventional questions of deceit and dishonesty.

The ultimate objective of the Remena workshops



is to develop a series of guidelines to be proposed for adoption by professional associations, funders, publishers and other supporters and amplifiers of social science research within and outside the region, a statement added.

Qatar gears up to host diverse events in February

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

Qatar is set to host a diverse array of events in February, featuring major sport competitions, an equestrian event, prestigious exhibitions, culinary celebrations and tech conferences.

The festivities start with the Arabian Horse Festival at Katara - the Cultural Village, running from tomorrow (February 1) until February 11. It celebrates the strength, originality and pride associated with purebred Arabian horses.

Organisers noted that this 4th edition promises exceptional competitions and beautiful events on the grounds of Katara, showcasing the Global Champions Arabians Tour and the Arabian Peninsula Horse Show.

The World Aquatics Championships - Doha 2024 is set to take place from February 2-18, making its debut in the country and hosting around 2,600 athletes from 190 nations. The Aspire Dome, Hamad Aquatic Centre and Old Doha Port will be the venues for various competitions, offering ticketed and free viewing for spectators.

Art and luxury converge at the 20th edition of Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition (DJWE), scheduled from February 5-11 at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre, bringing together more than 500 brands from 10 countries. It will also shine a spotlight on Indian and Turkish pavilions, as well as Qatari designers.

The Qatar International Food Festival (QIFF) returns for its 13th edition from February 7-17 at the Expo Family Zone at Al Bidda Park. Organised by Qatar Tourism (QT), the festival will feature more than 100 stalls, live cooking shows, masterclasses, and cook-



QIFF 2024 pays tribute to the Qatar-Moroccan 2024 Year of Culture. (Screengrab from Visit Qatar website)

ing competitions with participation from renowned restaurants in Qatar and the region.


QIFF 2024 pays tribute to the Qatar-Moroccan 2024 Year of Culture and will showcase renowned chefs and personalities from the global gastronomic scene, according to QT.

The Qatar ExxonMobil Open, from February 19-24 at the Khalifa International Tennis & Squash Complex, will see the return of 22-time Grand Slam winner Rafael Nadal, along with other top-ranking players, making it a must-watch on the ATP Tour calendar.

Closing the month is the Web Summit Qatar 2024, scheduled from February 26-29 at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Cen-

tre. With more than 7,500 international entrepreneurs, investors, and leaders in attendance, the summit aims to boost the region's tech scene and unlock economic opportunities. Web Summit CEO Katherine Maher has underlined the event's potential for positive social impact.

Entertainment takes centre stage with a series of concerts by renowned regional and international performers. The lineup includes Najwa Karam, Onerepublic, Nassif Zeytoun, Amine Bouchar, Nawal El Kuwaitia and Ahmed Saad, who are set to captivate audiences at various venues across Doha, including the Katara Outdoor Theatre, throughout February.




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Progress in Gaza ceasefire talks: PM

QNA
Washington

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani has stressed that there is a progress in the ongoing negotiations for a hostage-prisoner exchange between Hamas and Israel, which could lead to a permanent ceasefire, calling on both parties to take this opportunity to end the war.

In a discussion session at the Atlantic Council, HE Sheikh Mohamed said that a good progress was made on Sunday which got things back on track and laid a foundation for the way forward. “We cannot say that this makes us...in better shape very soon.”

However, he said: “But we are hoping, actually, to relay this proposal to Hamas and to get them to a place where they engage positively and constructively in the process.” He described it as “the only way to get the situation de-escalated” ex-

pressing hope that both parties use this opportunity to stop the war and get the hostages back to their homes.”

“Now, our main role as mediator is trying our best to get a negotiated solution where it can bring the hostages safely back to their homes, yet also stopping the bombing, you know, and the continuation of the killing of the civilians. We’ve seen the numbers are increasing dramatically.”

Regarding Hamas’s position and achieving a breakthrough to reach an agreement, HE Sheikh Mohamed said: “We are an intermediary party here. We are not a party of this conflict and we are trying our best to bridge the gap is the framework that yesterday been agreed upon with all the parties, was a framework based on what’s been proposed by the Israelis and what’s been a counterproposal from Hamas and we tried to blend things together to come up with some sort of a reasonable ground that brings everybody together.”

Answering a question regarding



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani in a discussion session at the Atlantic Council.

Qatar’s ability to pressure Hamas, HE Sheikh Mohamed said: “Our role is mediator. We try to bring the parties to bridge the gaps between them...pressuring both of them by words, by meetings, by commitment, by addressing the issues with some solutions. That’s the pressure and the leverage.”

He said beyond that Qatar cannot impose anything on neither

sides, adding: “We are using our good offices to connect, to bridge gaps, to put solutions, to come up with some alternatives.” He said that through this approach, Qatar has been successful in reaching an agreement between Hamas and Israel to establish a humanitarian pause and conduct an exchange of hostages and prisoners in November, as well as Qatar’s successful

mediation between the US and Iran, and between the US and the Taliban, in addition to Qatar’s accomplishment in reuniting some Ukrainian children with their families in Ukraine, adding that this is how Qatar operates.

Regarding whether the attack on an American base in Jordan might affect the ongoing negotiations to calm the situation in the Gaza Strip, HE Sheikh Mohamed said: “We’ve been warning from day one that this war has a potential of expanding and spillover in the region. I hope that nothing will undermine the efforts that we are making or jeopardise the process. Yet, it will definitely have an impact. One way or another, it will have an impact on the region’s security. And we hope that things get contained and not to get escalated beyond control.”

“We condemn any act that tries to undermine the security and stability of the region. Infringing the security of a country like Jordan or even killing soldiers who are part of a coalition that we are a mem-

ber of is not something that can be acceptable. In order to rescue the region from suffering and stop further escalation, a solution must be found to what’s happening in Gaza. We don’t encourage any attacks to happen in any country in our region and we are calling for de-escalation to contain the situation as much as possible,” he added.

Regarding the Israeli prime minister’s statements rejecting the establishment of a Palestinian state, he said that he doesn’t want to comment on such statements and that Qatar is not expecting thanks from him. He added that “the State of Qatar understands its role and everyone is aware of its importance and integrity. We have been very transparent with everyone from the beginning and our role has proven that it’s getting results and not just putting out some statements or using it for political exploitation.”

He also stressed that “the only way forward to have a peaceful region is a two-state solution. That’s what the State of Qatar stands for and what we believe in.”

Al-Muraikhi meets Spain’s envoy



HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi met yesterday with Spanish ambassador to Qatar Javier Carbajosa Sanchez. The meeting discussed aspects of bilateral co-operation. **(QNA)**

AlKhater meets Cuban ambassador



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Loliwah bint Rashid AlKhater met with Cuban ambassador to Qatar Alain Perez Torres. The meeting discussed aspects of bilateral co-operation. **(QNA)**

Ministry discusses legal co-operation with AIC

HE the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali bin Issa al-Hassan al-Mohannadi met yesterday with Assistant Secretary-General of the Arab League ambassador Dr Mohamed al-Amin Weld Kik, who is visiting the country on the occasion of the Supreme Judiciary Council’s hosting of the General Assembly of the Arab Investment Court (AIC) of 2024.

The meeting discussed the legal co-operation between the Ministry of Justice and the AIC, in addition to emphasising Qatar’s support for the AIC and revitalising its role as an Arab legal mechanism for the Arab League in investment.

A legal lecture was organised following the meeting, in the presence of Dr Weld Kik, who is also the Head of the Legal Affairs Sector, and a delegation of judges and an elite group of jurists.

During the lecture, First President of the Commercial Court of Appeal in Casablanca, Morocco, Abdelwahed Safour, member of the AIC, presented the advantages provided by the AIC in arbitration.

The lecture, which was organised under the title “national judicial oversight of arbitration rulings in investment claims; also discussed the advantages of arbitration for deciding cases in terms of confidentiality, speed, and freedom to choose the place, time, and language, unlike the judiciary, which requires specific controls for deciding cases.

The most prominent agreements that established arbitra-



tion as an alternative mechanism for resolving disputes were also discussed, including the New York Convention of 1952, the Washington Convention of 1965, the Hague Convention, and the Unified Agreement for the Investment of Arab Capital in the Arab States, pointing to the role of pre- and post-monitoring of the national judiciary in monitoring arbitration awards and granting them executive status. **(QNA)**

Qatar-Morocco military relations discussed



HE the Commander of the Amiri Guard Lieutenant-General Hazza bin Khalil al-Shahwani met at Barzan Camp on Monday with the visiting Commander of the Moroccan Royal Guard Lieutenant-General Abdelaziz Chater and the accompanying delegation. The meeting discussed bilateral military relations of common concern and ways to support and develop them, in addition to strengthening prospects of co-operation. The meeting was attended by a number of senior officers of the Amiri Guard. **(QNA)**

Govt’s scholarship plan for academic year announced

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) announced the updated government scholarship programme, its general guidelines, and most important features, for academic 2024/2025, in partnership with the Civil Service and Government Development Bureau and the Ministry of Labour.

In a press conference yesterday, Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Higher Education Affairs Dr Harib Mohamed al-Jabri reviewed the general objectives of the programme, including economic growth in terms of investment in human capital and the quality of educational outcomes, noting the role of the private sector in this context.

He noted that one of the goals of the new plan, for which registration will be open from June 15 until Aug 15, is to ensure equal opportunities, diversity, inclusion, and talent development, stressing that the government scholarship is an opportunity for all Qatari students.

In a related context, Dr al-Jabri discussed the three main scholarship programmes, which are the internal scholarship programme for five universities inside Qatar within Education City universities, and the external scholarship programme for the best 300 universities according to the classification of tracks and specialisations, in addition to the Amiri scholarship programme allocated to the best 24 universities according to the general classification in the world for foreign scholarships, with the conditions required for each of them.

He indicated that government scholarships were previously limited to out-



standing students, while now they also include talented people in specialisations such as sports, art, and innovation, for example.

Dr al-Jabri noted that those who are unable to register for a scholarship during the aforementioned period can do so and enrol for two other periods from Oct 15-Nov 15, 2024 (spring semester) and from March 15-April 15, 2025 (summer semester).

He said that the government scholarship plan inside and outside Qatar previously included 700 male and female students, but now includes 1,500 male and female students annually.

The Civil Service and Governmental Development Bureau’s Civil Service Affairs Director Saif Ali al-Kaabi considered the scholarship plan one of the main pillars for achieving the Qatar National Vision 2030, promoting human development, and contributing to preparing an efficient workforce capable of

advancing the country’s development wheel. Head of the Skills Development Qualification Department at the Ministry of Labour Abdul Rahman Mohamed Talfat stressed that the private sector is an essential partner in economic and social development in Qatar, indicating that the ministry is keen to contribute to providing scholarship opportunities for Qatari students of both sexes, in a way that qualifies them for leadership and assume responsibility in the private sector.

Director of Public Relations and Communication Department of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Maryam Abdullah al-Mohannadi, spoke about the importance of government scholarships and its role in investing in national human capabilities, stressing the importance of this developed and updated plan with all its details for government scholarship students. **(QNA)**

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Katara North Hills

(KP/B237/24)

(343/2024)

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Proposals shall be evaluated based on the key factors outlined in the Competition Document and in alignment with the global vision of the project.

The Competition Document is available for download via the following link:
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Submission of Proposals shall be made by uploading the Proposal in a compressed and undatable PDF format with a prime quality onto the portal according to the procedure stipulated in the Competition Documents.

The closing Date for submission of Proposals shall be no later than 12:00 Noon on: Sunday 10th March 2024

فرصة استثمارية

مطعم سياحي فاخر على التلال الشمالية بكتار

(KP/B237/24)

(2024/434)

تدعو المؤسسة العامة للثقافي – كتارا شركات الأطعمة والمشروبات والمستثمرين المتخصصين أصحاب الخبرات المناسبة لتقديم عروضهم في مسابقة لتطوير التصميم المبدئي لتطوير مشروع مطعم فاخر على التلال الشمالية بالحي الثقافي (كتارا) ،بما يكفل تعظيم الاستفادة من هذا الموقع الفريد بإطلالته الساحرة على البيئة المحيطة به من تلال كتارا الخلابة وشواطئها الرائعة.

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Malabar Gold launches 'Heart to Heart' collection



Malabar Gold & Diamonds (MGD) has launched the "Heart to Heart" jewellery collection in their over 340 showrooms across 13 countries, a statement issued in Doha yesterday said.

The elegant array of adornments comprise over 200 heart-shaped designs with prices starting from QR830.

MGD is also giving away branded Kenneth Cole & Anne Klein watches with every purchase of diamond jewellery from the "Heart-to-Heart" collections.

The limited-edition collection and offers can be availed across all MGD showrooms until February 14.

Giving customers a wide range of options to choose from, the brand has incorporated numerous designs in necklaces, pendants, bangles, bracelets, earrings & rings into the "Heart to Heart" collection.

There are options available in both 18K gold and diamonds.

"Jewellery is one among the most pristine and thoughtful gifts that one can present," said MGD managing director (international operations) Shamlal Ahamed. "Malabar Gold & Diamonds has always strived to be the perfect gifting partner for jewellery lovers, and customers need not look further than our new 'Heart-to-Heart' collection to find a gift that manages to express all your emotions."

"With a low starting price point and a free branded watch with every diamond jewellery purchase from the limited-edition collection, we have made it easier and more lucrative than ever to convey your love this season," he added.

MGD also has a wide range of collections in gold, diamond and precious gem jewellery suited for the varied preferences of its multi-ethnic customer base, the statement added.



'Still room for Malaysia-Qatar ties to grow'



Malaysian ambassador Zamshari Shaharan.

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

Plans for exchange visits at the highest level between Qatar and Malaysia are underway as the two countries mark the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations this year, Malaysian ambassador Zamshari Shaharan has said.

"We have a very good basis, a warm and close relationship," the envoy told *Gulf*

Times, expressing optimism about the future of their ties. "There is still room for moving forward and to explore and increase co-operation between the two countries."

Shaharan underlined the potential for further co-operation and exploration, both at the diplomatic level and in cultural and artistic collaborations.

He noted that the cultural exchange between Qatar and Malaysia took a significant leap during the 2022 FIFA World

Cup, where Malaysian groups showcased their talents.

This was further strengthened during the ongoing AFC Asian Cup with various groups representing the nation seen performing remarkably.

Shaharan lauded the organisation of the AFC Asian Cup in Qatar, expressing confidence in the country's capability due to its successful hosting of the World Cup 2022.

Despite the Malaysian football team not

qualifying for the round of 16, the ambassador commended their fighting spirit, particularly highlighting the thrilling 3-3 draw against Korea.

In celebration of the 50th anniversary, a "Malaysia Truly Asia" Hi-Tea event took place last Friday in Doha, organised by the Malaysian embassy, in collaboration with the Malaysian community in Qatar.

It showcased Malaysia's cultural diversity through various performances, traditional activities, and culinary delights.

Awqaf joins International Day of Education activities

The Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs, represented by the Department of Da'wa and Guidance, has taken part in the International Day of Education celebrations organised by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE).

For the first time, a week was allocated to celebrate this global event under the slogan *Education is Everyone's Responsibility*.

The Education City, according to a statement from Awqaf, hosted an interactive exhibition that included various educational programmes to introduce the role of all segments of society in advancing the process of education.

Through its pavilion at the exhibi-



tion, Awqaf presented an introduction to the educational and teaching initiatives which benefited 90,000 male and female students and participants from schools, clubs, youth centres and Qur'an teaching centres.

In partnership with about 250 schools, the programmes are run with the aim of building and strengthening positive values and behaviours among students across Qatar.

They are implemented in co-operation with many agencies and institutions in the country.

The programmes, held in clubs and youth centres, have been so far attended by more than 1,500 participants, while those for students of Qur'an teaching centres were attended by around 15,000 students.

The department continues to provide its educational programmes through its spring centres in a large number of mosques in Qatar during summer vacation and spring break.

The department also publishes videos and booklets for students aimed at instilling moral values.

QU don's innovation sees importance of catering to individual needs

A "Smart Mobile Shower Room" developed by Qatar University (QU)'s Dr Ahmed Elkhayat recognises the importance of caring for individual needs in an age characterised by rapid technical development and continuous social changes.

In 2016, the "Mobile Shower Room" received great response when it was presented on the 8th edition of the *Stars of Science* programme.

The dedicated team to the programme worked on converting this design into a practical product that was tested on the ground.

Dr Elkhayat observed that simple and daily issues that are considered a normal part of life for some people, such as showering, in some cases, for people who suffer from motor difficulties or certain disabilities, may be considered a source of anxiety and embarrassment.

"Smart Mobile Shower Room" comes within this framework, with the room carefully designed to provide a safe, comfort-

able and integrated showering experience.

The "Smart Mobile Shower Room" is a strong building that uses fibreglass supported with epoxy and solid services, which achieves the maximum safety for users who may have balance problems.

The system provides an emergency key to stop the process of showering if any problem occurs, to ensure more safety.

The design is focused on providing comfort to users by providing warm water and air from the beginning.

The temperature of water and the height of the chair can be controlled according to the user's preferences.

The warm upper cover is made from a water-resistant substance to provide a feeling of safety and privacy in addition to avoiding suffocation.

The mobile shower also contributes to promoting self-confidence and a feeling of independence, which restores the user's sense of dignity as well as the ability to live normally.



The mobile shower room contributes to promoting self-confidence and a feeling of independence.

Katara festivities attract visitors

Katara - the Culture Village is continuing its various cultural, artistic and entertainment activities that accompany the ongoing AFC Asian Cup Qatar 2023, attracting visitors of different nationalities and age groups.



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Qatar sends field hospital for Palestinians



A Qatari Armed Forces aircraft carrying 42 tonnes of aid for Gaza arrived yesterday in the Egyptian city of Al Arish. The aid includes a field hospital as well as medical equipment and supplies provided by Qatar. So far Qatar has sent 74 aircraft to Gaza with a total aid of 2,186 tonnes. Qatar is supporting the brotherly Palestinian people during their current difficult humanitarian conditions. (QNA)

Berri meets Quintet Committee envoys



Qatar's ambassador in Beirut HE Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman al-Thani participated yesterday in the meeting of Speaker of the House of Representatives of Lebanon Nabih Berri with ambassadors of the Quintet Committee in Lebanon. The meeting discussed the latest developments of the current political situation in Lebanon. (QNA)

Qatar Charity provides cooking gas to Rohingya refugees



Qatar Charity (QC), with the support of the benevolent people of Qatar, has provided gas cylinders to the Rohingya refugees living in Bhasan Char, an island in Bangladesh, benefiting over 32,000.

QC teams distributed refilled gas cylinders to refugee families in co-ordination with local government authorities and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). QC also provides repair support for the stoves they use for cooking, benefiting around 800 families monthly.

The Rohingya refugees expressed their happiness with the assistance provided to them. Mohamed Iqbal extended his gratitude to the people of Qatar and QC for consistently offering aid to them.

Khadiza Begum, said: "We are grateful to Qatar Charity for providing food and non-food aid for us. Since the beginning, the people of Qatar have offered us the necessary assistance. It is a great blessing for us."

QC's relief interventions in Bhasan Char benefited 550,000 individuals in the last three years. It provided food and non-food relief to meet their essential needs.

This comes at a time when Bangladesh is hosting approximately 1mn Rohingya refugees, and QC is working in co-ordination and collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh to respond to their humanitarian needs caused by the displacement.

In 2021, approximately 30,000 refugees were relocated to Bhasan Char to ease congestion in the refugee camps. As of the latest UNHCR figures, nearly 32,560 Rohingya refugees reside on the island and the government plans to relocate up to 100,000 Rohingya refugees to the island in phases.

Researcher explores role of higher education amid climate crisis, AI

The future of higher education, the forces driving its transformation and its potential to provide solutions to an increasingly unstable world were explored by the internationally known futurist, researcher and author Dr Bryan Alexander during a public talk at Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q).

Touching on the themes of his award-winning book, *Academia Next: The Futures of Higher Education*, Dr Alexander considered the trends being shaped by artificial intelligence (AI) and climate change, which he termed "the biggest challenge facing higher education and the human race."

A senior scholar at Georgetown University in Washington, DC, Dr Alexander first explored the cultural attitudes towards AI, and its present and future value in higher education.

"We're kind of freaked out by AI when we logically use it, but we're also scared that it's going to clog our labour market, that it may be inhumane, or of it becoming the terminator," he said, identifying the key fears around AI. He went on to explain the positive uses for AI, such as collaboration, brainstorming, and simulation, arguing for the need to prepare students for the changes ahead, whether those come in the form of new jobs that do not currently exist, or having to work more closely with AI in almost every job and profession.

Dr Alexander then turned to the subject of climate change, warning that the transformations taking place affect everything from physical spaces to what is being taught, how, and to whom. Referencing his new book, *Universities on Fire: Higher Education in the Age of Climate Crisis*, he highlighted several solutions to this crisis, but emphasised the power of higher education.



Dr Bryan Alexander during the talk at GU-Q.

"What we know about climate change now is driven largely by academic research; researchers around the world are studying this problem, so universities and colleges play a contributory role to our understanding." He also pointed to new approaches, which highlight higher education's "immense intellectual horsepower across all domains," including campus movements which creatively imagine positive human experiences in response to climate change.

Dr Alexander's talk also explored the impact of demographic changes and global geopolitical instability on universities, and the pressure to improve the quality and quantity of students. "We may see more general support for students, services for taking care of students' mental, spiritual, and physical health, helping them with politics or careers. In Georgetown culture, it's called 'cura personae' (care for the person). We may also see curricular changes start to happen," he suggested.

With universities responding in different ways, he discussed the adoption of the international university strategy, where campuses become a place to encounter multiple ethnicities, religions, and languages, and understand global cultures and the global economy. It is a direction where Qatar is ahead of many other countries, he noted.

HBKU invites applications for 2024-25 academic year

Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) has invited prospective students to learn more about the university and its range of multidisciplinary programmes for the 2024/2025 academic year.

To assist and inspire potential applicants, HBKU has scheduled several outreach initiatives, including an upcoming Open House. To be held in-person on February 14 at Minaretein, Education City, Open House is an opportunity to meet the deans of HBKU's six colleges, internationally renowned faculty, and admission staff, as well as discuss course content, admission requirements, research opportunities and more.

Dr Michael J Benedik, HBKU provost, said: "Individuals hoping to advance their academic careers, conduct groundbreaking research, or strengthen professional skills will find that HBKU provides an integrated, cutting-edge teaching and research environment where they can excel and achieve their desired impact. We encourage everyone to attend the Open House and discover how the university inspires a mindset of continuous growth and prepares students to shape novel solutions regardless of their field."

HBKU offers 40 masters and



HBKU will hold outreach initiatives for admission to 2024/2025 Academic Year.

doctoral degrees and one bachelor degree through its six colleges, the College of Islamic Studies, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, College of Science and Engineering, College of Law, College of Health and Life Sciences, and College of Public Policy. These degrees cover fields of study that address critical challenges facing Qatar and the world and position our graduates for exciting and transformational career opportunities.

Students also benefit from access to HBKU's vibrant research ecosystem, including Qatar

Biomedical Research Institute, Qatar Computing Research Institute, and Qatar Environment and Energy Research Institute. Both the colleges and institutes cover five focus areas in their research - Artificial Intelligence, Precision Health, Progressive Education, Social Progress, and Sustainability.

The deadline for international applicants to join HBKU in Fall 2024 is February 1. The deadline for Qataris and residents (with eligibility for merit-based funding) is March 14, with last-minute applications closing on May 1.

Aid groups slam suspension of funding for UN agency in Gaza

AFP
Paris

Aid groups condemned yesterday a decision by several countries to suspend funding for the UN Palestinian refugee agency (UNRWA), pointing to a "worsening humanitarian catastrophe" and "looming famine" in Gaza.

A number of key donors to UNRWA - including the US, Germany and Japan - have announced they are suspending funding to the agency over Israel's accusations that some of its staff were involved in the October first week Hamas fighters' storming of the country.

UNRWA has fired several employees since Israel's accusations and promised a thorough investigation into the claims, which were not specified.

The two dozen top charities, including Oxfam and Save the Children, stressed the UN Relief and Works Agency was the main provider of aid to millions of Palestinians in Gaza and the wider Middle East.

"The suspension of funding by donor states will impact life-saving assistance for over 2mn civilians, over half of whom are children," the NGOs said in a joint statement.

"The population faces starvation, looming famine and an outbreak of disease under Israel's continued indiscriminate bom-



A man walks near a facility of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in the city of Jenin in the occupied West Bank, yesterday.

bardment and deliberate deprivation of aid in Gaza." A total of 152 UNRWA staff had already been killed and 145 of the UN agency's facilities had been damaged by bombardment, according to the statement, issued in English by the Norwegian Refugee Council, on behalf of the aid groups.

"If the funding suspensions are not reversed, we may see a complete collapse of the already restricted humanitarian response in Gaza," they said.

The NGOs said more than a million displaced Palestinians were taking shelter in or around 154 UNRWA shelters, stressing that the agency has been working in "near impossible circumstances." "Countries must reverse these funding suspensions, uphold their duties towards the Palestinian people and scale up humanitarian

assistance for civilians in dire need in Gaza and the region." On Friday, the UN's top court said Israel must prevent genocide in its war in Gaza and allow aid into the besieged Palestinian territory, but stopped short of calling for an end to the fighting.

On Saturday, Israel said it would seek to stop UNRWA from operating in Gaza after the war.

The World Health Organisation said yesterday that the row over funding for the UN agency for Palestinian refugees was distracting from the dire humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip.

Israel's relentless military offensive since October first week has killed at least 26,751 people in Gaza, most of them women and children, according to the health ministry in the densely populated Hamas-run territory.

UK's Cameron says recognising Palestinian state could help end conflict

AFP
London

The British government insisted yesterday that its stance on the Middle East peace process remained unchanged after Foreign Secretary David Cameron suggested the UK could soon recognise a Palestinian state.

Cameron's comments were welcomed by the Palestinian ambassador in London but sparked a backlash from Conservative

MPs who said early recognition would reward Hamas for its storming of Israel.

Hamas fighters triggered the Gaza war after the storming of Israel in the first week of October.

Israel's subsequent relentless military offensive has killed at least 26,751 people in the Palestinian territory, most of them women and children, the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said.

Cameron told a reception for Arab ambassadors at the UK parliament on Monday of the need to give the "Palestinian

people a political horizon", amid diplomatic efforts to end the Israel-Hamas war.

He said recognising a Palestinian state would help make the two-state solution – currently rejected by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu – an "irreversible process".

"We should be starting to set out what a Palestinian state would look like – what it would comprise, how it would work," he said.

"As that happens, we, with allies, will look at the issue of recognising a Palestin-

ian state, including at the UN. "This could be one of the things that helps to make this process irreversible." The Palestinians' ambassador to the UK, Husam Zomlot, called Cameron's words a "significant" moment. But Cameron's fellow member of the Tory party, Theresa Villiers, said bringing forward the recognition of a Palestinian state would "reward Hamas".

The UK has long supported a two-state solution, where Israelis and Palestinians could live side by side in separate countries as per UN resolutions. Down-

ing Street said the UK's position had not changed.

"We've always been clear that we will recognise a Palestinian state at a time it best serves the cause of peace, and we are committed to the two-state solution," Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's spokesman told reporters.

Cameron, who was prime minister from 2010-2016, is visiting the Middle East this week – his fourth visit to the region since being appointed foreign secretary in November.



A woman consoles the mother (right) of Mohamed al-Ghazzawi and Basel al-Ghazzawi, two of three Palestinian men who were killed when undercover agents raided the Ibn Sina hospital in the city of Jenin, as she mourns during their funeral in the occupied West Bank city, yesterday.

Three Palestinian fighters killed in raid on West Bank hospital

Reuters
Jenin

Israeli commandos disguised as medical workers and Muslim women burst into a hospital in the occupied West Bank yesterday and killed three Palestinian fighters, one of them lying paralysed in bed, witnesses and authorities said.

The Israeli military said the three fighters were killed in a joint undercover operation by the army, Shin Bet security service and border police in the Ibn Sina hospital in Jenin, in the West Bank.

It identified one of the men as Mohamed Walid Jalamna, a Hamas member.

The military said the two others, the brothers Basel al-Ghazzawi and Mohamed al-Ghazzawi, belonged to the Jenin Brigade and the armed wing of Islamic Jihad.

The Palestinian health min-

istry confirmed the deaths and called on the UN to guarantee protection for health centres.

"The occupation is committing a new massacre inside hospitals," it said in a statement.

CCTV footage from the hospital showed a group of about 10 people, dressed variously in civilian clothes and medical garb and including three in headscarves and women's clothing, pacing through a corridor, armed with assault rifles and moving into the hospital.

The hospital's director, Dr Naji Nazzal said the Israeli team had entered the hospital at around 5.30am (0330 GMT) and made its way stealthily to the third floor, ringing the bell to enter the ward where the men were sleeping.

"They executed the three men as they slept in the room," he told Reuters. Hours later, a bloodied blue hospital pillow pierced by a bullet remained on a bed, while a folding bed nearby was also stained with

blood, apparently from a shot to the head. Nazzal said Basil Ayman al-Ghazzawi had been receiving treatment since Oct 25 for a spinal injury which had paralysed him.

The Islamic Jihad fighter group said the al-Ghazzawi brothers were members of its armed wing, while Hamas confirmed that Jalamna belonged to its Al Qassam Brigade.

The dramatic operation in the early hours of the morning was the latest in a series of incidents in the West Bank, which has seen an explosion of violence since the Hamas-led storming of Israel in the first week of October.

Jenin, in the northern part of the West Bank, has witnessed some of the biggest clashes, with repeated Israeli attacks on the densely packed Palestinian refugee camp adjoining the city.

Thousands of mourners poured into the streets of the camp during the day as the three men killed in the raid were buried.

CRIME

Kidnappers seize children from Nigeria school bus

Kidnappers attacked a Nigerian school bus and abducted five children along with their teachers, the school's founder said yesterday as outrage grows over insecurity in the country, AFP reported from Abuja. Kidnapping for ransom by criminal gangs is a major problem in Nigeria and the new government is facing an outcry over a recent spate of abductions. The gunmen in southwestern Ekiti state shot the bus's tyres and took the children captive on their way home from school on Monday afternoon, co-founder Gabriel Adesanya told AFP. He said the Emure Apostolic Faith Primary School pupils aged between eight and 14 were still missing along with the bus driver, conductor and two teachers. "I've never seen anything like this before," he said. "The parents are very worried." Police confirmed the abduction and said they had sent officers "to ensure the victims are rescued and suspects arrested". Footage shared online - which AFP has not been able to verify - showed an empty school bus and abandoned belongings. "There is no security in our country," a man at the scene says in the clip.

POLICY

Tunisia extends state of emergency until Dec 31

Tunisian President Kais Saied has extended a long-running state of emergency by 11 months until Dec 31, 2024, the official gazette showed yesterday, Reuters reported from Tunis. The North African country has been under a state of emergency since 2015 after an attack in which several presidential guards were killed.

Zimbabwe opposition leader freed from pre-trial detention

Reuters
Harare

A Zimbabwean court yesterday freed opposition politician Job Sikhala after nearly 600 days of pre-trial detention on charges of inciting public violence in 2022.

Sikhala, 51, a leader in the opposition party Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC), has been arrested dozens of times since he began his political career in 1999. He was jailed in 2022 for obstruction of justice and inciting public violence after saying that the ruling party, ZANU PF, had killed an opposition activist, which it denied. He denied all charges against him.

Yesterday, a Harare magis-

trate convicted him of inciting public violence but gave him a suspended two-year sentence because he had already spent so long in jail. "He is now a free man. He is going to come out today," his lawyer, Harrison Nkomo, told journalists outside the court, where Sikhala's supporters sang and danced in celebration. Nkomo added that his client, a lawyer, would appeal against the conviction.

"We are not resting. What we want is an acquittal," he said.

Kept in the high-walled Chikurubi maximum prison in Harare which houses Zimbabwe's most dangerous criminals, Sikhala had written spirited letters calling for solidarity.

He is the only Zimbabwean politician to have endured such a long pre-trial detention.



Supporters of Zimbabwe's main opposition party, Citizens for Coalition for Change (CCC), celebrate after Job Sikhala was given a suspended sentence at the Harare Magistrates Court, yesterday.

Palestinians in Lebanon protest halt in funding to UN agency

AFP
Beirut

Dozens demonstrated yesterday outside the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees in Beirut against several countries' decision to suspend funding for the body after Israel charged some staff participated in Hamas' October first week storming of the country.

At least 12 key donor countries have said they will halt funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency following the accusations, while UNRWA has fired several employees and promised a thorough investigation into the claims.

"We are afraid for the future of UNRWA," said Palestinian refugee Abu Mohamed, 65, who attended the protest organised by Hamas in Lebanon.

"All our children study in UNRWA schools and most of our medical care is covered by the agency," he said, urging countries "to reverse their decision".

"The suspension of aid would be catastrophic from a social and humanitarian perspective," he added.

UNRWA is charged with providing humanitarian aid and protection for Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank,



Palestinian refugees gather outside the offices of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, in Beirut, yesterday, to protest against some countries' decision to stop funding the organisation.

including east Jerusalem. Lebanon hosts an estimated 250,000 Palestinian refugees, according to UNRWA, while almost double that number are registered for the organisation's services. Most live in poverty.

"Even though I have a job, UNRWA helps me pay my rent and buy food," said Dima Dahouk, 40, a Palestinian and the sole breadwinner for her four children.

"My son who dreams of becoming an engineer had to temporarily drop out of school" to help support the family, she said.

"The situation is terrible," she added, amid a four-year economic crisis in Lebanon that has plunged most of the population into poverty.

Aid groups yesterday condemned the countries that suspended funding to UNRWA, pointing to a "worsening humanitarian catastrophe" and "looming famine" in Gaza. The World Health Organisation warned the funding row was distracting from the humanitarian disaster in the Palestinian territory.

Raafat al-Murra, a Hamas official in Lebanon, said the UNRWA funding crisis had "dangerous repercussions for Palestinian refugees, particularly in Lebanon, where they depend mainly on UNRWA in the absence of aid from the Lebanese state". "We have called on the United Nations to take urgent measures...and look for more financing," he said.

Welcoming guests to embark on an opulent and enchanting journey to savor the magical flavors of India

"Dalchini" launches terrace dining with a brand new avatar at Centara West Bay Doha

Centara West Bay Hotel & Residence Doha, one of the most iconic & prestigious five star hotels in the West Bay area, which offers a brilliant concept of hospitality uniquely blending the charm of Asian heritage with Qatari and Arab legacy and warmth, has unveiled the brand new look of the famous and renowned Indian restaurant "Dalchini". The highly acclaimed restaurant is all set to mesmerize its esteemed guests with the launch of terrace dining



Beside the enhanced new menu and unique food presentation, the latest addition to "Dalchini" is the newly designed opulent outdoor terrace area, that is in sync the management's vision and commitment to providing an exceptional dining experience for the guests, and become the preferred destination for those looking for an opportunity to enjoy delicious food in the open air.

On this occasion, Mr. Sean Spinks, General Manager of Centara West Bay Hotel & Residences commented: "We are pleased to witness the reopening of Dalchini, Doha's renowned Indian restaurant, with its new outdoor terrace area so that guests can enjoy a unique experience in a delightful ambience, and immerse themselves in a completely new experience in the world of hospitality, through which we will provide the opportunity for connoisseurs and lovers of Indian cuisine to indulge in our sophisticated and unique signature recipes. The concept of Dalchini is based on presenting traditional Indian culinary in an unparalleled creative manner, with a focus on quality and diversity to suit all tastes in a pristine setting full of opulence and luxury."

From his side, Mr. Mohammad Zameer, the recently appointed Director of Sales and Marketing added, "Through the reopening of Dalchini in its new avatar, we seek to enrich the luxury restaurant sector in Doha, and we are fully confident that the new menu and the restaurant's splendid ambience will provide a unique concept that reflects the perfect blend of the harmony and authenticity of diverse cuisines of the Indian regions and the local warmth and hospitality, to provide our customers and guests with a distinctive experience that suits all tastes and meet all aspirations."

through a diverse and rich selection of succulent foods and delicious dishes.

The thoughtful design of the terrace dining is evident from the moment a guest walks to dine, immediately creating a sense of place and building anticipation for the unforgettable experiences that await. This relaunch is aimed for guests to embark on an enchanting and opulent journey and indulge in the diversity of India's regional cuisines.

Located on the ground floor, "Dalchini" Restaurant offers an innovative blend of authentic and traditional Indian culinary in a modern and exceptional atmosphere, highlighting the ancient trade routes, exotic history, and the explosion of ideas that emerged from the exchange of precious spices, philosophies, and cultures. Moreover, the restaurant provides an innovative menu catering to both vegetarian and non-vegetarian patrons during lunch and dinner, in addition to a special Friday brunch.



New Hong Kong law to expand security control

AFP
Hong Kong

Hong Kong's leader John Lee yesterday announced that the city would urgently create a new security law to crush pro-independence threats, nearly four years after authorities extinguished a huge democracy movement.

The law will expand on legislation imposed by China in June 2020 to silence dissent, adding in crimes such as insurrection and external interference. Critics of the existing security law have said it has affected Hong Kong's status as an international hub, and curbed freedoms the city had long enjoyed.

The new law, which the Hong

Kong government said it would open up to public consultation, will bolster the authorities' ability to crack down on perceived threats.

"While the society as a whole looks calm and very safe, we still have to watch out for potential sabotage and undercurrents that try to create troubles," Lee told a press conference.

He also warned about the proliferation of "independent Hong Kong" ideas. "The threats to national security are real... we don't want to go through that painful experience again," he said, adding that "some foreign agents may still be active in Hong Kong".

Since Britain handed Hong Kong back to China in 1997, the city has been under a "one country, two systems" regime, in which the legal and court structures are sepa-

rate from the mainland. Under its mini-constitution, known as the Basic Law, Hong Kong is required to enact a law combating seven security-related crimes, including treason and espionage. The Hong Kong government's first attempt in 2003 to introduce its own national security law was shelved after half a million people took to the streets in protest.

The semi-autonomous territory has since seen several other waves of dissent, including in 2019 when hundreds of thousands of people participated in sometimes violent protests, calling for greater freedoms. In response, Beijing imposed in 2020 a national security law to punish four major crimes - secession, subversion, terrorism and collusion with foreign forces - with sentences ranging up to life

in prison. Since then, 290 people have been arrested in Hong Kong on national security grounds, including dozens of prominent elected politicians, democracy activists, rights lawyers, unionists and journalists. More than 30 of them have been convicted, while dozens have been held in pre-trial detention for more than two years.

Officials yesterday said the city's own law would also punish a raft of new crimes: treason, insurrection, espionage, destructive activities endangering national security, and external interference. Lee said authorities would engage with local and foreign groups in a consultation process until the end of February.

The rapid clampdown on freedoms in Hong Kong has quietened the city's once-vibrant civil

society space, with news outlets and radio programmes shuttered, and some foreign companies reconsidering their presence in the territory. Amnesty International's China director Sarah Brooks said the new law was intended to "double down on repression".

"This is potentially the most dangerous moment for human rights in Hong Kong since the introduction of the National Security Law in 2020," she said. But Lee downplayed the impact of Beijing's 2020 law, pointing to an increase in the number of foreign and mainland companies choosing to open in Hong Kong.

The sooner Hong Kong enacts the new law "we can focus comprehensively on economic development," Lee said. He added that the law would not require those

arrested in Hong Kong to be sent to mainland China - a key issue for Hong Kongers as it was an extradition bill proposed in 2019 that sparked that year's massive protests. John Burns, a political science professor of the University of Hong Kong, said that businesses prefer stability to the disruption seen during the 2019 protests. But he warned that both foreign businesses and NGOs might be spooked by the new law's broad definitions of state secrets and external interference.

"The state secrets aspects of the law on the mainland have ensnared foreign businessmen there. Businesses in Hong Kong may be worried about this," Burns told AFP.

"NGOs may be more cautious about fundraising under the new local security regime."

China, US resume talks to curb fentanyl trade

AFP
Beijing

China and the United States yesterday resumed talks on curbing the production of ingredients to make fentanyl, as the two powers seek to rebuild frayed channels of communication on hot-button issues.

The synthetic opioid, many times more powerful than heroin, has caused an epidemic of addiction in the United States - responsible for 100,000 overdose deaths a year, officials say. Washington's allegations that Beijing is complicit in the trade have long been yet another source of contention between the United States and China, at loggerheads in recent years over everything from trade to human rights and the self-ruled island of Taiwan.

At a summit in November, presidents Xi Jinping and Joe Biden agreed to do more to co-operate on tackling companies that manufacture the precursor chemicals to make fentanyl and on cutting financing for the trade. Yesterday, a Washington delegation led by Deputy Homeland Security Advisor Jen Daskal arrived in Beijing for the inaugural meeting of a counter-narcotics co-operation working group.

She is accompanied by high-level US officials from the State Department, Treasury, Department of Homeland Security and Justice Department. After being greeted at Beijing's Diaoyutai guesthouse by Minister for Public Security Wang Xiaohong, Daskal underscored that "synthetic drugs are killing so many thousands of people".

"I've come from Washington with a very high-level delegation that represents the United States' whole-of-government approach to tackling the global challenge posed by illicit narcotics," she added. "President Biden sent such a significant delegation to underscore the importance of this issue to the American people," she said.

Wang, in turn, said the establishing of the China-US working group represented an "important common understanding" reached by the presidents last year. "Our co-operation once again shows that the China-US relationship gains from co-operation and loses



The delegates of the US-China Counternarcotics Working Group at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing.



Chinese Minister of Public Security Wang Xiaohong.

es from confrontation," he said, speaking through an interpreter.

Working-level China-US talks earlier in the day had been "in-depth" and "pragmatic," he added. "Our two sides agreed to follow the principles of mutual respect, managing differences and mutually beneficial co-operation as we work to carry on co-operation on counternarcotics," he said.

Wang said he hoped future meetings would see two sides "accommodating each other's concerns to enhance and expand co-operation to provide more positive energy for stable, sound and sustainable China-US relations".

The United States says it hopes the talks will "provide a platform



US Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy Homeland Security Advisor Jen Daskal (C) speaks during a meeting with Chinese Minister of Public Security Wang Xiaohong at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing.

to facilitate ongoing co-ordination designed to tackle the illicit production, financing, and distribution of illicit drugs". Xi pledged during his summit with Biden in November to clamp down on the trade. He also said that China "deeply sympathises" with victims of fentanyl. The US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) in the past previously described China as "the main source for all fentanyl-related substances trafficked into the United States".

And in October, the US Justice Department slapped sanctions on more than two dozen China-based

entities and individuals alleged to be the "source of supply" for many US-based narcotics traffickers, dark web vendors, virtual currency money launderers and Mexico-based criminal organisations.

Beijing has denied complicity in the deadly trade, touting its "zero tolerance" drug policies and insisting the roots of the addiction crisis lie in the United States. Since the summit China has shut down one company, blocked some international payments and resumed sharing information on shipments and trafficking, a US official said last week.

Taiwan People's Party the kingmaker in island's new parliament

AFP
Taipei

Taiwan's freshly elected lawmakers will meet from Thursday, with a new party enjoying an outsized influence over legislation after breaking through the self-ruled island's long-entrenched two-party system.

Taiwan's political landscape has been dominated for decades by two parties, the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and the opposition Kuomintang (KMT), both defined by how they would approach the democratic island's relationship with China - which claims Taiwan as its territory.

The DPP's Lai Ching-te won this month's election to be president, but neither of the major parties won enough seats to secure a majority in the 113-seat legislature.

Taiwan People's Party's (TPP) Ko Wen-je came last in the race to be president, but his party secured eight seats and a quarter of the votes to emerge as kingmaker in the new legislature.

When newly elected legislators take their seats on February 1, the first order of business will be to elect the speaker - an important role that will define Taiwan's legislative agenda. After that, whichever party has the TPP's support will have enough votes to pass legislation.

"For the first time ever, you have a viable third party option that... gets to play that decisive kingmaking minority party status in the parliament," said political analyst Wen-ti Sung.

TPP's arrival could mean a more diverse and vibrant democratic scene for Taiwan's future - or it could also translate to a logjam in parliament. But "a greater share of voters who previously felt underrepresented by existing political parties may now feel... a greater sense of empowerment", Sung said.

The ruling DPP has long portrayed itself as defenders of Taiwan's democracy, with current President Tsai Ing-wen and president-elect Lai, her deputy,

maintaining that the island is "already independent". Beijing rejects this position, and has cut off all high-level communications since Tsai's election in 2016. It has also upped the rhetoric in recent years on Taiwan's "unification", and increased military and political pressures on the island.

Opposition KMT - the oldest party in Taiwan - advocates for a more co-operative line, and sees the island's economic prosperity interlinked with closer ties with China. Ko has differentiated himself by saying it is pointless to argue over the two scenarios of "unification" or "independence", when there are "real problems" in Taiwan.

He appealed to voters by focusing his campaign on everyday issues like soaring housing costs and stagnating wages. This message resonated with supporters like Chen Jin-chi, who said she was sick of the "blue-green rivalry" - referring to the KMT and DPP's colours.

"At least three million people are no longer blindly supporting a certain party and are willing to... hear what this person has to say or what change he wants to bring," she told AFP. After eight years in power, the ruling DPP's brand as a progressive hope for the youth has also faded, and they are now regarded as part of the political establishment.

Critics, however, say his party's lack of ideological clarity could spell trouble in Taiwan's raucous political atmosphere.

Ko already had a public falling-out with KMT in the lead-up to the election, when the parties failed to form an alliance over a disagreement on who should be on the presidential ticket. He has been coy about who TPP will co-operate with in the legislature.

"Do you know what it means to be the 'crucial minority'? It means receiving numerous unwanted phone calls every day," Ko said last week, in his usual off-the-cuff manner.

On Monday, both KMT and DPP's prospective speaker candidates visited TPP's legislators to seek their backing, but no decision was announced.

Vietnam, Philippines seal deals on South China Sea security

Reuters
Hanoi

Vietnam and the Philippines agreed yesterday to boost co-operation among their coastguards and to prevent untoward incidents in the South China Sea, in an announcement during a state visit to Hanoi by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

The two Southeast Asian countries have competing claims over some parts of the South China Sea, a conduit for \$3tn of annual shipborne trade that China claims almost in its entirety.

The two memoranda of understanding on security covered "incident prevention in the South

China Sea" and "maritime co-operation" among coastguards, according to a Vietnamese official who announced the deals during a formal ceremony in the country's presidential palace.

The agreements in Hanoi, details of which were not disclosed, could risk angering Beijing, especially if they paved the way for future compromises on disputed claims.

China tends to view progress in the resolution of border disputes among other claimants with scepticism.

Both Hanoi and Manila have had run-ins with China's coastguard in the past, but altercations have been frequent in the last year between vessels of China and US-

ally the Philippines, adding strain to deteriorating relations. Before meeting Vietnam's President Vo Van Thuong, Marcos said Vietnam was "the sole strategic partner of the Philippines" in Southeast Asia and stressed that maritime co-operation was the foundation of that relation.

"The world and regional situation is evolving in a rapid and complicated manner and therefore we need to unite and co-operate more closely," Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh said, noting Marcos' visit helped boost bilateral relations.

Vietnam, one of the world's biggest rice exporters, also sealed agreements with the Philippines, a top importer of the grain, covering

rice trade and agriculture co-operation. In his two-day visit to Hanoi, Marcos is meeting Vietnamese leaders, but not Communist Party chief Nguyen Phu Trong, according to official schedules, in what would be Trong's third consecutive absence from meetings with visiting leaders this month.

Trong, 79, however attended a parliament's session in mid-January, partly dispelling concerns about his health after he was not included in official schedules of visiting leaders from Laos and Indonesia.

Before meeting Vietnamese political leaders yesterday, Marcos met Pham Nhat Vuong, the head of Vingroup, Vietnam's largest conglomerate, on Monday.

Bangladesh reports first death from Nipah virus this year

Reuters
Dhaka

Bangladesh reported on Monday its first fatality this year from the brain-damaging Nipah virus when a man died after drinking raw date juice. The virus, transmitted to humans through contact with bodily fluids of infected bats, pigs or other people, was first identified in 1999 during an outbreak affecting farmers and others in contact with pigs in Malaysia.

Since then it has led to outbreaks in Bangladesh, India and Singapore, killing more than 160 people in Bangladesh. The nation's first case of 2024 was reported in Manikganj, some 50km from the capital Dhaka, said Tahmina Shirin, director of

the health ministry's Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR).

"The sample was sent for a laboratory test and it turned positive. We came to know that the person drank raw date sap," she told Reuters. The health ministry has warned people against eating fruits partially eaten by birds or bats, and consuming raw date juice.

There are no treatments or vaccines for the virus. A total of 10 people among 14 infected with Nipah virus in Bangladesh died in 2023, the highest number of fatalities in seven years, according to the IEDCR. The infection can cause fever, headache, cough and difficulty in breathing, with brain swelling likely to follow. Its fatality rate is estimated at 40% to 75%, according to the World Health Organisation.

Queen Camilla takes the public reins in King Charles’s absence

AFP
London

Queen Camilla will be the most high-profile public face of the British monarchy as her husband King Charles III and his daughter-in-law recuperate from surgery. Charles, 75, spent three nights in hospital recovering from an operation on an enlarged prostate, and was discharged on Monday.

Catherine, Princess of Wales, 42, also had abdominal surgery at the same private clinic, and is now back home with her husband, Prince William, and their three children.

With Charles and Kate facing weeks of rest and recuperation, and heir to the throne William, 41, tending to his wife, the burden of public engagements has now fallen largely on the 76-yearold queen.

It also means greater roles in the short term for the king’s only sister, Princess Anne, 73, and the younger of his two brothers, 59-year-old Prince Edward. Charles’s recuperation could last up to a month, according to media reports, while Kate is expected to be out of action until at least Easter on March 31, her Kensington Palace office has said.

The king has won plaudits for being open about his condition but no reasons have been given

for Kate’s admission to hospital, although officials said it was not linked to cancer.

Camilla visited Charles every day during his brief stay in hospital, despite a busy schedule.

On Tuesday, she hosted a reception at Windsor Castle, for authors, illustrators and bookbinders working on a collection of miniature books for the centenary of Queen Mary’s Doll’s House. This week she has three engagements, including two outside London. Edward last week spent four days on the remote British overseas territory of Saint Helena, some 2,000km west of Angola. He inaugurated a new international airport, planted a tree and met 191-year-old Jonathan,

the volcanic tropical island’s resident giant tortoise.

His wife Sophie stayed in London and undertook several engagements. The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, as they are formally known, are not royal big hitters with the public. Anne, also known as the Princess Royal, is more popular but her activities do not garner much press coverage.

Last week, she visited a prison in Norfolk, eastern England, and opened a new sailing centre. She also stood in for her elder brother at an investiture ceremony at Windsor. Opinon polling indicates that younger people are less interested in the British monarchy and the current situation robs the

institution of its two star younger members.

Both had been expected to attend the Bafta film awards – the biggest night in British cinema – in February, and reportedly also visit Rome. William, whose mother was the late Princess Diana, is the most popular “working royal”, with a 68-percent favourable opinion rating, according to a recent YouGov survey.

Anne was next on 67 percent, followed by Kate on 63 percent. Charles was in sixth place on 51 percent, with Edward on 42 percent and Camilla on 41 percent. The number of working royals – a member of the family who represents the king at official engage-

ments – has dwindled in recent years. Charles’s younger son Prince Harry and his wife Meghan quit royal life in early 2020 when they settled in California.

Prince Andrew – the king’s other brother – has been sidelined since 2019 because of uproar at his friendship with the late US financier Jeffery Epstein, a convicted paedophile. Age is also catching up on other members, with the late Queen Elizabeth II’s cousin, Prince Richard, Duke of Gloucester, now 79, and his wife, Birgitte, 77.

Two other cousins of the late queen, Princess Alexandra, and Prince Edward, Duke of Kent, are 87 and 88 respectively, and appear increasingly frail.

N Ireland deal looks to end two-year political deadlock



Northern Ireland Deputy First Minister and Irish republican Sinn Féin party Northern Leader Michelle O'Neill (right), flanked by Sinn Féin Leader Mary Lou McDonald (centre) speaks during a press conference at the Parliament buildings, in Stormont.

AFP
Belfast

Northern Ireland yesterday moved a step closer to ending a near two-year political deadlock after the main pro-UK party finally endorsed a deal with London aimed at reopening the region’s assembly.

The Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) walked out of the regional power-sharing government in February 2022 in protest at post-Brexit trade arrangements for Northern Ireland, which has the UK’s only land border with the European Union. DUP leader Jeffrey Donaldson said the agreement with London – approved in an internal vote at a closed-door meeting in Lisburn, near Belfast – formed a basis to restore the Northern Ireland Assembly, that has been paralysed for nearly two years.

“The result was clear. The DUP has been decisive. I have been mandated to move forward,” Donaldson told reporters following a marathon five-hour meeting and vote. UK Prime Minister Rishi

Sunak called it a “positive step” towards restoring the institutions and “delivering for the people of Northern Ireland,” his spokesman said. Sunak’s Northern Ireland Secretary Chris Heaton-Harris told reporters that “all the conditions are now in place for the assembly to return,” with little opposition expected in Westminster.

The deal contained “significant changes... to make sure our internal market works properly”, he added, saying he did not believe it would require renegotiations with the EU.

An approved deal would allow the DUP and the nationalist pro-Irish Sinn Féin to elect a speaker for the Assembly as early as next week. It would also see Sinn Féin’s Michelle O’Neill become first minister – the first time a nationalist has held the post after her party overtook the DUP in the last Assembly election in May 2022. Mary Lou McDonald, leader of Sinn Féin, said that was of “very great significance” and she was optimistic the assembly would be back up and running before a February 8 deadline.

A key plank of the 1998 Good

Friday Agreement, which ended three decades of sectarian violence over British rule in Northern Ireland, was to keep an open border with EU member the Republic of Ireland to the south. But Brexit threw up a conundrum – how to protect the European single market and customs union if the UK was no longer part of it when there was effectively an open back door for goods to cross in and out via Northern Ireland.

The post-Brexit trading arrangements sought to square that circle, deciding that the EU-UK border for goods checks would run down the Irish Sea. Unionists are concerned the solution effectively puts Northern Ireland on the EU side of the border and the other three nations of the UK – England, Scotland and Wales – on the other.

They said that by keeping the province partly under EU law, that opened the door to Northern Ireland being reunited with the Irish Republic – a prospect they bitterly oppose. During protracted talks with London, the DUP sought to overhaul the trading rules, including reducing the number of checks on goods travelling between



British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Chris Heaton-Harris delivers a statement to media members near the Houses of Parliament in London.

Northern Ireland and mainland Great Britain.

The mothballing of the Assembly paralysed Northern Ireland’s power-sharing institutions and fuelled political uncertainty and industrial unrest in the region. Public services crumbled as budgets were put in cold storage. Earlier this month, 16 public service worker unions coordinated a mass strike over pay, the biggest indus-

trial action seen in Northern Ireland for decades. London has offered the region a £3.3bn (\$4.2bn) financial package to solve public service pay disputes on condition that the Stormont Assembly opens again. O’Neill told a news conference in Stormont that lawmakers needed to come together to tackle years of UK government underfunding. “We have work to do,” she said.

Why is Northern Ireland’s govt set to return after two years?

When and why did the DUP boycott Stormont?

The DUP walked out in February 2022 forcing its collapse in protest against post-Brexit trade rules for the province, arguing that it risked cutting Northern Ireland adrift from the rest of the UK. The rules were revised but the party said they don’t go far enough to protect Northern Ireland’s status within the UK.

Northern Ireland’s border with EU member Ireland to the south needs to be kept open under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement. But new checks on goods arriving in the province from mainland Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) – to ensure they don’t go on into the EU unchecked – effectively creates an internal UK border in the Irish Sea, the DUP says.

What has happened during the boycott

Civil servants have run Stormont departments with limited powers and reduced budgets, leading to a gradual decay in public services. Hospital waiting lists are the longest in the UK while crises in policing and environmental protection have also been blamed partly on the lack of top-level decision-making.

Morale among public service workers who have been denied pay increases has plunged, sparking mass strike action. Meanwhile the DUP urged further easing of post-Brexit trade barriers during protracted talks with the UK Northern Ireland Secretary Chris Heaton-Harris.

Now what?

Heaton-Harris set a new deadline of February 8 for calling a fresh Northern Ireland Assembly election if a Stormont executive is not formed. Donaldson said that details of the deal could be published “as early as tomorrow” (Wednesday), with London expected to pass legislation in the coming days. Hardline unionists have collected signatures from supporters around the province urging Donaldson against a “sell-out” and warned that restoration of Stormont without an end to the sea border could lead to street protests. (AFP)

Indian navy rescues two boats from Somali pirates in one day

The Indian navy rescued two Iranian fishing vessels that had been hijacked by Somali pirates in one day, India’s defence ministry said yesterday. The INS Sumitra patrol vessel rescued 17 Iranian crew members aboard one boat early on Monday before responding to another distress call to free 19 Pakistani nationals on another, the ministry said in a statement.

The rescues came amid a resurgence of Somali piracy in the Indian Ocean since last month following years without a major attack. The pirates appear to be taking advantage of instability around the Red Sea, where the Houthi militia has targeted civilian ships in what they say is a protest against Israel’s military campaign in the Gaza Strip.

The Houthis’ attacks have prompted retaliatory air strikes by countries including the United States and Britain, and analysts say they have diverted attention from the Somali piracy threat. Somali piracy peaked around 2011, costing the world economy some \$7bn a year, before international naval patrols and armed private guards managed to contain the threat. Until December, when the Maltese-flagged MV Ruen was seized, there had been no successful hijacking of a merchant ship by Somali pirates since 2017. — Reuters

More than 80% of English rivers polluted with phosphates: study

AFP
London

More than 80% of rivers in England have been polluted by phosphates, according to a study published yesterday that’s likely to focus more criticism on British water compa-

nies for their wastewater discharges. The first annual report from the water quality monitoring network Angling Trust said there was an “urgent need for action” over waterway pollution.

It said that “of the 163 rivers where regular samples were recorded, 83% failed to meet the phosphate standard for good eco-

logical status in at least one sample”. Phosphates in rivers mostly come from discharges from wastewater treatment plants and from its use on agricultural land. Excessive phosphates can deplete oxygen levels in waterways by encouraging explosive growth of algae and other aquatic plants.

“We need to see much more en-

forcement and an update of existing laws to tackle the scourge of river pollution and hold polluters to account,” said Jamie Cook, Angling Trust CEO. Much of the report was carried out by volunteers taking water samples across the country, with 240 fishing clubs monitoring water quality. UK water companies have been criticised for a number

of years for wastewater discharges into rivers and the sea due to a lack of investment in sewage networks, many of which date from the 19th century. Improvements would cost billions but the firms have accumulated more than £60bn (\$75bn) in debt since they were privatised in 1989 under prime minister Margaret Thatcher.

Gandhi’s death anniversary observed



India’s President Droupadi Murmu arrives to pay her respect at the Mahatma Gandhi memorial at Rajghat on Gandhi’s death anniversary in New Delhi yesterday. The death anniversary of Gandhi, who is widely known in India as Bapu (father), is also observed as Martyr’s Day in the country.



India’s Defence Minister Rajnath Singh pays his respect at the Mahatma Gandhi memorial at Rajghat in New Delhi.

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GULF TIMES

ESG faces tough times amid higher rates and investor exodus

A boom in the use of environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors in the financial world has fed scepticism that the approach is nothing more than a marketing gimmick, fuelling a backlash and regulatory crackdown.

And for the first time ever, ESG funds saw net global outflows amid a major exodus by US investors from such strategies.

US fund clients withdrew a net \$5.1bn in the final three months of 2023, according to a fresh analysis by Morningstar.

Combined with \$1.2bn in outflows in Japan, that was too severe a retreat for Europe's \$3.3bn of net inflows to bolster the global market.

In all, the global sustainable fund market experienced net redemptions of \$2.5bn in the fourth quarter, marking an historic low point for the industry.

ESG is part of a wider strategy known as sustainable investing. Broadly, the goals are to achieve societal impact, align with personal values or manage risks, proponents say.

But US scepticism toward ESG follows years of attacks by Republicans who accuse the strategy of being “woke” and anti-capitalist.

The retreat from ESG also lies in the failure of actively managed strategies to draw in clients, according to Morningstar analysis.

Even in Europe, fund flows were buoyed by \$21.3bn of allocations into passive strategies, while actively managed funds lost almost \$18bn.

The global sustainable fund market saw net redemptions of \$2.5bn in the fourth quarter, marking an historic low point for the industry

The “disappointing reality is that active managers failed again to prevent redemptions in a corner of the market where it’s easier for them to prove their worth,” according Hortense Bioy, global director of sustainability research at Morningstar.

“By contrast, passive funds demonstrated consistent resilience.”

In the US, meanwhile, the pace of outflows was almost double the \$2.7bn registered in the third quarter.

Much of that development should be seen against the context of persistently high interest rates, fears of a recession as well as anxiety relating to the spread of war. Even so, redemptions last quarter left a bigger dent in ESG funds than in conventional portfolios, the researcher’s data showed.

Net outflows represented a decline of 0.1% relative to total global sustainable fund assets. For the broader fund universe, net outflows were equivalent to 0.05% of the total, Morningstar said.

Europe’s banks are asking investors not to pay too much attention to a new green metric due to be published in in the coming weeks, as early estimates show the industry woefully behind where it needs to be.

In the US, ESG efforts have been derided by some state officials, claiming they prioritise liberal values at the expense of financial returns.

Some supporters think the term ESG has become so broad as to lose much of its meaning. Many point to the prevalence of greenwashing, which is when companies exaggerate the environmental benefits of their actions.

Other criticisms focus on the way fund managers rank companies by how they’re performing on ESG factors.

At the same time, ESG risks have become all the more prominent as extreme weather events and worker strikes have hurt automakers, insurers and travel companies.

Last year was the planet’s hottest on record (going back to 1850) by a substantial margin and likely the world’s warmest in the last 100,000 years, the European Union’s Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) has said.

Just as the world saw record land and sea temperatures in 2023, so some research models have for long suggested up to a quarter of global GDP could be lost if no action is taken to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

An industry shakeout is seen underway amid calls for tougher regulations to stamp out the false claims by fund managers.

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Will 2024 be the new 1933?

By Mark Jones

Dublin

On January 30, 1933, Adolf Hitler was appointed chancellor of Germany. To his supporters, it was a day of “national revolution” and rebirth. Germany, they believed, needed the restorative force of an authoritarian strongman after 14 years of the liberal-democratic Weimar “system.” That night, Hitler’s torch-bearing brownshirts marched through central Berlin to mark the dawn of a new era.

It was also a triumphant moment in the history of popular deception. Since the Weimar Republic’s early days, its politics had been defined by disinformation campaigns, including the lie that Weimar democracy was the work of a cabal of Jews and socialists who had “stabbed Germany in the back” to ensure its defeat in World War I.

Today, few people dispute that Hitler’s arrival was a turning point in world history, the start of a political process that would lead to World War II and the Holocaust. But Hitler did not “seize power,” as the Nazis later claimed. Instead, as his biographer Ian Kershaw has explained, he was “levered into power” by a small group of influential men.

One of those men was Franz von Papen, who served as chancellor in 1932. He (infamously) thought that Hitler and the Nazi Party – by far the largest party after the Reichstag elections of 1932 – could be used to advance a conservative agenda. Similarly, Germany’s president, former Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg, wanted to use Hitler to restore the monarchy.

But these conservatives’ plans were soon swept away by Hitler’s ruthless leadership, Nazi violence, and the German public’s rush to join the regime and become a part of the promised national reawakening. The liberals and social democrats who opposed Hitler were either subjected to violence or caught up in their own optimistic escapism. As bad as things got, they assured themselves, Hitler’s rule would eventually collapse. Nazi infighting would surely bring an end to the new government.

Beyond liberals and socialists, a wider section of German society assumed that Hindenburg, who had promised to be president of all Germans, would keep Hitler on a leash, while others expected the army to do so. All had been fooled by Hitler’s ability to look respectable in the final years of the Weimar Republic.

Within 100 days of Hitler becoming chancellor, as historian Peter Fritzsche has shown, the Nazis’ ruthless drive for power became all too clear. By the end of the summer of 1933, German society had been brought into line. There were no more independent political parties, trade unions, or cultural organisations. Only Christian churches retained some degree of independence.

A year later, in the summer of 1934, Hitler ordered the murder of his internal party rivals and, following Hindenburg’s death on August 2, declared himself German Führer. His dictatorship was complete. By then, the first concentration camps were already up and running, and the economy was being put on the path to war.

This period of history remains all too relevant today. Hundreds of millions of people will vote in pivotal elections this year, and even though the warning signs are there, few commentators are prepared to say it out loud: 2024 might be the new 1933.

Just imagine the world a year from now, with disinformation having taken down democratic majorities around the world. President Donald Trump ends the United States’ support for Ukraine. Nato is no longer a restraint on Vladimir Putin’s dreams of building a new Russian Empire across Eastern Europe. A critical mass of far-right parties in the European Parliament blocks a unified European response. Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia are on their own. With the war in Gaza having expanded into a regional conflict, Putin seizes the opportunity to launch another blitz, accompanied by long-range missiles. And amid the chaos, China decides to seize Taiwan.

The prospects for 2024 are so bleak that many refuse to contemplate them. Just as liberals in 1933 predicted that Hitler would quickly fail, wishful thinking today is clouding our judgment. We are sleepwalking – to borrow Christopher Clark’s apt metaphor for the onset

of World War I – into a new international order.

In her masterful two-volume history of the interwar era, Zara Steiner refers to 1929-33 as the “hinge years”, when idealism in international relations was replaced by the “Triumph of the Dark”. But as late as 1926, liberals had seemed to be winning: French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand and his German counterpart, Gustav Stresemann, shared the Nobel Peace Prize for their work on Franco-German reconciliation, and Germany joined the League of Nations. Extreme nationalism seemed to be isolated in Mussolini’s Italy.

Faced with today’s global crises, there is no room for optimism. We are potentially in another hinge year. If liberals act now, they can still prevail.

In a promising sign, hundreds of thousands of Germans recently took to the streets to support democracy and diversity, and to denounce the far right. But demonstrations in one country are not enough. German liberals must be joined by others across the continent. A continent-wide demonstration would send a powerful message. The sense of urgency must extend upward, particularly to business leaders like JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon, who, hedging his bets, has already started cosyng up to Trump.

Not so long ago, European leaders came together and did whatever it took to save the euro, because they recognised that the single currency’s failure would end the European Union itself. Europeans now must demand the same urgency to meet this year’s threats. The EU needs a plan for a world without Nato. It needs new tools to deal with member-state leaders like Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico, both close to Putin. It is simply unacceptable that Orbán still wields a veto over EU decision-making.

In the US, political mobilisation is the big variable. Trump’s opponents must set aside their differences and unite behind President Joe Biden. We know all too well where disunity and naive optimism can lead. – Project Syndicate

● Mark Jones, Assistant Professor of History at University College Dublin, is the author of 1923: The Forgotten Crisis in the Year of Hitler’s Coup

Analysts slam verdict, question legitimacy of Pakistan election

Reuters

Karachi

Former Pakistani prime minister and cricket star Imran Khan’s jail sentence received sharp rebuke from analysts and experts who say it will have a direct impact on the forthcoming elections.

● Madiha Afzal, analyst & Brookings scholar

“It was apparent that the state was using the cipher case to sideline Khan completely. Khan’s (predictable) sentence is part of the (military) establishment’s usual playbook before elections.

“The irregularities of the trial have now cast an even greater shadow on polls that had already lost their credibility given the extent of pre-poll manipulation that’s taken place.”

● Michael Kugelman, Senior Associate for South Asia at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

“In terms of Khan’s electoral prospects, the impact of the verdict is purely symbolic. Khan had already received a separate prison sentence that prevents him from participating in polls.

“But the verdict also delivers a sharper blow to his broader politics. Khan’s populism has long revolved around fighting corruption and railing against what he views as US policy and pressure that hurt Pakistan’s interests.

“And yet he’s now been jailed for both corruption and for exposing what he describes, albeit wrongly, as plans for a US plot against him.”

● Amber Rahim Shamsi, political analyst and Director of the Centre for Excellence in Journalism

“The disorderly haste in which the cipher trial was concluded just over a week before Election Day validates Imran Khan and PTI’s stance that an expedient verdict is preferred over a just verdict.

“The verdict will cast a long and dark shadow over the fairness of the elections and the credibility of any incoming government to make the difficult decisions needed to set Pakistan on the right economic path.”

● Mazhar Abbas, Pakistani journalist and analyst

“His supporters may come out in large numbers to cast votes...The decision coming out just before elections will not only help him politically but it will also raise questions about the election’s credibility.”

● Mosharrar Zaidi, Pakistani writer, analyst and former policy advisor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

“Imran Khan’s jail sentence is another indication of the system-wide barrier to his participation in the political process. It will validate his supporters’ belief that the system is rigged to deny him and his party the path back to the prime minister’s office.

“Regardless of the way it is received, the judgment will not be able to withstand the scrutiny of an appeal because of a range of procedural issues.

“Lost in this fog of partisanship will be the

more serious question of whether leaders of a country should be bound by constraints like the Secrets Act, or whether the virtue of popularity insulates them from such restrictions. As evident in the case of Donald Trump and now Khan, in the age of populism these kinds of cases will only grow in quantum.”

● Suhail Warraich, Pakistani journalist and television host

“Pre-poll rigging has happened in every election. It’s happening this time around too. However, this time, it’s way more than ever before.

“After all this, it brings up the question of the credibility of the election. But because the country operates under a hybrid democracy, people accept whatever results the elections present.”

● Zaigham Khan, political analyst

“The situation is likely to have a disheartening impact on the voters and supporters of PTI, conveying the notion that their leader might not be released in the near future.

“Given the party’s strong dependence on Imran Khan’s charisma and his ability to mobilise support, this could cast uncertainty on the party’s future prospects.”

● Amir Zia, political analyst and journalist

“The sentencing of Imran Khan has intensified polarisation. The stage is set for a prolonged period of political tussle which has all the potential to destabilise Pakistan. This is not a good omen for the country.”

Khan given 10-year jail on poll eve

Reuters/AFP
Islamabad

A Pakistan court jailed Imran Khan for 10 years yesterday for what it deemed leaking state secrets, the harshest sentence the popular former prime minister and cricket superstar has received and announced just days before a general election.

The special court found Khan, 71, guilty of making public the contents of a secret cable sent by Pakistan's ambassador in Washington to the government in Islamabad, his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party said.

Former foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi was also sentenced to 10 years in the same case.

Khan had earlier been sentenced to three years jail in a disputed corruption case in August, which ruled him out of the public spotlight ahead of the February 8 election.

"You have to take revenge for every injustice with your vote on February 8," Khan said in a statement addressed to the electorate that was posted on his X profile.

"Tell them that we are not sheep that can be driven with a stick."

The court is likely to issue a written verdict within a day or two. Khan's PTI party said it would challenge the ruling. "We don't accept this illegal decision," Khan's lawyer, Naeem Panjutha, posted on social media platform X.

The PTI has not called for protests or demonstrations before the election. A bomb in Pakistan's Balochistan region killed three PTI members yesterday, the party said, hours after Khan was sentenced. There were no details of who was responsible.

Khan aide Zulfikar Bukhari told Reuters that the legal team was given no chance to represent Khan or cross examine witnesses. The proceedings were carried out in maximum security Adiala jail in Rawalpindi.

Another of Khan's lawyers, Ali Zafar, told ARY television that given the circumstances of the trial and sentencing, the chances of the case being quashed on appeal were "100%".

Bukhari called the conviction an attempt to weaken support for Khan. "People will now make sure they come out and vote in larger

- **Former FM Shah Mehmood Qureshi also gets 10 years in cipher case**
- **Legal team given no chance to represent ex-PM, cross examine: aide**
- **Verdict 'unacceptable' bid to influence general election, says party**
- **Lawyers to challenge verdict in higher court, say it will be quashed**



Former prime minister Imran Khan, left, with the-then foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi.



Mehriene Qureshi (right), wife of former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi with their daughter Gauhar Bano Qureshi, speak to the media after a special court verdict outside the Adiala jail in Rawalpindi yesterday. (AFP)

Reaction to the verdict on Page 10

numbers," he told Reuters.

His legal team was hoping to get him released from jail, where he has been since August last year, but the latest conviction means that is unlikely even as the charges are contested in a higher court.

PTI lawyers said they were ousted from the proceedings, denying their leaders fair representation.

"This is unconstitutional, this is against the principles of natural justice," barrister Salman Safdar told AFP.

Khan's sentencing just before the polls will "raise questions about the election's credibility", said Mazhar Abbas, a Karachi-based analyst.

About 127mn Pakistanis are eligible to vote in nine days, with Khan and PTI at the centre of debate despite being squeezed out of the limelight.

"This is a murder of justice," said Tauseef Ahmed Khan, a human rights activist and political analyst. "But his popularity among the people will grow in leaps and bounds as his sympathisers will increase."

When Khan was first arrested in May last year, riots broke out

in cities across the country. But his street power was killed by a subsequent military crackdown which saw thousands of supporters detained - 100 of whom are facing closed-door military trials - and dozens of senior leaders forced underground.

In Khan's northwestern power base province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa voters remained bullish about his prospects at the ballot box.

"Imposing a sentence will not affect Imran Khan and his party," predicted 33-year-old welder Inayatullah Khan in Peshawar city. "If he were in a coffin instead of jail, I would still vote for him."

Yesterday's sentence "will only prompt voters to express their anger on the ballot paper", added 37-year-old pharmaceutical worker Alif Rahman.

Pakistan's recovery from an economic crisis depends on political stability. The election comes as Pakistan is navigating a tricky recovery path under a \$3bn International Monetary Fund bailout that helped it narrowly avert a

sovereign default last year.

Khan has been fighting dozens of cases since he was ousted from power in a controversial parliamentary vote of no-confidence in 2022.

Khan says the secret cable mentioned in the case was proof of a conspiracy by the Pakistani military and the US government to topple his government in 2022 after he visited Moscow, just before Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Khan has previously said the contents of the cable appeared in the media from other sources.

Khan's PTI suffered a major setback this month when in a shocking move the Supreme Court upheld the Election Commission's decision to strip the party of its traditional election symbol, the cricket bat.

His candidates are now contesting as independents, many of them on the run amid a brutal crackdown backed by the military. Khan's media team posted a message from the jailed leader on X ahead of the verdict.

"These people want to provoke

you by giving me a harsh sentence in this case so that you go out on the streets and protest, then add unknown people to the crowd and then do another false flag operation," the post said.

As a result of the ongoing crackdown, PTI has moved most of its campaigning online, where it has been bogged down by state-imposed Internet blackouts.

Khan urged his supporters to vote for candidates backed by him. "This is your war and this is your test that you have to take revenge for every injustice by your vote on February 8 while remaining peaceful," the post on X said.

In a nation where literacy lags, icons are vital for identifying candidates on ballot papers and the Supreme Court injunction has effectively forced PTI hopefuls to run as independents.

When state media reported Khan's yesterday conviction they did not use his name, obeying strict censorship measures that have alarmed rights monitors.

Nawaz Sharif - head of one of the two dynastic parties that have historically helmed Pakistan - has returned from self-imposed exile and seen his myriad convic-

4 killed in explosion near PTI protest rally

At least four people were killed yesterday in a bombing near a Pakistan political rally, officials said, as the nation prepares to go to the polls next week.

Police in the Balochistan provincial capital of Quetta said a bomb planted on a motorbike detonated as supporters rallied for the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party of jailed ex-prime minister Imran Khan. "The PTI rally was passing by there but it is not clear whether the rally was a target or not," senior police official Farhan Zahid told AFP.

Waseem Baig, a provincial health department spokesman, said six people were wounded in addition to the four killed. In a statement, PTI said three of its activists were among the dead at the rally - a convoy of motorbikes and cars parading through the city to curry support for a candidate ahead of national elections scheduled for February 8.

A party spokesman told AFP it was too soon to say whether they had been deliberately targeted.

Pakistan's electoral commission said it was investigating.

The attack came just hours after PTI founder Khan was sentenced to ten years in prison on charges of having leaked classified state documents.

tions dissolve in the courts in a matter of days. Analysts say it is a sign the three-time former prime minister is the favoured candidate of the military, which has directly ruled Pakistan for roughly half of its history.

Farm uproar spreads in EU

Protests by angry farmers spread across Europe yesterday, as the French government scrambled to placate agriculture workers who have blocked motorways and moved in convoys of tractors towards Paris. Their complaints range from rising costs to meeting carbon-cutting targets, fuel prices, inflation, bureaucracy, and Ukrainian grain imports. The French mobilisation has blown up into a serious crisis for Prime Minister Gabriel Attal only three weeks into the job. Some 1,000 farmers with hundreds of vehicles blocked key roads into Paris for a second day, with some sleeping in their tractors overnight. Addressing parliament, Attal said his government stood ready to resolve the crisis and praised the agriculture sector as "our force and our pride". Agriculture embodied the "values of work, freedom and entrepreneurship", Attal said. "It is one of the foundations of our identity and our traditions."

EU parliament probes Russia spy claims against MP

The European Parliament yesterday announced a probe into a Latvian lawmaker accused in an investigative report of spying for Moscow over the past two decades. According to the Russian-language newspaper *The Insider* - an independent investigative outlet based in Latvia - Tatjana Zdanoka (pictured), who joined the European legislature in 2004, began collaborating with Russia's FSB security services the very next year. The extensive report, based on leaked e-mails between Zdanoka and her alleged Russian handlers, exposes how she acted as a "trusted asset of Russian intelligence", providing "explicit, detailed reports" on her work as a European legislator. The investigation carried out jointly with several other media,

including the Swedish newspaper *Expressen* and an Estonian website, says Zdanoka was "openly advocating" for Moscow in both Brussels and Riga throughout her tenure. Leaked e-mails refer to in-person meetings in Moscow or Brussels between Zdanoka and a Russian handler, as well as requests for Russian funding for her political activities both in Latvia and Brussels. European Parliament President Roberta Metsola "takes these allegations very seriously and is referring the case to the Advisory Committee on the Code of Conduct", Metsola's spokesperson said. "This means that investigations within the European Parliament have been opened." The question will also be on the agenda of a meeting today



between the parliament's political leaders. "We take note that these allegations have been reported in the member state of the MEP already for some time," the parliament's press service said, adding: "All MEPs are subject to the same rules... regarding

in power," said right-wing opposition leader Alberto Nunez Feijoo ahead of the vote.

"Sanchez wanted to bring Puigdemont to justice and now they are rolling out the red carpet for him. He left Spain in the boot of a car and now he'll return in Sanchez's Falcon," he jeered, referring to the prime minister's private plane.

Even if the bill eventually passes, it will face numerous hurdles before becoming law.

Feijoo's Popular Party (PP) has vowed to slow the bill's passage through the Senate, where it holds an absolute majority.

"It doesn't matter whether the bill passes or not... We are going to appeal against it in every possible way and we're going to ask for EU protection," Feijoo said.

The PP has already modified the procedural rules in the upper chamber and will request opinions and reports before amending it and sending it back to MPs for a final vote.

independence of the mandate or ethics." The parliament's statement also referred to potential follow-up action by Zdanoka's home country, Latvia. Questioned about the accusations against Zdanoka, the Kremlin's spokesman dismissed them as a politically motivated witchhunt and an echo of the anti-Communist fervour of the Cold War era.

"Do you remember McCarthyism in the United States?" asked Dmitry Peskov.

"How many people were arrested back then, thrown in jail after being accused of ties to Communists or the KGB? It's the same thing."

"We strongly condemn all of this," he added, saying the accusations flew in the face of Europe's "supposed democratic ideals".

EU moves to tap profits from Russian assets for Ukraine

AFP
Brussels

The EU has reached an agreement on a first step towards tapping profits from frozen Russian assets to help pay for rebuilding war-ravaged Ukraine, officials said.

EU ambassadors agreed on a plan to set aside the profits from the assets in order for them to eventually be used to help pay for Ukraine's reconstruction, the Belgian presidency of the European Union said on X late Monday.

The agreement moves forward a long and legally fraught debate about how to use Russian state assets that were blocked by Western institutions immediately in the wake of Moscow's all-out invasion of Ukraine nearly two years ago.

The EU has frozen some €200bn (\$220bn) of Russian central bank assets, with about 90 percent of those funds held by the international deposit organisation Euroclear, based in Belgium.

Simply confiscating all that money and giving it to Ukraine's reconstruction efforts is not seen as an option, as that could rattle international markets and undermine the euro.

Some countries, notably Belgium, had proposed a windfall tax on the frozen funds that could generate some three billion euros a year for Kyiv.

The European Commission made a cautious proposal that was put to all 27 EU member countries under which deposit holders like Euroclear would first have to separate interest or profits earned on the frozen assets and ring-fence them.

A second proposal was to be

put forward later on how the ring-fenced profits could then be shifted into a fund that would go to Kyiv.

Lithuania's ambassador to the EU, Arnoldas Pranckevicius, called the overnight preliminary agreement a "very important and long awaited decision".

But, he said on X, it was "only the beginning of the road," adding: "Now looking forward to the 2nd step proposal from the European Commission on the use of profits for reconstruction of Ukraine and the start of discussion on confiscating assets themselves."

The issue goes beyond the EU. The bloc acted in concert with the G7 group of wealthy nations to freeze the Russian assets.

The United States wants a collective G7 decision on how to tap the Russian money.

Diplomats say Washington is increasingly in favour of outright confiscation of all frozen Russian funds, but that the Europeans have pushed back on that.

The movement on the frozen funds issue comes at an otherwise difficult time for Ukraine as continued Western support runs into political headwinds in both Washington and Brussels.

In the United States, opposition Republicans are blocking further US funds and weapons for Ukraine in manoeuvring over domestic issues, notably migration.

And in the European Union, Hungary - whose leader Viktor Orban is close to Russian President Vladimir Putin - has blocked a 50-billion-euro EU financial lifeline for Kyiv.

A summit in Brussels tomorrow will again tackle that issue with hopes of persuading Hungary to drop its veto.



Ashghal measures in place to support Asian Cup

The Public Works Authority (Ashghal) has established a framework for the optimal testing and repairs of the dynamic message signs, lane control signs, CCTV and traffic signals in addition to providing the necessary support to implement road closures and diversions and installing directional signs during the AFC Asian Cup Qatar 2023 match days. This is aimed at contributing to the success

of the tournament, according to a post shared by Ashghal on its official X account. Engineer Ahmed al-Kubaisi (pictured), manager of Ashghal's Roads Operation and Maintenance Department, said that teams are working in co-ordination with the relevant entities to carry out the necessary road maintenance and traffic restrictions around stadiums and metro bus stations.



Snapshots from the exhibition.



NHRC opens human rights and football exhibition

The National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) has inaugurated the human rights and football exhibition at the Old Doha Port within the framework of raising awareness of human rights principles.

HE the NHRC Chairperson Maryam bint Abdullah al-Attiah said that the exhibits clearly focus on human rights values, equality, non-discrimination, repudiation of violence, as well as values of practicing sports and promoting unity among nations.

The exhibition showcases paintings by Qatari artist Ahmed al-Maadeed, which express art and language easily understood by everyone, in addition to expressing notions that connect the people of the world through societal integration and unity, spreading the spirit of hope and love among them, as well as build the future of football through voluntary collective work, HE al-Attiah added.

She said that the exhibition was inaugurated for the first time during the FIFA World Cup Qa-

tar 2022 tournament and successfully traversed numerous capitals of the world, starting from the UN headquarters in Geneva, then Algiers within the framework of spreading awareness as widely as possible, in addition to sharing knowledge and expertise with those who curate national human rights institutions and human rights defenders worldwide.

HE al-Attiah highlighted that the paintings depict expressions that overtly call for the importance of connecting sporting events with sustainable development goals and conserving the environment.

She added that the NHRC's pavilion primarily focuses on the sustainable development goals and environment protection ahead of the convention of the International Conference on Food Justice under the theme *From A Human Right Perspective - Challenges of Reality and Future Stakes* due on February 6-7.

The conference is aimed at sharing knowledge and expertise, build capacities, and review leg-

islation, policies, plans, and programmes that are relevant to food justice from human rights perspectives, in addition to setting frameworks for human rights workers to be a launching pad for them in the areas of food justice and human rights.

HE al-Attiah elaborated that the exhibition's paintings broadly express the rights of the vulnerable segments, particularly the rights of people with special needs to work and practice sports.

The official said that the inauguration of the human rights and football exhibition follows the success achieved by the Arabic Calligraphy Exhibition on Human Rights in Islamic Culture that has been hosted at numerous capitals of the world.

The NHRC has also inaugurated the painting of *Litaarafu*, which means "get to know each other", at the UN House in Doha.

It is an Arabic calligraphy painting on human rights in the Islamic culture. - QNA

UDST partners with Al Ahli Hospital to enhance healthcare learning, research

The University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Al Ahli Hospital to engage in collaborative work of mutual interest across a range of clinical, educational, community outreach, and research-related areas.

The memorandum was signed on UDST campus by UDST president Dr Salem Al-Naemi and Khaled al-Emadi, the chief executive of Medicare Group and Al Ahli Hospital, in the presence of other attendees from both organisations.

The aim of the agreement is to serve as a co-operative framework, ultimately helping to advance Qatar's healthcare education, research and services.

It will also help to foster a culture of knowledge sharing between the two entities.



UDST and Al Ahli Hospital officials at the signing ceremony.

"We at the UDST reaffirm our commitment as a leading national applied university to connect academia and the professional world," said Dr Al-Naemi. "This collaboration reflects our dedication to providing our students and faculty with real-world experiences and research opportunities."

"Together, we aim to contribute sig-

nificantly to Qatar's National Vision 2030, nurturing a generation of healthcare professionals equipped with practical skills and innovative insights, ready to make a meaningful impact in our society," he said.

"The importance of this collaboration is in providing practical training opportunities for students in healthcare specialties," al-Emadi said. "This contributes to en-

hancing and developing their practical and clinical skills."

"This collaboration is part of the Al Ahli Hospital's contribution to achieving the goals of Qatar Vision 2030," he added. "Both parties aim to qualify healthcare professionals to effectively meet the needs of the job market."

The MoU encourages the two organisa-

tions to work jointly on designing and developing academic pathways and higher degree programmes, including professional certificates and post-graduate studies for the healthcare sector.

UDST students will be able to take advantage of practical opportunities at Al Ahli Hospital, along with enhanced support for their capstone projects.

The agreement promotes the development of joint research and publications between the two institutions on projects that align with Qatar's national priorities, and enables Al Ahli Hospital practitioners to engage in specific teaching and project supervisory roles at the UDST, and vice versa for the university faculty.

Additionally, both institutions are committed to community outreach, including jointly organising health-awareness campaigns, seminars and workshops.

Dr Jane Goodall inspires children, parents and educators at Dadu Gardens

Dadu, Children's Museum of Qatar, hosted groundbreaking primatologist Dr Jane Goodall alongside more than 250 children and educators for a celebration of nature and environmental awareness at Dadu Gardens in the Expo 2023 Doha.

Through her community-based efforts, Dr Goodall reshaped several generations' understanding of environmental, conservation and humanitarian issues, founding the Jane Goodall Institute & UN Messenger of Peace in 1977.

Since then, she has been a beacon of inspiration for young leaders worldwide, with an emphasis on individual action for positive change.

Dadu, Children's Museum of Qatar director Essa al-Mannai delivered the welcome message and introduction, outlining the importance of inspiring role models like Dr Goodall, and of supporting the future generation to engage in a meaningful discussion on environmental, conservation and sustainability matters.

During the lively event, Dr Goodall shared insights from her work and experience, delighting everyone by performing chimpanzee calls with her own voice, and sharing personal stories of wonder and joy in nature.

She called upon the attendees to make a difference for animals, people, and the environment, and



Dr Goodall with children at Al Bidda Park.

to leave a positive footprint in their communities.

The event included a screening by the Doha Film Institute (DFI) of *Microplastic Madness* that showed how 56 fifth graders in the US made a difference in their community by

campaigning against single-use plastics.

These events were made possible through the collaboration of Dadu, Children's Museum of Qatar, the Jane Goodall Institute, and the DFI.



Essa al-Mannai and Dr Goodall at the event.