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Qatar reach Asian Cup final after feisty Iran battle

Qatar fans celebrate their team's win in the Qatar 2023 AFC Asian Cup semi-final against Iran at Al Thumama Stadium in Doha yesterday. **PICTURE:** Shaji Kayamkulam

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Defending champions Qatar last night beat Iran 3-2 in a fierce battle to reach the final of AFC Asian Cup for the second time in succession. Chief striker Akram Afif pro-

duced a dream performance at the Al Thumama Stadium where football icon David Beckham was one of 40,432 fans watching the intense semi-final. It will be the second final for Qatar over their 10 AFC Asian cup appearances. Iran opened the scoring through Sardar Azmoun in the fourth

minute. Qatar equalised when Jassem Gaber found the net in the 17th minute. Afif, Qatar's X factor, produced a deft long-range shot from the edge of the Iran box for the home side's second goal in the 43rd minute. Iran upped the ante in the second half winning a penalty that was easily converted in the 51st

Qatar's Almoez Ali (centre) celebrates scoring their third goal with teammates during their AFC Asian Cup semi-final against Iran at Al Thumama Stadium in Doha yesterday. (Reuters)

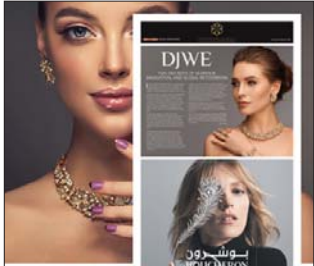
minute by Alireza Jahanbakhsh. Qatar, struggling for most part of the second half, produced the winner in the 82nd minute when Almoez Ali scored from inside the Iran box. This was Almoez's second goal of the tournament. Qatar, winners of the 2019 edition in the UAE, are now set to take on Jordan in the final at Lusail

Stadium on Saturday. First-time finalists Jordan made their way to the finale after upsetting South Korea 2-0 on Tuesday. "This victory was not easy," said Afif, who scored his fifth goal of the tournament to give Qatar a half-time lead yesterday. "We are very proud of ourselves and our fans. They deserve tonight's win and

hopefully the best is yet to come." "I think that we played a very big match," Qatar coach Marques Lopez, who took over from Carlos Queiroz only a month before the tournament, said yesterday. "The players did not spare any effort to-night. Now we have one final step left in order for us to defend our title." **Sport Pages 1, 4**

ISO 45001:2018 certification for HIA

The Qatar Company for Airports Operation and Management (MATAR) received the ISO 45001:2018 Occupational Health & Safety Management System Certification for Hamad International Airport (HIA). The certification was awarded by the BSI (British Standards Institution). To obtain the recognition, the HIA underwent a rigorous in-depth assessment which analysed the airports health and safety processes and procedures, leadership commitment, risk management, and controls in place. **Business Page 4**



Today's Gulf Times includes a 4-page supplement on DOHA JEWELLERY & WATCHES EXHIBITION

Israel rejects Hamas truce offer, sets sights on Rafah

AFP
Jerusalem

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday dismissed Hamas's demand for a ceasefire and ordered troops to move on the city of Rafah in Gaza's far south, where more than one million Palestinians have sought refuge. As the war entered a fifth month, Netanyahu told a televised briefing that he had ordered troops to "prepare to operate" in Rafah and that a "total victory" by Israel over Hamas was just months away. The comments appeared to dampen US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's hopes for a ceasefire and hostage release deal, even as he cautioned that more negotiations were needed. "There's a lot of work to be done, but we are very much fo-

An injured man looks on while standing next to the rubble of a destroyed building in Rafah.

cused on doing that work and hopefully being able to resume the release of hostages that was interrupted" after a week-long truce in November, Blinken said after talks with Netanyahu and other members of his war cabinet in Jerusalem. An Egyptian official told AFP that "a new round of negotiations" would start today in Cairo aimed at achieving "calm in the Gaza Strip". A Hamas source with knowl-

edge of the matter said the Palestinian group had agreed to the talks, with the goal of "a ceasefire, an end to the war and a prisoner exchange deal". Last week, a Hamas source said the proposed new truce calls for a six-week pause to fighting and a hostage-prisoner exchange, as well as more aid for Gaza, but negotiations have continued since. Blinken, on his fifth Middle East tour since the October 7 attack, also made a new plea for more aid into Gaza, whose 2.4 million people have endured a crippling siege and severe shortages of clean water, food, fuel and medical supplies. For now, the war raged on unabated in Hamas-ruled Gaza, where the health ministry said at least 123 people were killed in the past 24 hours and witnesses reported more heavy bombing of southern cities.

PM, Arab League chief discuss Gaza developments

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met, in his office yesterday, with Secretary-General of the Arab League Ahmed Aboul Gheit on his current visit to the country. During the meeting, they discussed the latest developments in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories and ways to enhance joint Arab action. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs also expressed Qatar's deep concern about the expanding violence in the region and its repercussions on regional and global stability. HE Sheikh Mohamed stressed the need to address the root causes of the various forms of escalation in the region by reaching a just, comprehensive, and sustainable solution to the Palestinian issue. For his part, the secretary-general of the Arab League appreciated Qatar's support for regional and international efforts aimed at achieving security and stability in the region. **(QNA)**

Qatar's medium-term growth to average 5.5%, says IMF

By Santhosh V Perumal
Business Reporter

Qatar's medium-term growth is expected to average around 5.5%, boosted by significant LNG (liquefied natural gas) production expansion (65% by 2028) and the initial reform gains from implementing the third National Development Strategy (NDS3), according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). As global commodity prices decline and domestic demand normalises, headline inflation is to moderate to around 2% over the medium terms against the projected below 3% in 2023, said the IMF after concluding its Ar-

Qatar's LNG production expansion, combined with increasing demand from Asia and Europe, is set to boost LNG export over the medium term

ticle IV consultation with Qatar. Highlighting that the fiscal and current accounts will likely remain in "sizeable" surplus, the Bretton Wood's institution said hydrocarbon prices are likely to stay elevated, albeit declining over the medium term. "Qatar's LNG production expansion, combined with increasing demand from Asia and Europe, is set to boost LNG export over the medium term," it said.

Amid high hydrocarbon prices, both fiscal and current account positions strengthened significantly in 2022, with surpluses reaching 10.5% of GDP (gross domestic product) and 26.5% of GDP, respectively. Finding that risks are broadly "balanced"; it said maintaining prudent macroeconomic policy and intensifying reform efforts will support Qatar's resilience to shocks and accelerate its economic transformation. The IMF suggested that the fiscal strategy should balance discipline with growth in the near term and facilitate the transition to more diversified, private sector-led growth over the medium term. **To Page 11**

NSD 2024 to be held under the slogan 'The Choice is Yours'

250 entities to participate in Sport Day events

QNA
Doha

The committee of the National Sport Day (NSD) announced yesterday that the activities of the 13th National Sport Day, to be held on Feb 13, will be under the slogan "The Choice Is Yours". Adviser to the Minister of Sports and Youth and head of the committee Abdulrahman bin Musallam al-Dosari stated in a press conference that the day greatly raises awareness of the importance of sports in the lives of individuals and society.

Choosing "The Choice Is Yours" as the slogan affirms the Ministry's message of the importance of exercising sports as a healthy lifestyle, he explained. Al-Dosari said that a number of young highly spirited Qatari

athletes in a diverse range of sports were chosen to be ambassadors for the National Sport Day 2024. He overviewed the events that Qatar is planning during the National Sport Day 2024 that are set to be held all over the country to promote physical activity and sports. Spreading the activities across all areas of the country is done in a way that allows everyone to participate and enjoy the day's activities. It is estimated that 250 governmental and non-governmental entities will be participating in the National Sport Day 2024, according to al-Dosari. **To Page 4**



Al-Muraikhi meets GCC chief



HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi met with the visiting GCC Secretary-General Jassem Mohamed Albudaiwi. During the meeting, they exchanged views on the progress of the GCC. (QNA)

Justice minister meets Iraqi counterpart



HE the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali bin Issa al-Hassan al-Mohannadi met with the visiting Iraq Minister of Justice Khalid Shwani. The meeting discussed the legal co-operation between Qatar and Iraq and ways to enhance it. It also discussed mechanisms to activate the memorandum of understanding for co-operation in the legal fields signed between the ministries of justice of the two countries. (QNA)

Al-Sulaiti meets Senegalese minister



HE the Minister of Transport Jassim bin Saif al-Sulaiti met with Senegalese Minister of Air Transport and Airport Infrastructure Development Antoine Mbengue. The meeting discussed co-operation relations between Qatar and Senegal in air transport and civil aviation as well as co-operation in the fields of training and civil aviation's technical skills enhancement. Senegalese ambassador to Qatar Dr Mouhamed Habibou Diallo attended the meeting. (QNA)

Cabinet approves proposal for Qatar Environment Day

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani chaired the weekly Cabinet meeting at the Amiri Diwan yesterday.

After the meeting, HE the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs issued the following statement:

The Cabinet considered the topics on its agenda as follows:

First, the Cabinet was informed of the Shura Council's approval of a draft law regarding extending the concession granted to Qatar Fuel Company (Woqod) to market, sell, transport and distribute gas and petroleum products.

Second, the Cabinet approved a draft Cabinet Decision amending some provisions of Decision No. 29 of 2020 on forming the National Counter-Terrorism Committee and determining its work system and the rewards for its members.

Third, the Cabinet approved the proposal of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change regarding the participation of

government agencies in celebrating Qatar Environment Day on February 26, under the slogan "Our Earth Our Legacy".

Fourth, the Cabinet took the necessary measures to ratify the unified administrative arrangement between the government of the State of Qatar and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) regarding the support for the Peacebuilding Fund.

Fifth, the Cabinet approved the following:

1- Draft memorandum of understanding for co-operation in the fields of social development and family between the governments of Qatar and Jordan.

2- Draft agreement between the governments of Qatar and Kazakhstan for co-operation in combating crime.

3- Draft memorandum of understanding between Qatar's Ministry of Communications and Information Technology and Kazakhstan's Ministry of Digital Development, Innovations and Aerospace Industry for co-operation in communications and

information technology.

4- Draft MoU for co-operation in social protection and development between the Ministry of Social Development and Family of Qatar and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Sixth, the Cabinet reviewed the following topics and took appropriate decisions thereon:

1- Report on the results of the participation of Qatar's delegation, headed by HE the Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, in the Haj and Umrah Conference and Exhibition for the year 1445 AH.

2- Report on the results of the participation of Qatar's delegation, headed by HE the Minister of Social Development and Family, in the 43rd session of the Council of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs.

3- Report on the results of the participation of Qatar's delegation, headed by HE the President of the National Cyber Security Agency, in the second meeting of the GCC Ministerial Committee for Cybersecurity. (QNA)

AlKhater meets UN rights official



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater met yesterday with the visiting UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Nada al-Nashif. The meeting discussed the latest developments in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories. HE AlKhater stressed the necessity of continuing the sustainable entry of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip and strengthening regional and international efforts aimed at an immediate ceasefire. In turn, the UN official voiced her appreciation for Qatar's ongoing efforts to resume the exchange of hostages and prisoners in Gaza. She stressed her support for Qatar's efforts to protect women in conflict zones and enhance their participation in all aspects of life. (QNA)

LuLu, ITA bring authentic Italian fare to Expo Doha

LuLu, a renowned name in the retail industry, has announced the inauguration of its special Italian-themed stall at the Farmer's Market in Expo 2023 Doha. The inauguration ceremony, graced by Italian ambassador Paolo Toschi and Italian Trade Commissioner in Doha, Paola Lisi, marked a significant milestone for LuLu and the Italian Trade Agency (ITA).

LuLu's regional director, Shaijan M O, regional manager, Shanavas P, and other senior officials from ITA and LuLu were present. Stall No. 26 & 27, the focal point of this culinary journey, are now open to the public every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday until February 24.

Visitors can immerse themselves in an array of fresh Italian fruits and vegetables, curated to offer an authentic taste of Italy. The stall also features a selection of premium olives, Italian chips, and select grocery products that reflect the rich culinary heritage of Italy.

LuLu and ITA have agreed on a collaboration named "Let's Eat Italian - Authentically Italian Products Promotion in Qatar 2023-2024." The inauguration of this stall at the Farmer's Market Expo is a testament to the commitment to bring high-quality Italian products to the Qatari market.

As part of the agreement, LuLu will operate this dedicated Italian stall. This initiative further strengthens the bond between LuLu and ITA, contributing to the promotion of Italian products in Qatar, a statement added.



Arab forum for social development kicks off

Under the auspices of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, the Arab high-level forum for multidimensional social development kicked off in Doha yesterday.

The two-day forum, which sees the attendance of Arab ministers and officials of social development as well as representatives of relevant regional and international organisations, aims to discuss several significant topics that represent a top priority for the joint Arab social development action, led by Second Arab Decade for Persons with Disabilities 2023-2032, the Second Arab Multidimensional Poverty Report, in addition to highlighting the sustainable solutions to improve the quality of life of Arab individuals and communities.

In her speech during the opening session, HE the Minister of Social Development and Family Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad said that the forum represents a new era of solidarity and co-operation to achieve Arab development goals so that production becomes a way of life for Arab societies and families, transcending the culture of consumption that does not build nations but rather damages their will.

She affirmed the determination to move toward comprehensive development and investment in the Arab human being. The first thing to invest in is his thoughts and mind, particularly the mentality of production and construction, so that our Arab societies rise with the help of their people,



self-sufficient with their wealth.

She pointed out that the culture of production is a pure Arab culture, inherited from the ancestors, and appeared as spontaneous behaviour for the Arab family to overcome the challenges it faces. The following generations kept the same approach and path so that their own hands would make their food, medicine, and livelihood. She stressed the importance of implementing the social dimensions of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) by eliminating poverty, ensuring the rights of children and persons with disabilities, and serving social development issues related to family, entrepreneurship, and establishing peace.

HE al-Misnad addressed the peace in the Middle East region, especially the Palestinian cause, and its connection to achieving the required development. She stressed that peace is the key condition for achieving develop-

ment and progress, otherwise, we will remain stuck in square one constantly thinking about merely healing wounds and ways to overcome disasters, unable to move forward towards achieving comprehensive social development.

She added that this delicate stage that the Arab region is going through requires more attention to weak and fragile groups and strengthening the role of the family to build promising generations that are aware of the issue of multidimensional development.

Egyptian Minister of Social Solidarity and President of the 43rd session of the Council of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs Nevin al-Kabbaj said that the forum for multidimensional social development represents a strong start to the work of the Council of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs during 2024.

Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit praised Qatar's efforts in supporting joint Arab action in social affairs. He said that the forum comes at a difficult time in the Arab region that is witnessing an unprecedented social and humanitarian catastrophe as a result of the heinous Israeli crimes in the Palestinian territories, violating all international and humanitarian laws and values. Aboul Gheit said that the forum with its high-level Arab and international presence mainly affirms the humanitarian and development support for the brothers in Palestine and the pledge to work to restore the fabric of Palestinian society, which embodies the values of resilience and attachment to the land. (QNA)

QC delivers winter aid to refugees in Jordan

A delegation of prominent Qatari donors, led by Ahmad Yousef Fakhroo, CEO's assistant for the Resources Development and Media Sector at Qatar Charity (QC), visited Jordan and delivered winter aid to refugees and underprivileged families.

The delegation also visited QC's Comprehensive Health Center in the Zaatari Refugee Camp and King Hussein Cancer Center and attended the events related to the sponsored orphans, as part of the 'One Heart' winter campaign. Distributed by the delegation, the assistance included 2,450 heaters and gas cylinders to benefit approximately 10,000 individuals.

It also comprised 350 vouchers for winter clothing for nearly 2,000 beneficiaries, blankets benefiting 2,000 people, 1,200 food packages for 6,000 persons, and food vouchers for 10,000 people across various governorates of Jordan.

The aid benefited a total of 30,000 people. The delegation also visited the homes of families sponsored by QC, assessing their needs.



Amir congratulates El Salvador president on his re-election

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani sent a cable of congratulations to El Salvador President Nayib Armando Bukele on his re-election for a second presidential term, wishing him success in performing his duties and the friendly people of El Salvador further progress and prosperity. His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani and HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent cables of congratulations to President Bukele.

PM congratulates new Kazakh premier

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent a cable of congratulations to Olzhas Bektenov on his appointment as Prime Minister of Kazakhstan, wishing him success in his work duties.

Qatar, Uganda hold talks on enhancing parliamentary ties

The Qatar-Uganda Parliamentary Friendship Group in the Shura Council headed by Mohamed bin Yousef al-Mana, Member of the Council and Chairman of the Group, met yesterday with a visiting delegation from the Parliament of Uganda headed by Chairperson of the Finance, Planning And Economic Development Committee of the Ugandan Parliament Amos Kakunda. The meeting reviewed the parliamentary co-operation relations between the two countries and ways to strengthen and develop them. **(QNA)**

ANNOUNCEMENT

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Al-Marri meets Somali minister



HE the Minister of Labour Dr Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri met yesterday with Somali Minister of Labour and Social Affairs Mohamed Elmi Ibrahim. The meeting discussed co-operation in matters related to labour fields between the two countries and the ways to support and enhance them. **(QNA)**

Al-Hammadi meets envoys



HE the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi met separately yesterday with Tunisian ambassador Farhat Khalif, Algerian ambassador Salah Attia and Chinese ambassador Cao Xiaolin. The meetings discussed aspects of bilateral co-operation between Qatar and the three countries. **(QNA)**



Speaker meets Uzbek official



HE the Speaker of the Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem met yesterday with the Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Chamber of the Parliament and Director of the National Human Rights Centre of Uzbekistan, Akmal Saidov, who is visiting the country to attend the International Conference on Food Justice from a Human Rights Perspective, currently taking place in Doha. The meeting discussed the existing parliamentary co-operation between Qatar and Uzbekistan, and ways to enhance it. The meeting also addressed several issues related to international efforts to promote human rights and the role of parliamentarians in this regard. The Uzbek official praised Qatar's important role in this regard, as well as its efforts to promote and preserve human rights. **(QNA)**

NSD 2024 to be held under the slogan ‘The Choice is Yours’

From Page 1

The head of the committee also noted that institutions in Qatar are also organising various sporting events for people associated with the institutions in accordance with the Amiri Resolution No 80 of 2011 on Sport Day in encouraging everyone to participate in sporting activities whether with colleagues or family members.

Director of Events and Activities at the Qatar Sports for All Federation (QSFA) Abdullah al-Dosari reviewed the calendar of events that the QSFA will organise during 2024. It will include more than 683 diverse community events, reflecting tangible efforts in promoting sports activity and encouraging community participation in various sports activities throughout the year.


The importance of organising the National Sport Day in Qatar every year is to elevate the practice of sports in society, the moral values it holds and its many health benefits. It also aims to raise awareness among people in the country of the importance of sports in their daily lives and to encourage them to practice it throughout the year.

Doha Metro, Lusail Tram transport 5,559,553 during AFC tournament

The Education City and Msheirib Trams have transported a total of 220,719 passengers since the beginning of the AFC Asian Cup 2023 Qatar until February 6, the Ministry of Transport (MoT) posted on its X account. A total of 23,698 air movements were recorded at both Hamad International Airport and Doha International Airport from January 10-February 6. A total of 5,559,553 passengers were transported by both Doha Metro and Lusail Tram from the beginning of the tournament until February 6.



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DEFECT	Transmission oil leak may cause failure of transmission control unit.
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Ministry of Commerce and Industry
دولة قطر State of Qatar



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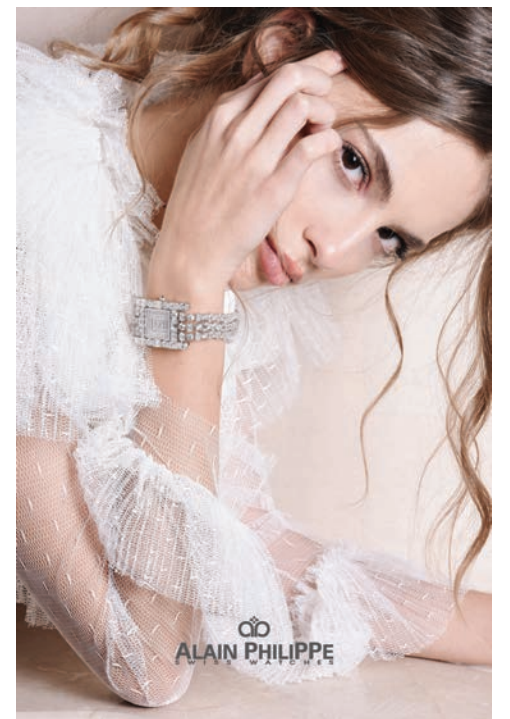
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The Alps Mountains in Switzerland are the true cradle of Swiss watchmaking. In this peaceful and quiet atmosphere, art was born that required unhurried precision, attention to detail, and discipline. Its name: watchmaking.

Alain Philippe at Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition 2024

For this reason, and to fulfill clients' desire for jeweled timepieces, Alain Philippe watches were created, ten years ago, by a family of jewelers with over a hundred years experience in jewelry design and creation. Tradition and progress is part of the reason why connoisseurs of fine Swiss watches all over the world have helped contribute to the success of Alain Philippe timepieces. Another essential component of this success is the creation of watches with a distinct character and style. Each watch has been designed by a team of jewelry designers who have one goal in mind: creating unique and gorgeous jewelry timepieces for clients ranging from political heads of states and celebrities to royal families worldwide – Europe, Middle East, United States, Africa and Far East. Alain Philippe creations offer discriminating clients, always seeking a way to reflect their personal style, the perfect compliment with which they can fully identify. From a design viewpoint, Alain Philippe watches come in an exciting assortment of styles, finishes, and sizes. Every detail is meticulously attended to, from the rarest precious gems such as diamonds, emeralds, and sapphires, chosen by a team of experts, to the handmade dials made of 18 kt gold. Each watch, from the initial design to the finished piece takes from six months to a year to perfect. With watches for all occasions and purposes such as the classical series (Traditional, Traditional Princess, Royale) to the trendy collection (Glamour, Nacrée, Gaia), Alain Philippe timepieces set the standard for design, finish, and performance and are the epitome of luxury. With the secure investment of an Alain Philippe watch, you'll have the assurance of an exceptional product of Swiss precision watchmaking and jewelry craftsmanship that will always reflect your distinctive personality and individuality.



HANNA JEWELRY is one of the most famous manufacturers of gold and jewelry in the Middle East region. Established in 1960, HANNA JEWELRY is the designer and manufacturer of a wide range of high quality jewelry, made under strict quality control and reflecting the beauty and tradition of fine jewelry production.

Each and every piece of HANNA JEWELRY's creations hold a small portion of these imaginations, a portion of the charm that every woman deserves, and there's certainly nothing above the charm of a woman wearing a diamond that combines both, a man's visions and a woman's needs.



Every woman aims to reach the highest level of luxury, therefore we do our efforts to provide our dearest clients with the best of the best, because "perfection" is the title of every creation of ours. HANNA JEWELRY today represents a pioneer brand for a resolutely contemporary mark, known worldwide, specialized in the retail business and dedicated to the fascinating international adventure.





VANLELES

FLEUR DE SABLE

Collection

Drawing from the narrative of the “Dewdrops of the Desert,” the Fleur de Sable collection comes to life. During her travels in the Middle East, our founder, Vania Leles, visited the National Museum of Qatar and was mesmerised by the striking architecture of the building which is inspired by desert rose formations.

Further exploring these delicate, yet robust mineral structures that naturally occur in deserts, Vania was captured by their beauty, igniting the creation of the Fleur de Sable Collection. Each piece is a testament to these natural wonders, reflecting the beauty and strength found in the desert's harsh landscape.

Inspired by the desert rose crystals’ overlapping disks, the Fleur de Sable pieces feature a unique ascending directionality, reminiscent of windswept desert sands.

The jewellery in this collection is entirely hand-crafted in our Italian workshops by master artisans. A technique called 'Florentine engraving' is used on the gold pieces to give them an irresistible silky feel and a sublime iridescent shine. Titanium is used in the gemstone earrings, each of which is set with a smooth transition of colourful precious gems, reminiscent of the vibrant and diverse tapestry found in the natural world.



Fleur de Sable Emerald Earrings



Fleur de Sable Collection Moodboard



Making of Fleur de Sable



Maxi Earcips in Titanium,
18K Rose Gold
Diamonds, Rubies, Pink Sapphires



Medi Earcips in Titanium,
18K Rose Gold
Diamonds, Amethysts, Purple Sapphires



Maxi Earcips in Titanium,
18K Yellow Gold
Diamonds and Emeralds



Mini Earcips in 18K Rose Gold
and pink Diamonds



Mini Earcips in Titanium,
18K White Gold
Diamonds and Blue Sapphires



Mini Earcips in 18K Yellow Gold
and Diamonds



Medi Earcips in 18K Rose Gold
and Diamonds



Mini Earcips in 18K White Gold
and Diamonds



Medi Earcips in 18K Yellow Gold
and Diamonds



ARAYA
MODERN HIGH JEWELRY



مجوهرات الفردان
Alfardan Jewellery



Founded by husband and wife duo with five generations of crafting expertise, each masterpiece is hand sketched by our co-founder and creative director, Ashni Kothari. Ashni's expert design innovation ensures each piece features modern and unconventional gemstone cuts and shapes, custom settings and distinctive versatility to elevate each creation, ensuring your choice remains exclusive and beautifully unique.



Within our annual collection of 100 iconic and unique masterpieces, our creativity knows no limits. Each piece is a true testament to our innovative creative vision to break free from the ordinary and challenge conventions ensuring that each 1 of 1 piece celebrates modern and unconventional designs to celebrate individuality.



Qatar healthcare entities offering expanded services, best emergency care



Dr Mohamed al-Amri speaking at the media interaction yesterday. PICTURE: Thajudheen



Nayef al-Shammari

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

Qatar's healthcare entities are offering a lot more services and facilities like never before and the best emergency care, stated experts and various officials from the public health care sector yesterday at a media interaction.

Opening the session, Nayef al-Shammari, the executive director of Media Relations, Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) noted that the National Healthcare Campaign 'Where For Your Care?' has been dedicated to raising public awareness about urgent and emergency medical services and how to access them.

A total of 692,140 paediatric patients were provided emergency services in 2023, at the Paediatric Emergency Centres (PECs), said Dr Mohamed al-Amri, chairman of paediatrics and director of PECs at HMC.

"There are four PECs under HMC: PEC - Al Sadd; PEC

- Al Rayyan; PEC - Airport and PEC - Daayen. We serve approximately 2,000 emergency patients every day. PEC Al Sadd is the busiest emergency centre, seeing over 55% of all patients across PECs," explained Dr al-Amri.

PECs provide medical care for emergencies of all priority levels to patients up to 14 years of age. "PECs stabilise any trauma/injury cases received and transfer them to Sidra Medicine. PECs provide support to child abuse/neglect cases and refers to the appropriate care facility as required. They are equipped to provide emergency consultations, observation facility and antibiotic administration. All support services are available in PECs to provide comprehensive care for patients," added Dr al-Amri.

According to Prof Dr Ruben Peralta, deputy trauma medical director, HMC, the HMC Trauma Centre has been the national level 1 trauma centre in Qatar since 2007. "The HMC Trauma Centre is a national and international

recognised centre of excellence. It provides immediate medical, critical and surgical care to all citizens and residents of Qatar that sustain major injuries. The clinical staff -physicians, nurses and allied health care - are experts in the field of trauma and specially trained to manage severe and life-threatening injuries 24/7."

According to the official, HMC provides emergency services at seven HMC Emergency Departments across Qatar 24 hours a day for serious medical cases. They are: Hamad General Hospital Trauma and Emergency Centre; The Cuban Hospital; Al Khor Hospital; Women's Wellness and Research Center; Hazm Mebarek General Hospital; Aisha Bint Hamad Al Attiyah Hospital and Al Wakra Hospital.

Officials from Sidra Medicine as well as Qatar Red Crescent Society also highlighted the services provided by the facilities and how Qatar's emergency care scenario has improved over the years providing excellent care and support for the needy.

Fanar hosts events linked to Asian Cup

The Sheikh Abdullah bin Zaid Al Mahmoud Islamic Cultural Centre (Fanar) at the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs (Awqaf) has organised several events in connection with the AFC Asian Cup 2023 Qatar.

The programmes, according to a statement from Awqaf, are in co-operation with Qatar Foundation (QF) and Katara - Cultural Village.

Fans and visitors visited Education City Mosque and attended an Arabic calligraphy workshop, a film screening and a lecture at Katara Mosque on the Muslim personality. Fanar organised an introductory meeting about Qatari and Islamic culture for students newly enrolled at the Education City from different countries.

The centre also launched the



"Qur'anic Reflections" event by scholar Abdul Rahim McCarthy in English at Lusail Mosque.

Fanar hosted several educational events at Katara, including a virtual reality event and lectures were presented by scholars Ahmed al-Dosari and Abdul Rahim McCarthy.

Fanar organised a visit to the Education City Mosque for 100 English speakers. They

learned about the mosque's distinguished architecture, which combines modernity, authenticity and attended an interaction.

In the presence of about 90 English speakers, the "Qur'anic Reflections" event was launched at Lusail Mosque with a series of lectures on contemplating the Holy Qur'an. This was presented by scholar Abdul Rahim McCarthy.

Qatar Reads hosts 'Mommy to Be Festival'

Qatar Reads, an initiative under Qatar National Library, announced that the eagerly awaited 'Mommy to Be Festival' has started and is set to run until February 10, at the Ceremonial Court in Education City.

The family-friendly event promises an enriching experience for expectant parents, offering an array of activities aimed at fostering connections, learning, and networking.

The 'Mommy to Be Festival' is designed to provide parents with the opportunity to explore new books and products, engage with experts from various fields, and connect with fellow parents in a welcoming environment. With a diverse range of activities planned, attendees can look forward to a family market featuring 18 vendors and offering a curated selection of products and books catering to expectant parents and families.

Special guest speakers will deliver talks about parenthood, covering topics from pregnancy care to early childhood development. The role of Qatari fathers as role models will also be a prominent topic for discourse at the festival. (QNA)



Al Darwish showcases a dazzling collection from premier jewelry brands

Over 22 global jewellery brands exhibiting their unique pieces under the umbrella of Al Darwish Jewellery are hogging the limelight at the seven-day-long 20th Doha Jewellery & Watches Exhibition (DJWE) 2024 currently taking place at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC).

Reflecting the cultural heritage of craftsmanship from the Gulf region, India, Turkey, Hong Kong and European countries, the pavilion of Al Darwish Jewellery has emerged as one of the most visited pavilions in the first two days of the exhibition that opened on February 5.

In an exclusive interview, Al Darwish Jewellery Chairman Abdallah Jassim Al Darwish



said, "Like every year, Al Darwish Jewellery is back with its partner brands at the DJWE. Over 22 brands under the Al Darwish pavilion are exhibiting their products this year. Our family has grown and we have added almost 10 new partners like Antoine Walid Salamoun, MRC, Rare Gems (Trinity Jewels), Kahn High Jewellery, Alok Lodha Jewellers, Royal Stone, Belisma, Fehmida Lakhany London, Shachee Fine Jewellery and Gem Export India (Tallin Jaipur) this year."

"Most of the exhibitors like Kiswah, Raaya, Liebe, Nafees, Moratti Gioielli, RK, Rosa Amoris, Birdhichand Ghanshyamas Jewellers, Motilal Jewellers, House of Gems, Al Darwish Jewellery and Jwahr who were with us in the previous editions of DJWE are with us this time as well," he said.

Al Darwish said, "We have ensured to choose partners very carefully so that we can provide the best mix of jewellery and the value for money for every purchase any customer makes at our booth. We are very positive considering the trend of the market that the exhibition will be amazing as the customers are waiting for the experience of buying with multiple choices at the best price. We agree with the clients because this has been our policy to provide the value for money for every purchase people make at our pavilion."

"The first day of DJWE 2024 was very good for us. It was very busy at our stands. We see that people are very interested in our unique pieces. Qataris have a great liking for our jewellery and this exhibition is another opportunity for us to get in touch with new customers," Kahn High Jewellery Managing Director Honey Ho said.

Ho said, "Kahn high jewelry is designed and crafted by our team of in-house designers and jewelers, assuring that no detail is overlooked. We only use pure and luxurious 18k gold/platinum to bring out the soul of each piece."

"Each piece of high Jewellery is handmade in our atelier in Hong Kong, Central. Our experienced craftsman has a minimum of 20 years of experience in high Jewellery making, a good eye for presentation and astute aesthetic sensibilities, you are establishing a relationship with a team who cares, and investing in an asset that will last a lifetime."

At Kahn, she said, "We only retain the finest diamonds and stone. Kahn diamonds are non-treated and are accompanied by a GIA certificate/ GRS certificate/ Gublin certificate."

"We continue to source the extraordinary quality and uniqueness diamonds and gemstones all over the world including Sri Lanka, Columbia, USA, Africa, Burma, India, Russia and Europe. By working with a reputable supplier, Kahn can ensure the quality and the stone/ diamond qualities are the best of the best. And in so doing, we created something not just brilliant, but beyond brilliance," she said.

Another jewellery brand Belisma, which is from Surat that processes almost 90 percent of diamonds that are purchased across the world, is dazzling visitors with elegant diamond necklaces crafted with intricate details and stunning sophistication.

Belisma Managing Director Ritu Seth said, "We have been receiving an overwhelming response to our products since the very first day of the exhibition. Qataris have a great liking for our jewellery and this exhibition is another opportunity for us to get in touch with new customers."

Rare Gems has also partnered with Al Darwish Jewellery to showcase an array of exquisite ruby and emerald jewellery pieces at the exhibition.

Monto of Rare Gems said, "Qatar's market has shown keen interest in our designs and the magnificent large stones they feature. Our clients here in Qatar see our creations as investment pieces."

India's fast-emerging jewellery brand Nafees, which has put on display its latest line of vibrant gemstone and diamond set couture jewels, is one of the prime attractions at the pavilion.

The vibrant gemstone and diamond set couture jewels of Nafees are exemplary in craftsmanship and bespoke services are always in demand within the elite families of Qatar and the Middle East.

RK Jewellers is another Indian brand that is attracting the attention of many visitors at the exhibition with its new line of fine jewellery.

With new pieces on display, Raaya, another Indian brand, is attracting the attention of many visitors at the exhibition.

House of Gems, another brand that exhibited under the banner of Al Darwish Jewellery, witnessed many visitors at its stall.

A representative of House of Gems said that it was very successful in terms of getting connected with old and new customers and the overall sales.

Italian brand Moratti, which entered the Middle East market by opening its first outlet in Qatar, was the point of reference for its extraordinary creations at the pavilion.

"Each masterpiece is a work of art that comes from an exhilarating journey between multi-ethnic cultures and is brought to life by the hands of fine Italian craftsmen," an official of Moratti said.

"We have introduced a good number of new designs at the exhibition. Each of our designs is a result of an exhilarating journey between multi-ethnic cultures and influences, through nature. Translated into reality by the hands of fine Italian craftsmen, each Moratti masterpiece is a work of art brought to life and tells a different story, a story that we are now proud enough to share with people in Qatar," he said.

Famous Turkish jewellery brand Kiswah, which partnered with Al Darwish Jewellery to open its first outlet in Qatar a few years ago, is one of the major attractions at the pavilion.

Kiswah designed and put on display an exquisite collection exclusively for the exhibition.

Believing in the power of Turkey's mighty heritage, the collections of Kiswah are based on the historical eras of 4,000 years old civilisation and its rich artistic background.

"Qataris are one of our main customers as many of them used to buy our products from showrooms in Turkey. It is because of their liking for our products that we have come to Qatar. Through this exhibition, we want to make the Kiswah brand more popular in Qatar," a representative of Kiswah said.

Another brand from Turkey, Liebe Jewels also hogging the limelight.

"There is a hunger for our products here at the exhibition. We are already witnessing a very successful exhibition for our brand," an official of Liebe said.



Ali Bin Ali’s pavilion draws crowds with global jewellery and watch extravaganza

Enthusiastic crowds are converging upon the captivating Ali Bin Ali Luxury Pavilion amidst the ongoing spectacle of the Doha Jewellery & Watches Exhibition (DJWE) 2024. This prestigious pavilion has become the epicenter of attention, drawing in visitors with its irresistible allure. Attendees are treated to an extraordinary display, as renowned global jewellery and watch brands converge to showcase their unparalleled craftsmanship and distinctive pieces.

Within the confines of the Ali Bin Ali Luxury pavilion, an opulent world unfolds, showcasing the pinnacle of creativity and innovation in the realms of jewelry and horology. From dazzling gemstones to intricately crafted timepieces, each exhibit tells a unique story of artistry and refinement. The atmosphere is charged with an air of exclusivity, as patrons immerse themselves in the opulence and sophistication that define this extraordinary exhibition.

The pavilion stands as a beacon, stealing the spotlight with its curated collection of the world's most coveted jewelry and watches. This gathering of global brands is not merely an exhibition; it is a celebration of the extraordinary, a testament to the relentless pursuit of excellence in the world of luxury craftsmanship.

As visitors explore the pavilion, they find themselves transported into a realm where elegance meets innovation, where tradition intertwines seamlessly with contemporary design. The allure of each showcased piece is heightened by

the meticulous attention to detail and the stories woven into the fabric of every creation. It is an immersive experience that transcends the ordinary, leaving an indelible mark on the hearts and minds of those fortunate enough to witness this symphony of luxury.

In essence, Ali Bin Ali Luxury pavilion at DJWE 2024 emerges not only as a physical space but as a cultural hub, a convergence of artistic expression, and a testament to the enduring legacy of craftsmanship in the ever-evolving world of jewelry and watches.

NEFERTITI by Nadine Barbey



The narrative of NEFERTITI by Nadine Barbey unfolds through a sincere transformation, rooted in her intuitive exploration of her spiritual journey. Leveraging her mastery of gemstones and a wealth of expertise in High-Jewellery spanning 27 years in Paris, Nadine imbues her creations with a unique significance.

Nadine's deep-seated desire to craft jewelry is finely tuned, both aesthetically and technically, aiming to elevate the wearer's energy to a higher resonant frequency. NEFERTITI integrates a plethora of elemental characteristics, encompassing refractive light resonance, color, structure, and patterns of untreated gemstones sourced from regions exhibiting potent magnetic resonance for both men and women.

Gemstones like Turquoise from Iran or Arizona's Sleeping Beauty, and the highest quality Afghan Lapis Lazuli inherently carry significantly elevated energetic frequencies. When combined with Malachite, Agate, Carnelian, Onyx, Mother of Pearl, Azurite, Crystal Quartz, and the highest quality Diamonds set into 18-carat gold, these elements collectively influence lower frequencies, elevating the overall vibrational resonance to its peak and affecting the individual.

Each meticulously crafted piece incorporates a warm gold element, ensuring product longevity. The synergy of these elements forms a system of "Vibrational Frequencies," drawing individuals intuitively towards the frequencies they "need" for realignment from a higher vibrational standpoint. Each piece symbolizes inner transformation, allowing the release of the deepest desires of the heart for a meaningful metamorphosis.

Damiani

Damiani, the globally acclaimed high-end jewelry brand celebrated for its sophisticated all-Italian creations, is showcasing its latest collections at the ongoing Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition. This marks the seventh consecutive collaboration with Ali Bin Ali, underscoring Damiani's commitment to expanding its presence in the Middle East.

Participating in this prestigious event provides Damiani with a prime opportunity to showcase Italian creativity and exquisite craftsmanship to a discerning market. The mature audience at the exhibition, appreciative of Italian quality and luxury tied to authenticity and exclusivity, resonates with Damiani's ethos.

Within the dedicated space for the Maison, enthusiasts can marvel at iconic fine jewelry collections, including the contemporary Margherita, the feminine Mimosa, and the innovative Belle Epoque Reel collection. Additionally, a captivating selection of High Jewelry pieces adds to the allure of Damiani's presence.

Founded in 1924, Damiani has steadfastly upheld values of authenticity, integrity, and Italian excellence. As the only true Italian jeweler and one of the few internationally managed by the founder's family, Damiani draws strength from its local roots while embracing a global perspective.

Crafted by skilled goldsmiths from Valenza, the world's leading goldsmithing district, Damiani's jewels are unique masterpieces celebrated for their design, attention to detail, and gem quality. Coveted by renowned figures and embraced by newer generations of international celebrities, Damiani's century-long legacy continues to captivate and make a statement.

Under the guidance of jeweler Marco Valente, Damiani is an innovative jewelry project dedicated to excellence in design, quality, and engineering. Each jewel is meticulously crafted with exclusive and selected gemstones, meeting high standards of cut, proportion, and symmetry, complemented by D-E-F colors and Gemmological Institute of America certificates.

The emphasis on design not only highlights the quality of diamonds but also ensures harmonious movement and extraordinary comfort. Marco Valente



High Jewelry's commercial strategy focuses on establishing a selective network of multibrand jewelers, aligning with top brands and transmitting the values of high-end Italian craftsmanship, diamond quality, and design. These enduring pieces are created to celebrate life, personal milestones, and to be cherished across generations, maintaining their economic value over time.

Marco Valente

Marco Valente, a beacon of Italian expertise and tradition in the realm of fine jewelry, unveils an innovative venture that encapsulates the essence of Milanese craftsmanship. Conceived by the skilled jeweler Marco Valente, the brand sets forth on a mission to achieve excellence in design, quality, and engineering. Each jewelry piece is a testament to this commitment, meticulously crafted with exclusive and carefully chosen gemstones.

Emphasizing precision, the jewels boast high standards of cut, proportion, and symmetry parameters, predominantly falling under the triple excellent category. Exhibiting D-E-F colors, the stones are accompanied by certificates from the renowned Gemmological Institute of America. The design philosophy revolves around accentuating diamond quality, ensuring harmonious movement, and delivering extraordinary comfort.

These jewels are not mere accessories; they are enduring treasures designed to celebrate life and personal milestones, destined to be cherished through generations. The intrinsic quality and thoughtful design of each piece contribute to the preservation of its economic value over time.

Marco Valente High Jewelry adopts a strategic approach by establishing an exclusive network of multi-brand jewelers. These partners are chosen for their affiliation with top brands of watches and jewelry, deep understanding of quality, and the ability to convey the values of high-end Italian craftsmanship, diamond quality, and design.

The brand encapsulates its essence through the "4 C" concept, aligning with the unique attributes that make each diamond distinct: Cut, Carat, Colour, and Clarity. For Marco Valente High Jewelry, however, the 4 C represent Competence, Consistency, Comfort, and Customization.

Competence stems from six decades of experience, resulting in jewels that showcase sophisticated creativity and utilize advanced design and production techniques. Consistency is the brand's hallmark, seen in the relentless pursuit of excellence, exceptional stone quality, and impeccable craftsmanship that defines each piece while maintaining a contemporary and timeless style.

Comfort is a primary objective in crafting each jewel, ensuring it becomes a second skin with its soft shapes and advanced engineering. Lastly, customization is the brand's commitment to placing the customer at the center, offering timeless jewels that transcend fleeting fashion trends, with



the assurance that their value remains unchanged over time. Marco Valente High Jewelry thus combines creativity, skills, and craftsmanship to transform the dreams of its customers into unique, personalized masterpieces.

LEICA

Introducing the Leica ZM 1 Gold Limited Edition, a testament to Leica's storied legacy of pioneering craftsmanship. This exclusive timepiece, limited to just 50 pieces, merges the opulence of 18k gold with the resilience of Grade 5 Titanium in a dual-metal case. Drawing inspiration from the iconic Leica I Model A Luxus, the ZM 1 pays homage to the 1929 gold Leica camera, embodying the brand's precision and design passion.



The ZM 1 Gold Limited Edition boasts a distinct dial featuring a unique color grade and sunburst effect achieved through expert brush techniques. The indexes and hands, delicately galvanized, complement the warmth of the gold case. Underneath, the Leica Calibre LH-1001 movement, crafted at the Lehmann Präzision manufacturer in Germany, undergoes a stringent five-axis regulation test for precision. The patented push-crown uniquely halts movement, resets the seconds hand, and facilitates easy time setting.

Enhancing its allure, the ZM 1 comes with an exquisite alligator leather strap sourced from a certified American farm, undergoing a natural tanning process in an Italian tannery. Hand-stitched in Geneva and adorned with an 18k gold 4N butterfly buckle, the watch epitomizes durability and elegance. Limited to 50 watches, the Leica ZM 1 Gold Limited Edition is exclusively available through private appointments at select Leica stores worldwide.

Leica Smart Projection

In the realm of home entertainment, Leica Smart Projection GmbH presents the Leica Cine 1, a cinema TV delivering unparalleled Leica image quality. Integrating state-of-the-art laser technology and Dolby Atmos® surround sound, this TV creates an authentic cinematic atmosphere. Recognized with the iF Design Award 2023, the Cine 1 offers connectivity, innovative features, and intuitive operation, making it a premium home cinema solution.



Available in 80, 100, and 120-inch screen sizes, the Cine 1 recommends high-contrast ALR screens, available from Leica Stores. The cinema TV surpasses industry standards with its triple RGB laser technology, Summicron lens, and Leica's image optimization expertise, ensuring bright images, vibrant colors,

and a service life of over 25,000 hours. Combining connectivity with Dolby Atmos® and Dolby Vision, the Cine 1 is a pinnacle of smart TV features. Its energy-efficient design and award-winning aesthetics further underscore Leica's commitment to excellence in every detail.

HUBLOT OPENS A DOOR TO THE FUTURE OF WATCHMAKING

In a groundbreaking leap into the future, Hublot introduces the world to the MP-10 Tourbillon Weight Energy System, a masterpiece that transcends the conventional boundaries of watchmaking. This new Manufacture Piece (MP) from Hublot is not just a timepiece; it is an immersive experience, a testament to relentless innovation, and a symbol of the brand's commitment to pushing the limits of horological artistry.

The MP-10 Tourbillon Weight Energy System represents a paradigm shift, redefining the very fundamentals of watchmaking. Gone are the traditional dial, hands, and oscillating weight. In their place, Hublot introduces a mesmerizing roller display, a circular power reserve, and an inclined tourbillon with automatic winding facilitated by two linear weights. This departure from the norm underscores Hublot's dedication to avant-garde design and disruptive complications.

Anticipation for a new MP is always met with fervor at Hublot, and the MP-10 Tourbillon Weight Energy System is no exception. The piece captivates the observer instantly with its distinctive features – rounded angles, a sleek design, and a sapphire crystal of unparalleled complexity that encases a movement of exquisite sophistication. This fusion of form and substance encapsulates the essence of the MP collections, where mechanical and aesthetic power are inseparable.

At the heart of the MP-10 is a movement that goes beyond being a mere timekeeping mechanism. It is a marriage of art and engineering, a creation that transcends the boundaries of traditional complications. Hublot's MP-10 collection exemplifies this ethos, presenting avant-garde timepieces that challenge norms not as mere concepts but as complete, practical watches destined to adorn the wrists of a select few collectors.

Ricardo Guadalupe, Hublot's visionary CEO, expressed the philosophy behind the MP-10: "For a piece to be part of our MP collection, it must not only reinvent existing complications; it must create something exclusive, invent, build, and open up new avenues in watchmaking R&D."

The MP-10 Tourbillon Weight Energy System in Titanium, limited to just 50 pieces, embodies this philosophy. It is destined to become a benchmark,

referred to as a pivotal moment in the evolution of timekeeping, marked by a 'before' and 'after' in the world of luxury watches.

Delving into the specifications, the MP-10 boasts an impressive array: 592 components

circular power reserve underscores the complexity of this horological marvel.

Navigating the MP-10's indications requires a departure from the conventional. Eschewing traditional hands, the timepiece features four rotating displays. The upper third showcases hours and minutes with an invisible magnifying glass, while the central third reveals the circular power reserve, marked by a vivid green zone and a red zone. The lower third displays seconds directly on the inclined tourbillon cage, constructed from monobloc aluminum.

An innovative design choice eliminates the need for a traditional dial, seamlessly integrating the movement with the face of the watch. The architectural design and expressive movement enhance readability, guiding the eye naturally from top to bottom. The power reserve is a visual spectacle, featuring a two-tone disc coaxially aligned with the hours and minutes.

Automatic winding in the MP-10 presented a unique challenge. The verticalized movement required a departure from the traditional flat dial with an oscillating weight. Hublot's engineers rose to the occasion, introducing two vertical weights made of white gold on either side of the central architecture. These weights, free to move along a vertical axis, engage a rack, allowing bidirectional winding. A patent-pending shock absorber system ensures smooth operation, providing the MP-10 with a power reserve exceeding 48 hours.

For manual winding and time adjustment, the MP-10 incorporates a crown at 12 o'clock and a second crown on the case-back side, preserving the fluidity of the design.

The exterior of the MP-10 is a testament to Hublot's commitment to unprecedented complexity. While the case construction is elegantly simple with two pieces of shiny micro-blasted titanium, the sapphire crystal atop is a marvel of engineering, featuring inclined planes on three axes. The integrated rubber strap, the most refined designed by the Manufacture to date, complements the complexity of the sapphire crystal.



In the landscape of haute horlogerie, the MP-10 Tourbillon Weight Energy System sets a new standard, a beacon of innovation, and a masterpiece that invites enthusiasts to explore the uncharted territories of timekeeping. Hublot continues to push the boundaries, offering not just a watch but a journey into the future of watchmaking excellence.



Moritz Grossmann Unveils the TOURBILLON Tremblage

The TOURBILLON Tremblage by Moritz Grossmann epitomizes the harmonious blend of traditional craftsmanship and contemporary aesthetics. Moritz Grossmann watches are the culmination of collaborative efforts, showcasing the skillful execution of various techniques at their Glashütte manufactory, resulting in the creation of exceptional timepieces. The latest TOURBILLON Tremblage, available in rose gold and white gold versions, is limited to just eight watches per variant.

Rooted in the visions and skills of both historical and contemporary craftspeople, the TOURBILLON Tremblage pays homage to the innovative contributions of watchmakers from the past and present. It seamlessly integrates the advancements of distinguished watchmakers with the meticulous finishing and decorating techniques upheld at the Glashütte manufactory.

The dial of the TOURBILLON Tremblage serves as a stage for the intricate mechanics and features of the watch. Crafted from German silver in a symmetrical design, the multi-part dial incorporates a historical technique known as tremblage. This technique involves hand-engraving the inner part of the dial with various burins in a trembling motion, creating a uniquely rough yet matte effect. The galvanization process in 'black-or' further enhances the dial's expressive anthracite color, showcasing the meticulous craftsmanship that takes several days to complete.

At the heart of the dial is the visually striking tourbillon, flanked by an off-centre hour display at 3 o'clock and a second display at 9 o'clock. The hands, manually crafted from 750/000 gold in the rose gold version and polished steel in the white gold version, showcase distinctive shapes that correspond to their functions. The minute hand's fine tip gracefully sweeps past the outer perimeter minute scale, providing precise time reading. The patented twofold minute display, featuring Arabic numerals and delicately tapered hands, underscores the clear aesthetics reminiscent of Glashütte precision measuring instruments from the 19th century.

The TOURBILLON Tremblage pays homage to influential figures in watchmaking, including Moritz Grossmann, Alfred Helwig, and Abraham Louis Breguet. Grossmann's legacy, Helwig's patented flying tourbillon, and Breguet's contributions to the tourbillon construction serve as the foundation for this innovative timepiece.

The modern interpretation of traditional mechanics is evident in the tourbillon construction of the hand-wound calibre 103.0. The generous-sized oscillator, influenced by Alfred Helwig, rotates every three minutes, deviating from the conventional one-minute rotation. The stop-second function, utilizing an elastic brush made of human hair, adds a unique touch to the precise mechanics,



rounding out the mechanism characteristic of Grossmann precision timepieces.

The meticulous finishing extends to the decoration stage, where each component is individually finished by hand. Hand-engraved Glashütte ribbing, bevelled edges, three-band snailing on the ratchet wheel, polished screws set in gold chatons, and white sapphire jewels exemplify the detailed perfection achieved by Moritz Grossmann.

Available in rose and white gold versions, each limited to eight pieces, the TOURBILLON Tremblage represents the pinnacle of craftsmanship, combining traditional techniques with modern innovation. The rose gold model comes with a brown alligator leather strap, while the white gold version is paired with a black alligator leather strap, adding a touch of sophistication to these limited-edition timepieces.

Vacheron Constantin celebrates history, heritage at DJWE

By Peter Alagos
Business Reporter

The 20th edition of the Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition (DJWE) stands as a testimony to the robust partnership between Alfardan Jewellery and Vacheron Constantin, which is showcasing its latest collection and services to the Qatari collectors' community.

Speaking to *Gulf Times* on the sidelines of the exhibition, Christophe Ramel, the Middle East re-

gional brand director of Vacheron Constantin, emphasised that the brand is "a maison for connoisseurs" – for people who appreciate the art and tradition of fine watchmaking and who are part of a select group of "one of not many".

Ramel pointed out that Vacheron Constantin's production is "very limited" and caters to people who are fond of traditional watchmaking and savoir-faire (know-how). According to Ramel, the brand connects with its clientele on a deeper level by preserving

its know-how and values and by catering to their preferences and culture.

He said, "Vacheron Constantin values preserving its know-how and its values, and connects with the Qatari collectors' community, who share the same passion and appreciation for the brand."

With a 269-year history and a proud heritage of watchmaking excellence, innovation, and tradition, Ramel said Vacheron Constantin has been careful at protecting and transmitting its savoir-faire from one watchmaker

to another while remaining relevant to today's clients. The brand has always been creative and pushed for excellence in its products, he noted.

Ramel said Vacheron Constantin has preserved the importance of craftsmanship in its maison, such as its handmade straps for collectors, which are on display at DJWE.

The straps are made with high-quality materials and techniques, and reflect the brand's attention to detail and aesthetics, he said, adding that the

brand's Overseas retrograde and the Overseas midsize could also be viewed at Vacheron Constantin's booth inside the Alfardan Jewellery Pavilion.

He said, "The retrograde, is a complication that is very dear to Vacheron Constantin; we have it in our collection for more than 100 years. On the other hand, the midsize watches, with a diameter of around 35mm in steel and pink gold, have a lovely design and an interchangeable straps collection, making them versatile and elegant for both men and ladies."



Christophe Ramel, the Middle East Regional Brand Director of Vacheron Constantin.
PICTURE: Thajudheen

HIA's Orchard wins award for its 1.2km digital ribbon

Hamad International Airport (HIA) was presented with the 'Large-format digital canvases' award at the Digital Signage Awards for its 1.2km digital ribbon that wraps the 'Orchard', the airport's indoor tropical garden.

Hosted at Esferic Events Centre in Barcelona, the global Digital Signage Awards is an annual international search for excellence and innovation across projects, creativity, products and services.

The project was submitted by multimedia studio Moment Factory who were tasked with enhancing the Orchard with a creative multimedia ecosystem.

Unveiled in November 2022, part of Phase A of HIA's expansion plan, the 6,000sq m Orchard is home to trees, plants and shrubs sourced from sustainable forests from around the world.

The ribbon display is a notable feature of the Orchard that compliments the lush greenery and 10,000sq m of multi-dimensional retail and F&B space offering, adding to the visual ecosystem.

The state-of-the-art dig-



Hamad International Airport (HIA) was presented with the 'Large-format digital canvases' award at the Digital Signage Awards for its 1.2km digital ribbon that wraps the 'Orchard', the airport's indoor tropical garden.

ital ribbon installation, which spans across two storeys, is tailored to enhance the ambience of the tropical garden with bespoke visuals, projected through high resolution display with over 169 million pixels of animation. The visual displays of the ribbon

consist of multiple themes including a luxe botanical elements, flora and fauna, Qatar Sands of time and a mirage, embodying the culture and heritage of Qatar.

The display comes to life every hour creating an immersive experience for passengers.

Qatar's medium-term growth to average 5.5%, says IMF

From Page 1

If downside risks to growth materialise and the ongoing growth slowdown sharpens, some fiscal space could be deployed through productive and efficient spending, while maintaining broad fiscal prudence, according to the IMF.

"In the medium term, fiscal strategy should aim at sustaining prudent and countercyclical policy, accelerating revenue diversification including via VAT (value added tax) introduction, enhancing current expenditure efficiency by rationalising wage bill and gradually removing remaining subsidies, and reorienting expenditure from traditional infrastructure to reforms that facilitate transformation to a private sector-led growth model," it said.

A medium-term fiscal framework anchored around maintaining intergenerational equity, complemented by greater fiscal transparency, would support

the implementation of the fiscal strategy, it added.

Qatar's medium-term fiscal strategy should be underpinned by sustained prudence, accelerated revenue diversification and enhanced spending composition and efficiency, it said, forecasting that the central government debt is projected to gradually decline to close to 30% of GDP by 2028.

On the need to intensify reform efforts to shift from a traditional state-led growth model to a more dynamic, knowledge-based, private sector-driven one; the IMF said attracting more skilled expatriates, improving education outcome, incentivising Qatari nationals to take up private sector jobs, and raising female labour force participation will enhance human capital and labour market dynamics.

Highlighting the need to promote further trade liberalisation, ease access to finance, and continue enhancing administrative efficiency; it said these measures

should be implemented comprehensively in a well-sequenced manner to boost potential growth.

Furthering digitalisation and climate actions are also critical, it said, adding broadening gains from economic zones and centers to the wider economy would accelerate economic diversification.

Qatar's decade-long efforts to diversify the economy culminated into the successful hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup. After very strong performance in 2022 on the back of World Cup-induced buoyancy and high hydrocarbon prices, growth has been normalising, with real GDP growth in 2023 projected at 1.6%.

"Growth normalisation is expected to continue in the near term, with non-hydrocarbon growth supported by investment in public projects, construction of the North Field LNG expansion project, and their spillovers to logistics, manufacturing, and trade," IMF said.

Shelley & Co unveils exquisite collections



Shelley Kabilu showcases Shelley and Co's latest collections at DJWE 2024.
PICTURES: Shaji Kayamkulam

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

Renowned jewellery brand Shelley & Co returns to the Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition (DJWE) this year, showcasing an array of exquisite collections – inspired by the beautiful world of diamonds and gems in various colours.

Sharing her insights into the inspiration behind the showcased pieces and the brand's unique approach to sourcing and crafting its jewellery, Shelley Kabilu, the owner of Shelley & Co, draws parallels between her designs and the nostalgic sweetness of childhood candies.

"They remind me of different candies I loved when growing up. I integrated my inspiration into the jewels. Pink diamonds, remind me of bubble gum. The various colour diamonds, and gems in unique beautiful pieces that are sweet, and pretty like your favourite candy," she told *Gulf Times*.

Among the showcased collections are timeless classics such as the bridal collection, featuring diamond engagement rings, stud earrings, necklaces and solitaire pendants. Additionally, Shelley & Co introduces pieces from its new Constellation Spiral collection, a daily wear line inspired by the celestial beauty of galaxies and space.

The brand also unveiled its latest creation, the Equestrian Diamond Jewels collection, inspired by Kabilu's experiences at prestigious equestrian events in Doha, including Al Shaqab and the Longines Global Champion Tour. "We have a collection for ladies and also a collection for men, including cufflinks and tie pins," she added, stressing the brand's commitment to catering to diverse tastes and preferences.

About the sourcing and creation process of their unique diamonds, Kabilu elaborated on her extensive travels around the world to procure stones for cli-



ents and designs. As one of more than 500 brands from 10 countries participating in DJWE, Kabilu said Shelley & Co distinguishes itself through its hands-on approach and commitment to excellence.

She oversees every aspect of the design and production process, from sourcing stones to crafting the final piece – a rarity in the industry.

With a history of supplying stones and manufacturing jewellery for renowned brands, she noted that Shelley & Co brings a wealth of expertise and a personal touch to the exhibition.

Reflecting on previous experiences in Doha, particularly during the 19th edition of DJWE

and the FIFA World Cup, Kabilu expressed admiration for the city's transformation and its status as a global destination. She highlighted the importance of participating in such major events in strengthening the brand's presence in Qatar and fostering connections with the local community.

"Participating in different events strengthens our connection to Doha and of the Shelley & Co brand to Qatar. We love it here and would love to have a Shelley & Co store in Doha one day," Kabilu said, underlining the brand's aspirations for future expansion and continued engagement with the vibrant Qatari market.

Culture ministry attends 'Me and My Child' festival

The Ministry of Culture is participating in the third edition of the "Me and My Child" festival organised by "Qatar Reads" initiative of the Qatar National Library devoted to families. The four-day event which kicked off yesterday at the Ceremonial Court in the Education City primarily aims to offer opportunities for the single family to discover books and new products of maternity and childhood, in addition to promoting familial values and solidifying tight-knit families. Commenting on the ministry's participation in the festival, Director of the Libraries Department at the Ministry of Culture Jassim Ahmed al-Buainain said he is delighted over the participation in the festival which promotes familial values and cultural awareness among families. **(QNA)**

Transparency, robust regulations key to boost property investments

By Peter Alagos
Business Reporter



measures implemented by the Qatari government, such as the online real estate platform, the establishment of a new Real Estate Regulatory Authority, and the inaugural meeting of Qatar Chamber's Real Estate Committee.

He emphasised that a transparent and well-regulated market is imperative in attracting real estate investment. "Qatar's real estate market adjusts and matures following years of strong growth ahead of the

World Cup, and receiving advice from real estate professionals has never been more important."

Discussing the firm's 'Q4 Real Estate Market Review', Archer pointed out that recent months have seen increased activity in the government sector.

"We understand that in excess of 70,000sq m of office space across West Bay and Msheireb has either been leased or is under offer to various government entities. These transactions will see the availability of vacant office space in West Bay reduce to approximately 15%, while overall availability in the prime office districts of Msheireb, Lusail, and West Bay is approximately 21%.

"The fall in availability in recent years is reflective of a number of large-scale

leases by government entities or the oil and gas sector. This includes the vast Abdullah Bin Hamad Al Attiyah District, occupied in its entirety by QatarEnergy."

According to Archer, "The current oversupply of office space in Qatar will continue to be a drag on office rent. The supply of purpose-built office accommodation in Qatar has reached approximately 5.4mn sq m in 2024 with an estimated 1.3mn to 1.4mn sq m of vacant space available."

Archer said new apartment buildings have attracted strong demand from residents looking to upgrade. This demand means that many new buildings in good locations often reach full occupancy "within three months," he noted.

"While tourist arriv-

als have increased significantly, occupancy rates fell from 58% in H1 2022 to 53%, due largely to an increase in hotel room supply over that period. Between June 2022 and June 2023, the supply of hotel rooms increased by 27% to 38,754.

"While the unprecedented increase in supply in the approach to the World Cup has put pressure on performance metrics, ADRs remained stable at QR425 for the first six months of the year. Over the second half of the year, figures from the Planning and Statistics Authority showed that occupancy rates remained stable between 52% and 58% with a spike to 66% in October. On the retail market, Archer added: "Some of Qatar's main malls have indicated that footfall and spending have remained

consistent this year. The increase in supply over recent years has, however, seen both footfall and occupancy drop in some of Doha's older malls, as properties compete for a finite number of retailers and F&B operators. While there is an increasing disparity between malls, Cushman and Wakefield estimate that there is now an overall vacancy rate of more than 20% (by unit) in Qatar's 20 largest malls.

"Retail mall managers have reported the noticeable impact that international geopolitics has had in Q4. A number of international brands have seen a downturn in trade due to the war in Gaza. It is unclear what impact geopolitics and associated consumer behaviour will have on Qatar's retail market in 2024."



Indian jeweller Rose lauds partnership with Alfardan



By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

The partnership with Alfardan Jewellery has played a key role in Rose's successful expansion in Doha, according to leading Indian jewellery house Rose's founder and senior sales director (luxury) Purnima Sheth.

Rose returns to Qatar for the 20th edition of the Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition (DJWE), which takes place at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre until February 11.

"Alfardan has been our partners for the past 7-8 years and gave us the platform to showcase our brand in the Qatari market. Over the years, our business during the show grew exponentially leading up to DJWE in 2020, which was our best show in the region at that time," she told *Gulf Times*.

Following the cancellation of shows due to the Covid-19 outbreak, Rose experienced a surge in orders from Qatar. This prompted the realisation that the brand needed a more



The Rose team is led by Purnima Sheth (second right).

permanent presence in the country, leading to the collaboration with Alfardan.

Sheth disclosed that the enthusiastic response from the people of Qatar contributed significantly in influencing Rose's choice to establish four stores in Doha. The admiration for the brand's distinctive designs, which seamlessly blend various gemstones with diamonds, was a key factor in making this decision.

"This was important because while our clients were happy to place orders

via our Instagram channel, jewellery is still a touch-and-feel category and it was thus valuable to have pieces in Qatar to allow new customers to see our quality before placing orders," she said.

Regarding Rose's international expansion strategy, Sheth highlighted the Middle East as an essential market, with the brand participating in over 10 shows across the region annually.

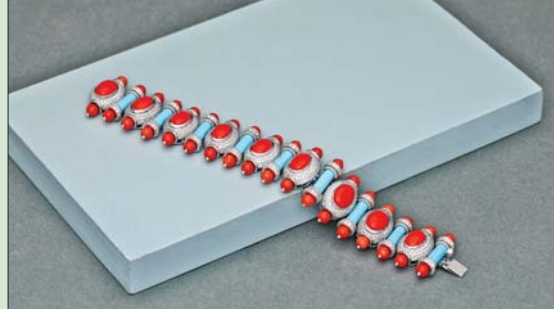
According to Sheth, Rose is also in the process of setting up an office in Dubai to better serve its Middle Eastern clients. Rose's presence in Doha

mirrors its flagship stores in Mumbai and New Delhi.

To stay innovative and relevant in the competitive jewellery market, she reveals that Rose adapts to evolving consumer preferences and industry trends. Underlining the brand's responsiveness to changes, she cited the example of introducing a line of fine jewellery after observing a shift in consumer preferences towards everyday wear post-pandemic.

About DJWE, Sheth lauded the organisers and underscored the significance of the event in their calendar, noting that: "This is one of the biggest events of our calendar and allows us to showcase our collection alongside the industry's best and we have been enthused by the response of our patrons in Qatar who have appreciated our designs and craftsmanship and patronised us over the years."

"We have been participating in DJWE for the last several years. In our opinion, DJWE is the largest and best show in this part of the world as it is the only existing show that brings all the brands of watches and jewellery under one roof for the customer. We look forward to taking part in DJWE for many years to come," she added.



Rose is introducing a line of fine jewellery after observing a shift in consumer preferences towards everyday wear post-pandemic.



Rose is showcasing an array of stunning pieces at DJWE 2024.

HEC Paris, Expertise France Group discuss food security

HEC Paris in Qatar recently hosted an insightful panel discussion titled 'Innovation, Investments and Entrepreneurship in the Agri-tech & Food-tech Sectors' in collaboration with Expertise France Group of the Agence Française de Développement (AFD, French Development Agency) and supported by the Economic department from the French embassy.

The event, held at the HEC Paris campus in Msheireb Downtown, in the presence of French ambassador Jean-Baptiste Faivre, featured panellists representing diverse companies and experts in food security from Qatar, France and the GCC region.

Dr Delphine Aclouque, French expert and food security adviser to the Ministry of Municipality of Qatar, and her colleague Mark Velders, Food Security Department, Ministry of Municipality moderated the discussion, which explored pressing issues such as technology transformation, climate change and global food security threats.

Alumni from both HEC Paris campuses in Qatar and Paris, representing a diverse group of companies specialising in the food and agricultural sector in Qatar and beyond, participated in the event. Among these alumni and entre-



French ambassador Jean-Baptiste Faivre speaking at the event.

preneurs were representatives from Baladna Food Industries, Enbat Holdings, Algama Foods, Agrico, Farm to Plate, Vital Food Technologies, and DiFFERS. Additionally, food security experts, who collaborate with various government entities in Qatar, France, and the GCC, made significant contributions to the discussion.

Panellists shared insights from their entrepreneurial journeys and discussed the role of the private sector in supporting government efforts to address food security challenges.

The discussions emphasised the increased investments in agri-tech and food-tech businesses and pilot projects, highlighting the GCC countries as frontrunners in this field.

Dr Pablo Martin de Holan, dean of HEC Paris in Qatar, said: "Qatar's remarkable progress in the food

security domain is a testament to the power of vision and innovation. Qatar National Vision 2030 is being realised through the steadfast dedication of local enterprises like Baladna, Agrico, and Enbat Holdings, which leverage cutting-edge agri-food technologies and sustainable methods, positioning Qatar as a leading example of food security in arid regions. Our panel discussion highlighted the synergy among the government, private sector, and academic institutions to continue this momentum."

Efi Frager, head of the Economic Department at the French embassy, highlighted in her concluding remarks the importance of fostering a "holistic approach to bring together entrepreneurs, innovators, and institutions to enhance sustainability across the entire food value chain".

QRCS completes second phase of medical convoy to treat eye diseases in Mauritania

In co-operation with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and the National Blindness Control Programme of Mauritania's Ministry of Health, Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) completed phase 2 of the medical convoy to treat eye diseases in Mauritania. The project was completed through the Hamad bin Khalifa Hospital in Boutilimit, operated by QRCS with funding from Education Above All (EAA) Foundation. QRCS said in a statement. Under phases 1 and 2, there were 1,097 cataract surgeries, 39 pterygium operations, and 5,629 medical examinations for the benefit of poor and older people at risk of blindness. Phase 3 is in progress, with a target of 800 surgeries and 2,000 medical examinations for patients in three Mauritanian provinces.

Director of Relief and International Development Division at QRCS Dr Mohamed Salah Ibrahim said: "The project involves multiple medical and surgical campaigns to detect eye diseases and perform cataract surgeries over six months. It seeks to help the poor patients and alleviate their suffering, amid difficult economic conditions of the population and limited medical resources at local hospitals. "I would like to thank IsDB for constantly supporting such projects that have far-reaching health and social outcomes for the target beneficiaries and help reduce disability and loss of sight."

The Hamad bin Khalifa Hospital was established in



2007 in Boutilimit, southwestern Mauritania, under the supervision of, and with support from EAA. It pursues the strategic goal of providing high-quality healthcare at affordable prices for the poor to avoid the need to travel for treatment in Nouakchott or abroad. (QNA)

'One Heart' campaign educates workers

Qatar Charity (QC) has organised health awareness lectures for workers in conjunction with the distribution of winter kits in collaboration with Doha Municipality and Wellkins Medical Centre.

The aim is to educate workers about taking precautions to maintain their health and protect themselves from diseases and infections that may arise due to the cold weather.

Wellkins Medical Centre's social service and media head Vishnu Prasad and community officer Mohamed Shebilly gave lectures in Arabic, English and Hindi.

Abdulahman al-Hajri, director of the Programmes and Community Department at QC, said the initiative is meant to ensure the well being of workers and enhance community engagement. He thanked Doha Municipality



and Wellkins Medical Centre and donors for supporting QC's "One Heart" winter campaign.

QC has distributed winter kits to 1,000 workers this season. The kits have essential winter items, such as jackets, shoes, socks, and blankets.

In addition to the Doha Municipality, the winter kits were distributed to the workers of Al Sheehaniya, Al Jumailiya, and Al Shamal municipalities and to workers of various companies in areas such as Al Kharrara, Al Jeryan, Umm Qarn, and others.

QU college opens Engineering Week 2024

Qatar University (QU)'s College of Engineering (CENG) inaugurated Engineering Week 2024 yesterday, amid the presence of university leadership representatives and participants from various schools.

In a concerted effort to connect with the local community and industry, the event seeks to raise awareness about the college's programmes among high school students and foster stronger connections with the local industry.

Dean of CENG Dr Khalid Kamal Naji said: "Engineering Week and similar university events aim to inspire students to join Qatar University's College of Engineering, motivating them to dedicate efforts to the various technologies and skills the college and university are committed to providing."

He invited all high school students in the country to explore the offerings of Engineering Week, engaging with representatives from diverse programmes, hoping that this event influences students' decisions re-



garding their chosen specialisations at the university, considering the crucial role of engineering in realising the Qatar National Vision 2030.

Among the featured activities during Engineering Week is an exhibition spotlighting CENG's diverse undergraduate programmes, including Chemical Engineering, Computer Sci-

ence and Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Industrial and Systems Engineering, Civil Engineering, and Architecture.

The college is also showcasing the Technology Innovation and Engineering Education Unit through a dedicated booth. (QNA)

Toyota, Range Rover, Honda models recalled

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), in co-operation with Al Abdulghani Motors, has announced the recall of Toyota Raize 2023 model, over a possible damage to the front brake caliper slide pin boot. If the water enters the slide pin boots it will cause rust, which may lead to early wear of the brake pads.

The MoCI, in co-operation with Alfardan Premier Motors, announced the recall of Range Rover Vogue, and Range Rover Sport V8, 2024 model, as it is possible that the oil cooler hose becomes loose or separates, causing significant vol-

umes of engine oil leak onto the road surface, which leads to safety hazard for other road users, especially motorcyclists, and increases the risk of accidents.

The MoCI, in co-operation with Domasco (Doha Marketing Services Company), also announced the recall of Honda Accord, 2023 model, due to a defect in the headlight assist system, which may affect headlight level and focus.

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

The MoCI said it will co-ordi-

nate with the dealer to follow up on the maintenance and repair works and will communicate with customers to ensure that the necessary repairs are carried out.

The MoCI has urged all customers to report any violations to its Consumer Protection and Anti-Commercial Fraud Department, which processes complaints, inquires and suggestions through the following channels: call centre: 16001, e-mail: info@moci.gov.qa, X (formerly Twitter) - @MOCIQATAR, Instagram MOCIQATAR. The MoCI mobile application available on iPhone and Android devices MOCI_QATAR

Dolce & Gabbana celebrates DJWE

By Peter Alagos
Business Reporter

Dolce & Gabbana is celebrating its participation in the Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition (DJWE) 2024 by showcasing a bespoke collection designed exclusively for Alfardan Jewellery.

The collection on display at the exhibition, which will run until February 11 at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC), resonates with local preferences and meets the taste of the luxury community in Qatar.

In a statement to *Gulf Times*, Alfonso Dolce, CEO of Dolce & Gabbana, said: "Dolce & Gabbana renews its focus on the watches and jewellery category after 15 years of activity in the sector, a category which Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana care a lot about, because it represents another soul of the value of handmade, bringing to light some of the lost or undervalued artisanal workmanship of Italian goldsmithing, further enhanced thanks to the use of the best quality natural materials and precious stones.

"Dolce & Gabbana wants to give creative independence to the watches and jewellery category: for example, in June 2023 the brand opened the first stand-alone boutique in Milan. We are honoured to be guests and partners of the Alfardan family, a leader in the market,



and happy to have had the opportunity to participate in the DJWE to offer the unique creations of high jewellery, limited edition jewels, and fine jewellery to an extremely demanding and prepared public, who can appreciate the beauty and the authenticity of these creations.

He added: "The local market has already known Dolce & Gabbana fashion for around 25 years, but today bringing the complete experience of the brand to specific and designed environments, such as the DJWE allows us to open new horizons and new dialogues with customers. This partnership allowed us to work together on some dedicated unique pieces: watches that enrich our collection and adapt our product to the desires and tastes of the local market."

Similarly, Dolce & Gabbana's jewellery and watches collections on showcase at DJWE narrate a unique story, in which the finest Italian goldsmith traditions dialogue with the brand's technical expert craftsmanship and creative strength.

Thanks to priceless gems, original shapes and the refined techniques used in their designs, these creations celebrate beauty, art and the love for expertise. From rings to bracelets, and sautoirs to timepieces, the Dolce & Gabbana fine jewellery and watches and the unique creations of the 'Alta Gioielleria' (high jewellery) and 'Alta Orologeria' (high watchmaking)

collections stand out for their extraordinary wealth of craftsmanship, attention to detail, technical excellence, and surprising colour harmonies.

On the occasion of this year's exhibition, Dolce & Gabbana presents some of its most emblematic creations: from the one-off Alta Gioielleria Sicilia necklace, featuring its exceptional 100.10-carat yellow pear-shape diamond, to the Kosmos Invisible Setting watch characterised by the proprietary DG 01.01 calibre assembled by hand by master watchmakers in Geneva and by the precious diamonds adorning the case, dial, crown, and deployant clasp.

Rings with delicate dangling charms, earrings, and bracelets with classic shapes or more unusual compositions: the Dolce & Gabbana fine jewellery collections - 'Devotion' and 'Easy Rainbow', among others - are a dream to wear every day, thanks to its original design that combines the brand's most iconic codes and a hint of playful irony.



One of the pieces from 'Alta Orologeria' (high watchmaking) collections.



The Dolce & Gabbana booth at DJWE 2024. PICTURE: Thajudheen



Some pieces from the 'Alta Gioielleria' (high jewellery) collection.

Robert Wan - elegance, uniqueness mesmerises visitors



By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

Robert Wan offers a captivating experience for visitors at the 20th Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition (DJWE) by curating a visually stunning display that highlights the elegance and uniqueness of its Tahitian pearls.

A global market leader for the most luxurious and beautifully-crafted Tahitian pearls, the brand showcases its latest collections at the Alfardan pavilion, alongside other luxury brands.

"The booth design will emphasise the elegance and uniqueness of our Tahitian pearls, creating an immersive environment that reflects the brand's essence. We will highlight the exceptional craftsmanship and intricate designs that set Robert Wan apart in the industry," Robert Wan general manager Wafa Habbar told *Gulf Times*.

About their continuous efforts to improve the quality of Tahitian pearls, she elaborated on the brand's five-decade commitment to achieving unparalleled perfection in craftsmanship.

The process, Habbar noted, involves rigorous quality control measures at every stage of pearl cultivation, from oyster production to harvesting and sorting. Robert Wan invests in cutting-edge technologies and collaborates with experts in the field to stay at the forefront of pearl cultivation practices.

Discussing the impact of major events on the luxury jewellery market, she acknowledged the opportunities presented by events such as the FIFA World Cup 2022, saying: "Robert Wan perceives these events as opportunities to showcase our exquisite collections to an



Robert Wan showcases the elegance and uniqueness of Tahitian pearls at the 20th DJWE this year.



"The booth design will emphasise the elegance and uniqueness of our Tahitian pearls, creating an immersive environment that reflects the brand's essence. We will highlight the exceptional craftsmanship and intricate designs that set Robert Wan apart in the industry"

— Wafa Habbar

international audience. The company plans to capitalise on the momentum generated by such events by engaging with the local market through strategic partnerships, exclusive events, and limited-edition releases".

Habbar recognises the growing demand for personalised jewellery, especially in Qatar. Robert Wan's bespoke service allows customers to create unique pieces tailored to their preferences, incorporating personalised touches such as specific pearl sizes, colours, and settings.

She underlined the significance of the Doha market for Robert Wan, noting Qatar's emergence as a key hub for luxury and high-end products. The brand closely monitors local preferences and trends, tailoring its collections to align with the sophisticated tastes of Qatari consumers, often drawing inspiration from the rich cultural heritage of the region.

Habbar also shines a spotlight on how Robert Wan maintains a competitive edge in the luxury jewellery industry. The company, she added, fosters a culture of innovation and creativity, exploring new concepts, materials, and techniques while collaborating with renowned designers and artists to bring fresh perspectives to their collections.

"By embracing innovation and staying attuned to global market trends, Robert Wan ensures that our Tahitian pearl jewellery remains at the forefront of luxury fashion, captivating discerning customers worldwide," she said.



Robert Wan general manager Wafa Habbar at DJWE's Alfardan pavilion (supplied pictures).

Sartoro Jewellery shines with exclusive collections

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

Sartoro Geneve has unveiled its meticulously crafted pieces at the Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition (DJWE) 2024, including the debut of Éclat creation from its Swiss Thematic High Jewellery Collection.

"Our existing collections are the pillars of our Maison, but we always have a new collection to introduce at the show (DJWE) because we love our clients here, and we thank them for their loyalty and trust," Sartoro Geneve co-founder and CEO Arto Artinian told *Gulf Times* on the sidelines of the exhibition.

The renowned luxury brand marks its 10th year at the prestigious event and reaffirms its dedication to the Qatari clientele, showcasing iconic and signature creations. From the stunning Éclat to the captivating Gaia, each piece tells a story of artistry and elegance that reflect the Maison's commitment to timeless design and ethical principles.

Éclat originates from the Swiss Collection, which draws its inspiration from the breathtaking landscapes and cultural heritage of Switzerland, the home-base of Sartoro. Each piece is imbued with the essence of the picturesque mountains, natural fauna, glamorous social gatherings, or iconic architectural marvels of the region.

The Gaia creation pays homage to timeless jewellery design, exuding innate allure while maintaining a delicate, elegant, and self-assured demeanour. As a cherished component of the Maison's High Jewellery collection, this carefully curated selection captivates with its iconic silhouettes and impeccable style.

"This year, we are having our Dualité collection, it's one of our latest fine jewellery novelties launching for DJWE 2024. Dualité has a very unique and distinctive design, an innovative creation.

"Apart from Dualité, we have our high jewellery collections. We as founders, are very passionate in gemstones. We love to collect rubies, sapphires, and diamonds. It has always been our family's backbone," said Arto, who was joined by his brother Saro, who is also co-founder and creative director of the brand.

Another highlight of the Sartoro collections is the Alba High Jewelry Set, symbolising the beauty of new beginnings with its radiant design.

Reflecting on the significance of the 20th DJWE and the 70th anniversary of Alfardan Jewellery, Arto shared his pride in being part of the celebration, saying: "It is very special for us to be here, we are proud to be part of Alfardan Group, our partners, and we feel like family, they welcomed us almost 12 years ago, in 2012, and we are very fortunate to be



part of this great celebration."

He highlighted their strong bond and shared commitment to excellence with Alfardan Jewellery, thanking Alfardan Group chairman Hussain Ibrahim Alfardan for his visionary leadership and his company's profound impact on Qatar's jewellery industry and beyond and Ali Hussain Alfardan, vice chairman of Alfardan Group and president of Alfardan Jewellery for his trust and support in building a strong foundation and future together.

Arto also acknowledged the sophistication of the Qatar market, describing Qataris as jewellery connoisseurs who appreciate quality and craftsmanship.

Regarding DJWE, Arto expressed his admiration, labelling it as one of the premier jewellery exhibitions globally. He lauded the event's refinement, highlighting the exceptional quality of the exhibition, its excellent organisation, and the distinguished calibre of its attendees.



(From left) Sartoro Geneve co-founders Saro and Arto at DJWE's Alfardan pavilion.

PICTURE: Ram Chand



opposing forces that dares to celebrate the beauty of difference (supplied pictures).

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GULF TIMES

Populism’s great replacement of economics

In 1944, as World War II neared its end, the exiled Hungarian economic sociologist Karl Polanyi published *The Great Transformation*, a treatise that focused on the dangers of trying to separate economic systems from the societies they inhabit. Eighty years on, Polanyi’s warnings about a market economy unleashed from human needs and relations may prove prescient. In fact, the future that he foretells bears a strong resemblance to Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, in which the doctor’s creature runs amok and eventually turns on its creator.

That future may be upon us. In 2024, the biggest election year in history, people in dozens of countries, representing half of the world’s population, will go to the polls. The list includes the world’s two largest democracies (India and the United States) and three of its most populous countries (Indonesia, Pakistan, and Bangladesh is already done). And the European Union, comprising nearly half a billion people from 27 countries, will hold parliamentary elections.

Many commentators and experts view this global synchronicity as a kind of plebiscite on the postwar global order. So far, the popular reviews do not look favourable. Some argue that the world is experiencing a “democratic recession,” citing evidence of declining levels of global freedom, authoritarian backsliding, and attacks on free and fair elections. Naturally, all of this raises the question of how we got from the blinding hope that accompanied the end of the Cold War – what Francis Fukuyama famously called the “end of history” – to today’s profound disillusionment.

This year should be a wake-up call for policymakers to heed that no economy exists outside the society that created and sustains it

While democracy has undoubtedly fallen prey to bad actors in countries ranging from Russia to Bangladesh and Pakistan, the current malaise runs deeper and is more fundamental than alarming setbacks to electoral integrity and freedom of expression. Leaders such as former US President Donald Trump, who will likely secure the Republican nomination for another presidential run, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in India, who

informally launched his re-election campaign in January by unveiling a controversial Hindu temple in Ayodhya, seem to be genuinely popular. Their populism and polarising agendas appear to be expressing something real in the global psyche. But what?

After WWII, the world was promised perpetual peace and prosperity – the first to be delivered by political liberalism (in particular, democracy and the rule of law), and the second by neoclassical economics (a highly sophisticated quantitative iteration of economics that any society could adopt).

But in an effort to replace the human touch with the invisible hand, these models were almost purely procedural, devoid of politics, values, and emotions. They were marketed as plug-and-play systems that needed no community or leadership, only infinite individual rationality, requiring minimal engagement with context or cognition.

The problem with this approach is that it ignored Polanyi’s key insight: the economy cannot be “disembodied,” as he put it, from society. After the Industrial Revolution, Polanyi argued, we embarked on a dangerous experiment, attempting to elevate the economy above society and reduce people to commodities within it. The result is a creature that poses an existential threat to its creators.

Seen from this perspective, the likely rejection of the postwar world order this year should not come as a surprise: elements of the narrative have become increasingly prominent in recent decades. The groundswell of discontent with globalisation in the 1990s was interpreted as a geographically confined phenomenon – the growth pangs of regions that had been left behind. By the early 2000s, problems that were once thought to be confined to the developing world – declining growth, rampant inequality, failing institutions, a fractured political consensus, corruption, mass protests, and poverty – began to emerge in developed countries. Many warnings went unheeded: the 2008 global financial crisis, the eurozone’s sovereign-debt crisis starting in 2009, and the United Kingdom’s Brexit referendum in 2016.

Scholarly efforts to understand populism have had only limited success because they are trying to apply a rational lens to what is essentially an emotional response: atavistic fears and instincts triggered by a long-standing disregard for identity, trust, and community. Populist leaders around the world are gaining ground by abandoning the economic arguments advanced by experts and invoking nativistic motifs – the mysticism and magic that, according to German sociologist Max Weber, capitalism had decisively quelled.

This year should be a wake-up call for policymakers to heed the message that Polanyi articulated 80 years ago: no economy exists outside the society that created and sustains it. — Project Syndicate

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Ceaseless Fire



Pakistan seals plan to sell national airline

By Asif Shahzad
Islamabad

Ahead of elections this week, Pakistan’s caretaker administration is making binding plans for a new government to sell loss-making Pakistan International Airlines, according to the minister in charge of the process and other officials.

In the past, elected governments have shied away from undertaking unpopular reforms, including the sale of the flag carrier. But Pakistan, in deep economic crisis, agreed in June to overhaul loss-making state-owned enterprises under a deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a \$3bn bailout.

The government decided to privatise PIA just weeks after signing the IMF agreement. The caretaker administration, which took office in August to oversee the February 8 election, was empowered by the outgoing parliament to take any steps needed to meet the budgetary targets agreed with the IMF. “Our job is 98% done,” Privatisation Minister Fawad Hasan Fawad told Reuters when asked about the plan to sell the airline. “The remaining 2% is just to bring it on an excel sheet after the cabinet approves it.”

Fawad said the plan, drawn up by transaction adviser Ernst & Young, will be presented to the cabinet for approval before the tenure of the administration ends following the election. The cabinet will also decide whether to sell the stake by tender or through a government-to-government deal, Fawad said. “What we have done in just four months is what past governments have been trying to do for over a decade,” Fawad said. “There is no looking back.”

Details of the privatisation process have not been previously reported. PIA had liabilities of Rs785bn

(\$2.81bn) and accumulated losses of Rs713bn as of June last year. Its CEO has said losses in 2023 were likely to be Rs112bn.

Progress on the privatisation will be a key issue if the incoming government goes back to the IMF once the current bailout programme expires in March. Caretaker Finance Minister Shamshad Akhtar told reporters last year that Pakistan would have to remain in IMF programmes after the expiry.

Two sources close to the process told Reuters that a 51% stake with full management control would be offered to buyers after parking the airline’s debts in a separate entity, under the 1,100 page report from Ernst & Young.

Reuters could not independently confirm the contents of the report. Fawad did not give specific details of the size of the stake to be sold, but confirmed the plan involved the carrier’s debts being spun off into a separate entity.

Ernst & Young did not respond to requests for comment.

PIA spokesman Abdullah Hafeez Khan said the airline was assisting the privatisation process, extending “full co-operation” to the transaction adviser.

Besides operational and technical measures for PIA’s divestment, the caretaker government has also amended a 2016 law that had blocked selling off its majority shares, according to a draft posted on the Pakistan parliament’s website.

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz party of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif is tipped by analysts to “win” the election with support from the powerful military. Its main political rival has been decimated by the arrest of its leader Imran Khan and a brutal crackdown on its members.

Sharif’s close aide Ishaq Dar, who has been his finance minister previously and has been named by the party to retain the portfolio if it forms the next government, told

Reuters that the sale of PIA will be fast-tracked.

“It will, God willing, move ahead with fast speed,” he said.

In a report in mid-January, the IMF expressed satisfaction over the measures initiated by the caretaker government to accelerate reforms of state-owned enterprises, specifically mentioning the amendment of the PIA privatisation law.

Under the privatisation plan submitted by Ernst & Young to the government on December 27, government-guaranteed legacy debt and payables – which are held by a consortium of seven domestic banks – will be parked in a holding company, Fawad and two sources involved in the process said.

Fawad said the government and the consortium had an agreement in place regarding the settlement of the legacy debt, which includes negative equity of Rs825bn in loans, creditors’ money and the losses. He provided no further details.

The sources had earlier said the banks wanted a five-year bond issued against the debt with a 16.5% coupon on the paper, while the finance ministry was offering only 10%.

The banks have not commented on the deal. Besides its losses and debt, PIA’s governance and safety standards have been questioned by global aviation authorities for some years.

In early 2020, Czech and Hungarian air force jets were scrambled to intercept a PIA flight with 300 people on board as it went astray due to an “avoidable human error” by its pilot, according to a previously unreported confidential report by a PIA inquiry board, which was reviewed by Reuters.

In May that year, the crash of a PIA plane in Karachi killed nearly 100 people and a fake pilot licence scandal erupted later in 2020.

The scandal led to the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) banning the airline from

flying to its most lucrative routes in Europe and the UK.

The 2020 ban is still in place and has cost the airline nearly Rs40bn in revenue annually, according to government records presented in parliament.

The airline has been pleading with EASA to lift the ban even provisionally, but to no avail, according to correspondence between it and PIA reviewed by Reuters.

Pakistan’s financial crisis has also led to seizure of PIA aircraft by creditors in recent months, according to the airline. One aircraft was taken at Kuala Lumpur airport for non-payment of lease fees, and another in Toronto for non-payment of ground handling, PIA said.

While the airline awaits the government’s decision on a sale, it continues to need financial support: Rs23.7bn are required to keep it afloat for another five to six months before control is given to a new buyer, three government and PIA sources said.

Not everyone agrees with pressing ahead speedily with the sale. Three senior airline officials who spoke to Reuters on condition of anonymity said a fast sale could devalue the airline’s worth, and that it would not be a transparent transaction without due diligence.

“We are not against its privatisation, and all we want is that you don’t just throw it away,” said one of the officials.

But Singapore-based aviation analyst Brendan Sobie said PIA is in dire straits: the plan submitted to the government was “essentially the only option to save the airline.”

“The privatisation will be challenging and a sale is likely not possible unless it first undergoes a deep restructuring and the debts are cleared,” he said.

PIA’s assets include key slots at the world’s busiest airports and air routes to top European destinations, the Middle East and North America.

PIA has air service agreements with more than 150 countries and generates about Rs280bn annually in revenues despite the EU ban, airline records show.

It has 10 slots at Heathrow, which, according to two PIA officials, are currently worth Rs70bn annually. It has a further nine slots at Manchester and four at Birmingham.

Turkish and Kuwaiti airlines have been operating 70% of the slots under a business arrangement with PIA that also allows the airline to retain them, the PIA officials said.

Separately, PIA’s physical assets, which include aircraft, hotels in Paris and New York and other properties, are worth Rs105.6bn (\$375mn) as per book value, according to the airline’s annual report for 2023.

PIA officials, however, said the market value of the assets could be above \$1bn. In any case, the hotels and other properties would not be up for sale, they said.

— Reuters



A Pakistan International Airlines plane prepares to take-off at Allama Iqbal International Airport in Lahore. (Reuters file photo)



PTI voters vow to beat odds in poll today

AFP
Islamabad

Supporters of Imran Khan say they will take evasive measures to cast votes backing the jailed politician in Pakistan's election today, after a major crackdown against his party.

The South Asian nation's poll has already been stained by allegations of pre-vote rigging, with Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party barred from contesting as a bloc, prevented from rallying and censored from the airwaves.

PTI voters say they anticipate polling-day interference and will deploy tactics to blend in with supporters of other parties.

"Flags and badges are for showing off, but the vote is from the heart," said 22-year-old mobile phone salesman Barkat Ullah at an Islamabad market, explaining he would keep a low profile on election day.

"The objective is to vote."

Surveys show 71-year-old Khan still has immense personal popularity despite the muzzling of his party, which has also had its websites blocked and helplines downed.

While PTI has been kept off the ballot, his supporters can still vote for Khan loyalists running as independents.

In Pakistan, voters for each party often travel to polls together trailing party paraphernalia — making allegiances easily identifiable.

But 25-year-old first-time voter Waseem Ali said he would escort



A man looks at a list of contesting candidates and their electoral signs, outside a polling office, set up for general election in Karachi yesterday. **Right:** Pakistani military personnel patrol on a vehicle in Larkana of Sindh province. (Reuters, AFP)

each family member "one by one, to avoid forming a crowd and grabbing attention".

Nearby, Abdul Basit said he planned to travel to vote with supporters of the Awami National Party, which advocates for the rights of ethnic Pashtuns.

But when safely secluded in the polling booth the 28-year-old will stamp his vote for Khan's PTI.

"I feel bad I can't exercise my right to vote freely, but I am going to vote anyway," he said.

PTI insists the establishment will have to carry out "massive" interference in order to tip the result against Khan.

"It may be advisable for (supporters) to hide their identity, their affiliation, to get to the polling station and cast their votes," PTI information secretary Raoof Hasan

Khan to voters: Wait by polling booths after ballot

Jailed former Pakistani premier Imran Khan urged his supporters yesterday to wait outside polling booths after casting their votes, as rival political parties held large rallies to mark the end of the election campaign period. Any large-scale gathering of Khan's supporters near booths could raise tensions because of what they call a military-backed crackdown on him and his party that has restricted campaigning.

"Encourage the maximum number of people to vote, wait at the polling station...and then stay peacefully outside the Returning Officer's office until the final results are announced," said Khan via his handle on social media platform X, accompanied by an undated photograph depicting him wearing simple black clothing. The origin of the image, the first of Khan in months, was not clear. Previously Khan's supporters have disseminated his messages, including through AI-generated audio speeches, from notes he has passed on through his lawyers during prison visits.

told AFP on Tuesday.

"Getting to the polling stations is not going to be blocked for people who belong to any other political party."

Khan enjoyed huge popular support when he became prime minister in 2018's election with the backing of the military establishment.

He was ousted by an April 2022 no-confidence vote after falling out with the top brass, and claims they have since mounted a campaign to sideline him from the February 8 election.

The former cricketing legend has been jailed for months and barred from running, and was hit with a trio of fresh convictions and sentences last week.

Three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif has meanwhile emerged as the front runner, after analysts

said he received the blessing of the military.

Monitors have told AFP the military establishment — which effectively has the power to make governments rise and fall — is presiding over today's vote with a heavy hand unprecedented in recent history.

Pakistan's elections have historically been marred by accusations of interference.

"In recent years tactics have graduated from the crude stuffing of ballot boxes to 'pre-poll rigging' — short-hand for denying candidates known to be out of favour with the military room to campaign freely," Farzana Shaikh of the Chatham House think tank wrote last week.

Seven in 10 Pakistanis lack confidence in the integrity of their elections, polling agency Gallup said this week, noting the figure "ties previous highs" but "represents a significant regression in recent years".

"Many now fear that the return of Sharif's party can only be secured through unacceptably high levels of election engineering," Shaikh said in her analysis.

In Islamabad, Hassan Ali pledged he would march towards his polling station to vote sporting PTI badges and flags, playing party songs.

"How many are they going to stop?" asked the 28-year-old. "I'm not scared of anyone."

But if he's turned away he "will join any other party's crowd" to cast a vote backing Khan.

"The country is run by the people," he insisted.

Senate defeats border deal, Ukraine, Israel aid may survive

Reuters
Washington

Republicans in the US Senate yesterday defeated a bipartisan effort to bolster border security that had taken months to negotiate, but said they could still approve aid for Ukraine and Israel that had been tied up in the deal.

By a vote of 49-50, the Senate failed to approve a \$118bn bipartisan package that would tighten immigration laws, help Ukraine fight a Russian invasion and bolster Israel in its war with Hamas.

The measure needed 60 votes to advance, in the chamber, which Democrats control by a 51-49 margin.

For months, Republicans have insisted that any additional aid to the two US allies must also address the high numbers of migrants arriving at the US-Mexico border — a top voter concern.

But many Republicans promptly rejected the package when it was released on Sunday, even though it contained many of their priorities. Former president Donald Trump has pressed them to reject any compromise as he campaigns to defeat Democratic President Joe Biden in the November election.

"Some have been very clear with me they have political differences with the bill," said Republican Senator James Lankford, one of the negotiators.

"They say it's the wrong time to solve the problem, let the presidential election solve the problem."

Independent Senator Kyrsten Sinema, another one of the deal's authors, said she was baffled by the sudden shift in fortune.

"Three weeks ago, everyone wanted to solve the border crisis," she said. "Yesterday, nobody did."

Still, the defeat of the bill left open the possibility that Congress could yet provide much-needed aid to US allies. The Senate was expected later in the day to vote on a \$96bn package that strips out the immigration provisions but leaves the foreign aid intact.

An aide to Republican Senator Roger Wicker predicted that a foreign-aid package would get well over 60 votes in the 100-seat chamber — a rare show of cross-party support.

Even if it passes, that aid faces uncertain prospects in the House of Representatives, as Republicans who control that chamber have balked at further support for Ukraine.

"We'll see what the Senate does. We're allowing the process to play out," House Speaker Mike Johnson told reporters.

5 Marines missing after copter found near San Diego

Five US Marines were missing yesterday after the wreckage of their helicopter was found in a remote area east of San Diego hours after it went missing in a mix of heavy rain and snow. The CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter was found by civil authorities in Pine Valley at about 9am, some eight hours after it was reported overdue when it failed to reach the Marine Corps Air Station in Miramar, California, the Marine Corps said in a statement. The 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing along with the San Diego County Sheriff's Department and the Civil Air Patrol were conducting a search and rescue effort for the five crew members, the Marines said. The crew had been on a routine training flight that had originated in Creech Air Force Base in Nevada on Tuesday night,

Stolen Van Gogh returned in IKEA bag displayed again

A precious Vincent van Gogh painting stolen and then handed to a Dutch art sleuth in an IKEA bag was displayed yesterday for the first time since its headline-grabbing return. The 1884 "Parsonage Garden at Nuenen in Spring", worth up to €6mn (\$6.8mn), was unveiled to media at a Rotterdam museum, with damage from the theft still visible. A deep white scratch can be seen at the bottom of the canvas. "I would call this a severe one because it goes through all the layers, the varnish, the paint layers, and then into the ground layer, which is white," said the painting's restorer Marjan de Visser. "Underneath is the original canvas, which is also a little bit damaged," de Visser told AFP, adding the damage probably



The painting of Vincent van Gogh titled "Parsonage Garden at Nuenen in Spring", which was stolen and then handed to a Dutch art sleuth, is on display during a press viewing in Rotterdam yesterday.

came from the painting bumping into something hard. De Visser said she was

conducting a thorough investigation into the painting, examining the materials used,

previous restorations, how it was mounted. "Without knowing, you can't do anything, you can't make a proposal for its conservation," she said. She has already removed dirt from the painting and started taking off some of the varnish, preparatory steps for the restoration proper. Yesterday's showing was just for media, but the public will be able to view the painting from March 29 in Groningen Museum, in the north of The Netherlands. The painting was stolen in a daring midnight heist during the March 2020 Covid-19 lockdown from the Singer Laren Museum near Amsterdam, when it was on loan from Groningen. Video footage released by police showed a thief smashing through a glass door in the

middle of the night, before running out with the painting tucked under his right arm. The painting's whereabouts was unknown for three and a half years before sensationally resurfacing in the possession of an art sleuth dubbed the "Indiana Jones of the Art World." A man, whose identity was not revealed for his own safety, handed back the painting to Arthur Brand in a blue IKEA bag, covered with bubble-wrap and stuffed in a pillow casing. The painting comes from relatively early on in Van Gogh's career, before the prolific artist embarked on his trademark post-impressionist paintings such as "Sunflowers" and his vivid self-portraits. "This is how the young Van Gogh painted, before he went to art academy in Antwerp," said De Visser.



The Prince of Wales gestures as he walks to attend London's Air Ambulance charity gala dinner yesterday. (Reuters)

William fills royal void during Charles cancer treatment

Prince William returned to work yesterday following his father King Charles III's shock cancer diagnosis as his estranged brother Prince Harry prepared to fly home to the United States after rallying to his father's side. With Charles, 75, undergoing cancer treatment following Monday's shock announcement and William's wife Catherine recovering from abdominal surgery, the heir to the throne found himself thrust back to the frontline of royal duties. Charles's eldest son, William had postponed public engagements to care for his wife, the Princess of Wales, and their three children after she was admitted to hospital on January 16 for an operation. But yesterday he was back on duty, hosting an investiture ceremony at Windsor Castle, west of London, for citizens being recognised for their community work and other good deeds. It had been three weeks since he last appeared at a major royal event. At the same time, Harry arrived back at Heathrow airport for an expected flight back to the US, around 24 hours after he jetted in. The prince, dressed casually in jeans, a T-shirt and jacket, was pictured by *The Sun* daily arriving at the VIP Windsor Suite at

Heathrow's Terminal 5. William, 41, was later due to attend a London Air Ambulance fundraising gala. Charles, who left London on Tuesday for his Sandringham residence in eastern England, will meanwhile hold his weekly meeting with Prime Minister Rishi Sunak by telephone for a change. "We have agreed with the palace in this specific instance to confirm that they will be speaking on the phone later," Sunak's spokesman said. William is expected to take on some of his father's duties while he undergoes treatment, alongside Charles's sister Princess Anne and his wife Queen Camilla. Buckingham Palace has not specified the type of cancer the monarch has, although it is understood not to be prostate cancer and Sunak has said it was "caught early". The diagnosis comes just 17 months into Charles's reign following the death of his 96-year-old mother, Queen Elizabeth II, on September 8, 2022. Duke of Sussex Harry's return sparked speculation it could serve as a catalyst to heal the family tensions that have blighted Charles's reign.

Twin blasts kill 28 on election eve

AFP
Pishin

At least 28 people were killed yesterday by two separate bomb blasts outside the offices of election candidates in southwestern Pakistan, on the eve of a national vote marred by violence and allegations of pre-poll rigging.

More than half a million security officers were deploying ahead of today's election, with authorities distributing ballot papers to more than 90,000 polling stations.

There have been multiple security incidents in the run-up to the vote, with at least two candidates shot dead and dozens more targeted in attacks across the country.

"The aim of today's blasts was to sabotage the election," said Jan Achakzai, caretaker information minister for Balochistan province, where the blasts happened.

"Despite today's blasts, the election will take place tomorrow. People of Balochistan will come out tomorrow without any fear."

The Islamic State group claimed the deadly bombing.

IS fighters "blew up a motorbike" rigged with explosives "at an election gathering" in Balochistan's Pishin district, the group said in a statement on the Telegram messaging app.

A first improvised explosive device (IED) blast killed 16 people near the office of an independent candidate in Pishin district, around 50km from the city of Quetta and 100km from the Afghan border.

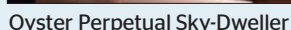
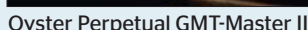
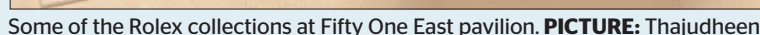
A second IED killed 12 people near the election office of a candidate for the Islamist Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-F (JUI-F) party in the city of Killa Saifullah — about 120km east — according to Achakzai.

"The incident took place in the main bazaar of the city area, where the election office of the JUI-F was targeted," a senior police official told AFP.

Achakzai said a total of 34 people were injured in both attacks.

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

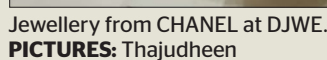
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By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

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