



TUESDAY Vol. XXXV No. 12947

March 12, 2024
Ramadan 2, 1445 AH

www.gulf-times.com 2 Riyals

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Plea to strengthen national identity among students

The Shura Council yesterday reviewed a proposal submitted by a member related to strengthening national belonging and identity among Qatari students in private schools. The proposal included reconsidering the legislation regulating uniforms in private schools by adding rules that obligate all Qatari male students to wear the Qatari traditional clothing, and Qatari female students to wear clothing in accordance with values, customs and traditions of the Qatari society. **Page 2**

50 hurt as Boeing 787 just dropped mid-flight

At least 50 people were hurt when a Boeing 787 operated by LATAM Airlines dropped abruptly mid-flight from Sydney to Auckland yesterday. The aircraft experienced a strong shake and as a result 10 passengers and three cabin crew members were taken to a hospital, the South American carrier said. The flight with 263 passengers and nine cabin crew members landed at Auckland airport as scheduled yesterday afternoon. **Page 13**

Kate apologises for photo edit confusion

Kate, Britain's Princess of Wales, issued an apology on social media yesterday for "any confusion" caused by an edited photograph which had been issued by her office Kensington Palace the previous day. "Like many amateur photographers, I do occasionally experiment with editing," the message on X said. "I wanted to express my apologies for any confusion the family photograph we shared yesterday caused." **Page 13**

Russian advance halted: Zelensky

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday that Russian advances had been "halted" in Ukraine and the situation was now "much better" for his troops than in recent months. The Ukrainian leader also said that Ukraine was in the process of building over 1,000km of fortifications.

RAMADAN THOUGHT

And fear a Day when you will be returned to Allah. Then every soul will be compensated for what it earned, and they will not be treated unjustly [Qur'an 2:281]

Prayer times

Fajr...4.30; Zuhr...11.44; Asr...3.08; Maghrib...5.44; Isha...7.14

Fasting times

Iftar today 5.44pm
Imsak tomorrow 4.19am

Amir receives well-wishers on advent of Ramadan

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani received a host of well-wishers on advent of the holy month of Ramadan at Lusail Palace yesterday evening. His Highness the Amir received HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, HE the Speaker of the Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem, Their Excellencies sheikhs, ministers, undersecretaries of ministries, members of the Shura Council and citizens. His Highness the Amir shared the congratulations with the crowds of well-wishers on this honourable occasion, asking Allah the Almighty to bestow upon Qatar and its people the blessings and goodness. His Highness Personal Representative of the Amir Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad al-Thani, His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Khalifa al-Thani, His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Khalifa al-Thani, and HE Sheikh Jassim bin Khalifa al-Thani, alongside a number of sheikhs attended the reception ceremony. (QNA) **Page 16**



Ramadan brings no relief as war rages in Gaza

● Massacre toll mounts to 31,112

AFP
Gaza Strip

The first day of Ramadan yesterday arrived like others for Palestinians in war-ravaged Gaza: stalked by famine and disease, shivering in tents and threatened by bombs more than five months into fighting between Israel and resistance movement Hamas.

As the Muslim world welcomed the holy month and its customary daytime fast, many Gazans faced bombardment that saw residents once more search through the rubble of destroyed homes for survivors and bodies.

A UN report, citing the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza, said 25 people have now died from malnutrition and dehydration, most of them children.

Gazans are feeling the shortages even more during Ramadan.

"We don't know what we are going to eat to break the fast," Zaki Abu Mansour, 63, said inside his tent. "I have only a tomato and a cucumber... and I have no money to buy anything." Goods that are available are sold



Palestinians share an Iftar meal, on the first day of the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan, at a camp in Rafah yesterday.

at exorbitant prices, residents say.

Fighting raged across Gaza, even as UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for "silencing the guns" during the Muslim holy month and said he was "appalled and outraged that conflict is continuing".

Guterres also appealed for removal of "all obstacles" to aid delivery.

Hamas authorities reported at least 67 people killed since

Sunday, with more than 40 air strikes across the territory.

Israel's bombardment and ground offensive has killed 31,112 Palestinians, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's health ministry.

Israel was checking whether Hamas's deputy military leader had been killed in an airstrike in Gaza, Israeli media said, as prospects faded of talks securing a ceasefire.

Ooredoo gears up for transition to 5.5G era

Ooredoo Group is preparing for the transition to the 5.5G era by evolving its core networks across key markets in partnership with Huawei.

The partnership will see the modernisation of Ooredoo's core networks in Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Iraq, Tunisia, Algeria, and the Maldives, paving the way for next-generation 5G services.

Under the agreement, Ooredoo and Huawei will collaborate to upgrade all core networks to state-of-the-art 5GC (5G Core) service-based architecture. This evolution will enable the delivery of innovative services and enhanced connectivity experiences to customers in the region.

Aziz Aluthman Fakhroo, Group MD and CEO, Ooredoo, said: "With a focus on continuous innovation, Ooredoo is committed to delivering transformative con-

nectivity solutions that will upgrade our customers' experiences and meet their evolving demands in this digital age. The transition to the 5.5G era is a pivotal step in this journey and our partnership with Huawei is key to continue providing best-in-class services across our markets."

The core network plays a crucial role in connecting various industry networks, communications networks, and the Internet, facilitating the roll-out of new services and their commercialisation.

Li Peng, president of ICT Sales and Services, Huawei, said: "This agreement is an important step forward to foster our long-term strategic partnership with Ooredoo. Huawei is committed to providing industry-leading technology to ensure the realisation of this project and help Ooredoo achieve business success."



Aziz Aluthman Fakhroo, Group MD and CEO, Ooredoo, and Li Peng, president of ICT Sales and Services, Huawei, during the signing ceremony.

Today's **GULF TIMES** includes an 8-page supplement on

RAMADAN

Kareem



Shura reviews proposal on promoting national identity in private schools

QNA
Doha

The Shura Council held its weekly meeting yesterday, under the chairpersonship of its Speaker HE Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem.

At the outset of the meeting, HE al-Ghanem extended greetings in his name and on behalf of members of the Shura Council to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani on the advent of the holy month of Ramadan, asking Allah Almighty to return it to the Amir, the Qatari people and all those residing in Qatar with good and blessings, and to the Arab and Islamic nations with security, peace and stability.

Afterwards, the Shura Council reviewed a proposal submitted by a member of the council related to strengthening national belonging and identity among Qatari students in private schools. The proposal included views aimed at strengthening students' national identity, including reconsidering the legislation regulating private schools with regard to clothing, by adding regulations that obligate all Qatari male students to wear the traditional clothing, and female students to wear clothing in accordance with values, customs and traditions of the Qatari



The Shura Council in session.

society, thus preserving the national identity in private schools.

The proposal included other views related to determining the specifications of school uniforms for each grade and age, as well as performing the national anthem and raising the state flag in schoolyards or on the buildings of private schools that have Qatari students. Members of the Council discussed the proposal and decided to submit it to the esteemed government.

Meanwhile, the Shura Council was briefed on the opinion of the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee regarding the response of the Cabinet's General Secretariat to the proposal submitted by the Council related to

inflation, high costs of living and increasing financial burdens on citizens, and took the appropriate decision thereon.

The Shura Council also reviewed the report on its delegation's participation in the meeting of the Standing Committee on Political Affairs of the Asian Parliamentary Association (APA), which was held in Baghdad in November 2023; and another report on its participation in the 45th conference of the International Women's Empowerment and Capacity Building (Tamkeen), which was held in Kuwait in December 2023 under the title "New Reading of the Challenges Facing Women's Empowerment for Sustainable Development".

Official

Al-Muraikhi, Spanish FM discuss Gaza

HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi received yesterday a phone call from Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Alvarez. During the call, they discussed co-operation relations between the two countries and the latest developments in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories. **(QNA)**

Third forum of Qatari Military Attaches held



Third Forum of Qatari Military Attaches was held in Doha yesterday, in the presence of HE the Chief of Staff of Qatar Armed Forces Staff Lieutenant General (Pilot) Salem bin Hamad al-Nabit. During the forum, HE the Chief of Staff thanked the Qatari military attaches for their efforts in consolidating and developing relations between Qatar and brotherly and friendly countries, and urged them to make more efforts to continue progress. **(QNA)**

Firm, consistent Qatari position in supporting Sudan to overcome crises: report

Qatar is always keen to play a leading role in providing aid based on its humanitarian and moral role and commitment to its responsibility as an active partner in the international community.

In this context, it continues its generous giving and tireless efforts in supporting the containment of crises in brotherly and friendly countries and extending a helping hand to the afflicted peoples without exception and discrimination or compensation, as its goal is only to alleviate the suffering of those affected by crises of all kinds around the world, and to operate air bridge-

es to transport hundreds or even thousands of tonnes of relief aid, in response to the emergency and urgent circumstances.

Out of awareness of the human suffering that the brotherly Sudanese people are currently experiencing, the ongoing humanitarian and non-humanitarian support and assistance to the Sudanese people comes under the generous directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani.

The death toll and injuries and the number of internally displaced people or refugees outside Sudan have doubled as a result of what is

happening in Sudan now, in addition to the material losses and major destruction of infrastructure and public and private facilities in the capital Khartoum, and several other cities and states.

Additionally, there is evident damage to water, electricity, and Internet networks, which greatly increased the suffering of civilians for more than 10 months, in light of the acute shortage of services, food and medical supplies, and the horrific security chaos. In the context of Qatari support for Sudan in its current crisis, the State operates an air bridge of vital humanitarian

aid to the brothers there, including food, health, shelter, water, and other shipments through planes belonging to the Amiri Air Force.

In light of the complexities of the Sudanese scene since the beginning of the war and the worsening suffering of the brotherly people of Sudan, HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani participated in June 2023, via video conferencing, in the High-level Pledging Event to Support the Humanitarian Response in Sudan and the Region, which was co-chaired by the State of Qatar,

Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Germany, UN, represented by Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the European Union, and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, where HE Sheikh Mohamed announced that Qatar pledged to provide \$50mn to support efforts of the humanitarian response plan in Sudan and the regional refugee plan, stemming from Qatar's fraternal responsibility and moral and humanitarian duty towards its brothers in Sudan, and in continuation of its constant humanitarian and development efforts in the sisterly Sudan.

With the continuation of humanitarian suffering of the Sudanese people and the worsening negative repercussions of the war on them, HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater visited Sudan.

During the visit, she met with Sudanese officials, oversaw the project of distributing 50,000 food baskets, met with officials of UN organisations and international agencies operating in Sudan, and inspected several hospitals and visited patients. **(QNA)**



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Qatar Charity launches ‘Endless Giving’ campaign in Somalia

Qatar Charity has launched projects for the Holy Ramadan season in Somalia for the year 1445 AH (2024) within the framework of starting to implement its Ramadan campaign “Endless Giving” outside Qatar, in the presence of Qatar’s ambassador to Somalia Dr Abdullah bin Salem al-Nuaimi, and Deputy Director of the National Disaster Management Authority Dr Ahmed Abdel Adam, QNA reported from Mogadishu.

Qatar Charity’s Ramadan projects contribute to helping poor, needy families and displaced families in Somalia meet their basic needs during the holy month, bringing joy to the hearts of orphans and enhancing social solidarity among members of the society.

Ramadan projects include distributing 3,540 food baskets to poor and needy families, providing Eid clothing for 300 orphans, and distributing Zakat al-Fitr to 6,675 families.

Dr Adam expressed his gratitude to Qatar and Qatar Charity for their continued support to the Somali people in the development and humanitarian fields.

He stressed that the projects implemented by Qatar Charity in Somalia will contribute significantly to alleviating the suffering of poor and needy families.

He pointed out that Qatar’s support for the Somali people comes within the framework of its commitment to strengthening co-operation between the two brotherly countries, and its keenness to help the Somali people achieve development

■ **Qatar Charity’s Ramadan projects contribute to helping poor, needy and displaced families in Somalia meet their basic needs during the holy month, bringing joy to the hearts of orphans and enhancing social solidarity among members of the society**

and stability. Director of Qatar Charity’s office in Somalia Abdel Fattah Adam Moallem explained that these projects come within the charity’s campaign to help needy families and orphans, as the number of beneficiaries is expected to reach more than 10,000 families.

The projects include distributing food baskets containing basic supplies such as rice, sugar, flour, oil and powdered milk, in addition to distributing Eid clothing to orphans.

Moallem pointed out that Qatar Charity will continue to provide humanitarian aid to the Somali people in various fields, out of its belief in its duty towards the poor, the needy, and groups affected by disasters.

He thanked the charitable donors in Qatar for their generous support for these projects, which

has contributed to alleviating the suffering of needy families and orphans in Somalia.

It is worth noting that the projects of Qatar Charity’s “We Affect” campaign outside Qatar will be implemented through its field offices and partners in 40 countries around the world. These projects that will be implemented outside Qatar are divided into two main parts: seasonal and various developmental ones.

The cost is QR335mn and is expected with the support of philanthropists. The number of beneficiaries should reach 3.3mn people.

The projects will focus on crisis and disaster areas such as Palestine, inside Syria, Somalia, Yemen, Bangladesh (including Rohingya refugees) and the poorest countries. (QNA)



Food safety drive held in Al Sheehaniya Municipality

Al Sheehaniya Municipality Health Control Section has carried out an intensive inspection campaign on vegetables outlets at different shopping complexes, and the Al Sheehaniya Yard for selling local agriculture products to ensure that the products on display are fresh and good for human consumption. Besides, 35 food samples were taken from local retailers and sent to the central laboratories to make the necessary tests and examinations. The campaign is set to go on all through the holy month of Ramadan.

EAA, IRC enhance access to education for conflict-hit children in Nigeria

Education Above All Foundation’s (EAA) Educate A Child programme and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) announced the successful completion of their collaborative project, “Improving Access to Education for Conflict-Affected Children in Northeast Nigeria.”

The two-year initiative targeted the enrolment of out of school children (OOSC) in the Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe States of Northeast Nigeria, areas severely affected by extremist violence and insurgency.

Against a goal of reaching 20,000 of the most marginalised OOSC with quality primary education, the project not only met, but exceeded this goal by ultimately enrolling 21,589 children between the ages 7 to 14 into non-formal education, surpassing the target by 8%. The establishment of 643 non-formal education centres within community primary schools, along with the renovation of 29 classrooms, has provided these children with a much more conducive-learning environment.

Moreover, the joint project achieved significant success in transitioning enrolled children into the formal education system, thereby bridging the education gap. In addition, bursary support, in the form of scholastic materials (exercise books, pencils, and a school bag) at the point of enrolment, proved critical and reached 14,213 children (7,268 girls and 6,945 boys) across 48 formal primary schools in the BAY States.

In response to concerns related to the volatile security situation, the project implemented robust mechanisms to enhance the safety of children travelling to and from school and during their time at school.

Executive Director of EAA’s Educate A Child programme Dr Mary Joy Pigozzi expressed her appreciation at the project’s achievements in light of the challenges that conflict poses.

She noted: “This project exemplifies our commitment with our partners to providing quality primary education to those affected by barriers beyond their control,

in this case, insecurity and conflict. Exceeding the OOSC enrolment target is not only a testament to the positive impact we can have on the lives of children, but the fact that we can enable children to realise their right to education in extremely challenging circumstances as well.”

For his part, IRC Country Director in Nigeria Babatunde Ojei said: “Our collaborative project with the Education Above All Foundation marks a significant milestone in our shared mission to provide quality education to conflict-affected children in north-east Nigeria.

The successful completion of this initiative underscores the transformative power of education in restoring hope and stability to communities ravaged by violence and insecurity. We remain steadfast in our commitment to improving education access for vulnerable children, recognising it as a cornerstone for building resilience and fostering a brighter future in regions affected by conflict.” (QNA)



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Zakat Affairs Department distributed more than QR235mn in aid last year

The Zakat Affairs Department at the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs distributed a total of more than QR235mn in aid last year.

According to a statement from Awqaf, more than 8,800 families received aid in 2023, totalling QR235,067,786 disbursed by the department to support needy families inside Qatar.

“This assistance is divided into two types:

one that is provided to families monthly to help them with their needs, and the lump sum aid that is provided to families once according to need,” said Zakat Affairs Department director Saad bin Omran al-Kuwari.

The aid is distributed to the families that deserve Zakat.

Al-Kuwari explained that the Zakat Affairs Department is the government entity that has been assigned by law the jurisdic-

tion to collect Zakat funds and distribute them to those entitled to them.

The largest amounts disbursed by the administration are for permanent and lump sum aid, which this stood at 59.52% of the total aid.

The education fees aid for university and school students stood at 19.89%, while the aid for debtors stood at 9.37%.

Of the total aid, 2.03% was spent on treat-

ment assistance and the Zakat al-Fitr assistance rate stood at 0.85%.

Al-Kuwari said that the Zakat Affairs Department has processes in place to ensure the eligibility of requests for assistance.

The department receives Zakat from individuals and companies throughout the year through offices and collection points spread across the country or through the Department of Zakat Affairs application.



Saad bin Omran al-Kuwari

QNB launches campaign to coincide with Ramadan



QNB's special Ramadan campaign coincides with the bank's celebration of its '60 years of banking excellence'.

QNB Group has launched a special campaign on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan, which includes offers and events for employees and benefits for customers.

This year's Ramadan campaign coincides with the bank's celebration of its “60 years of banking excellence”, and reflects QNB's commitment towards strengthening its banking leadership in the region and working towards the group's vision of becoming one of the leading banks in the MEASEA (Middle East, Africa and Southeast Asia) region.

Special Ramadan advertisement

QNB launched a Ramadan advertisement with a special appearance by the Kuwaiti star actress Huda Hussain, titled *May your doors remain open with kindness*.

The idea of the television advertisement revolves around encouraging everyone to visit family during Ramadan, and inviting everyone to have Iftar and Suhoor with their relatives and loved ones, reflecting the Arab hospitality and generosity.

Exclusive discounts for QNB First members

The bank has announced an exclusive campaign for QNB First members, which runs until April 9.

During the campaign period, members can benefit from exclusive discounts at QNB First lifestyle programme partners, from hotels, restaurants, to health and beauty stores, shopping, across Doha.

Double rewards with Talabat and QNB Life Rewards

QNB launched a campaign in partnership with Talabat during Ramadan, through which it offers customers special discounts and the opportunity to double their “Life Rewards” when using QNB credit cards on the Talabat application.

The campaign enables customers to benefit from the Life Rewards loyalty programme and redeem their points when using their QNB credit cards for various purchase transactions, whether made locally or internationally, whether in store or online.

Sponsoring Ramadan tents

QNB has announced its sponsorship of several Ramadan tents that provide the finest Iftar and Suhoor experiences



during the holy month with a distinctive atmosphere and a special family vibe for an experience that showcases Arab hospitality with a global flair, reflecting the bank's commitment to supporting the local community as part of its social responsibility.

QNB also announced its platinum sponsorship of the Layali Katara Ramadan Tent at the Chedi Katara Doha Hotel and Resort, one of the most luxurious hotel destinations for local guests and visitors.

The bank also announced its sponsorship of the Oum-siat La Cigale Ramadan Tent at La Cigale Doha Hotel, one of the leading hotels in the field of high-end hospitality in the Middle East, which offers unique Iftar and Suhoor experiences.

Employees and customers will be able to enjoy these unique experiences in Ramadan tents throughout the holy month in an atmosphere characterised by hospitality, sophistication and luxury.

QNA wins Arab news agency award for tourism coverage

The Qatar News Agency (QNA) has won the best Arab news agency award that primarily focuses on tourism news, as announced by the Arab Tourism Media Union on the 2024 Arab Tourism Media Awards during the International Tourism Exchange (ITB) show held in Berlin.

The QNA broadly covers tourism news in Qatar, including the variety of tourism festivals, and spotlights the diverse tourism elements in Qatar.

The Arab Tourism Media Union award is the most important in tourism media in the Arab region and primarily intended to honour innovators and influencers in this field, in addition to promoting excellence and innovation in tourism media content.

The awards are annually distributed and include a multitude of categories such as press reports, best TV programme, best tourism website, and best media campaign.

Qatar, represented by Qatar Tourism, took part in the ITB that took place on March 4-7 in Berlin.

– QNA

Louis Philippe and Van Heusen expand their global presence by launching new stores in Qatar



From left: Jacob John, President - Premium Brands, Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Limited; Celebrated Malayalam actor Manoj K. Jayan; Popular Bollywood producer Antony Perumbavoor; Hassan Ahmed Moammed Al Mal along with Dr. Hassan Kunhi, Chairman of HK Group

Louis Philippe and Van Heusen, two distinguished powerhouses in the fashion world, are poised to broaden their international presence with an exciting expansion in Qatar. These brands are unveiling two new flagship stores in a strategic collaboration with HK Group, symbolizing a pivotal leap in their mission to bolster their physical retail footprint and enhance the consumer shopping experience in the GCC region. The launch was honored by the attendance of celebrated Malayalam actor Manoj K. Jayan and popular Bollywood producer Antony Perumbavoor.

Louis Philippe and Van Heusen are prominent brands by Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Limited (ABFRL), part of a leading multinational conglomerate, The Aditya Birla Group.

The brand's latest expansion is an exclusive store located in the prestigious Mall of Qatar's first floor. This space showcases a curated selection of globally inspired fashion solutions, designed to integrate flawlessly into the modern active lifestyle, embodying the brand's commitment to innovation and functionality.

Jacob John, President - Premium Brands, Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Limited stated, “It is a testament to our commitment to provide high-quality fashion solutions and superior shopping experiences. We are thrilled to bring

Louis Philippe and Van Heusen closer to our customers in Qatar with our second exclusive outlets for both brands. This expansion aligns with our ambitious growth strategy as we continue to expand our retail footprint across the globe, following recent openings in Mauritius and the UAE.”

Dr. Hassan Kunhi, Chairman of HK Group expressed, “The launch of the Louis Philippe and Van Heusen stores in Mall of Qatar represents a significant expansion for both brands in the Qatar market. With a focus on men's and women's fashion, these brands introduce a wide range of stylish and versatile clothing options, further enhancing the shopping experience for our valued customers. The launch of these stores is a testament to our commitment to offering the latest fashion trends and reflects our confidence in the Qatar market.”

Louis Philippe's Qatar store showcases the Permapress Collection for wrinkle-free formal wear, Gods and Kings for special occasions, and Luxure for luxurious apparel. The modern Athwork range introduces innovative fabrics. While, Van Heusen's second Qatar flagship features the Move Labs collection, offering sophisticated fashion for globe-trotting professionals, seamlessly combining elegance with innovation and functionality.



The Expert Group Meeting (EGM) took place in Kuala Lumpur.

DIFI holds meeting in Malaysia on how megatrends impact the family

The interlinkages between migration, urbanisation, climate change and technological and demographic trends were raised at an event organised by the Doha International Family Institute (DIFI), a member of Qatar Foundation (QF), during the Expert Group Meeting (EGM) held in Kuala Lumpur.

The meeting highlighted the New Urban Agenda and explored ways to achieve inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities, and envisaged outcomes, including underlining the impact of migration on family structures and analysing strategies for optimising the benefits of technology while minimising its drawbacks on family relationships.

The meeting also discussed the policy lessons learned from Asia that can be applied globally, and the potential contributions of global experiences to the Asian context, interlinkages between migration, urbanisation, new technologies, and climate change, said the statement issued by the QF.

The event was held in partnership with the Malaysia's National Population and Family Development (LPPKN), the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), and the International Federation for Family Development (IFFD), the statement continued.

LPPKN director-general Ab-

dul Shukur Abdullah began the event by discussing families and megatrends, and the importance of understanding a rapidly and ever-changing world.

“The four megatrends require proactive responses that create opportunities and challenges to shape our present and future,” he said. “The Expert Group Meeting provides excellent opportunities for us to take the necessary measures to tackle the remaining and emerging challenges towards achieving the New Urban Agenda.”

“Malaysia is honoured to be part of this programme and we hope this fruitful collaboration will continue for many years as we unite in pursuit of common goals,” the official added.

“The profound interaction between the megatrends, and the fixed family ties, constitutes a landscape of interconnected forces,” said DIFI director Dr Khalid al-Naama. “As individuals migrate, cities develop, technology advances and demographics shift, families stand at the heart of these transformations.”

Speaking about families in Asia, IFFD director of communication and international relations Ignacio Socias said that they are facing a dynamic landscape shaped by the four megatrends globally that are being studied for the 30th anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF).

“Demographic trends influence family structures and sizes, impacting social dynamics and resource allocation,” he said. “The rapid integration of new technologies transforms daily life, altering communication patterns and access to information.”

“Migration patterns often lead to separated families, challenging traditional support systems and cultural norms,” Socias added. “Urbanisation brings opportunities and challenges, reshaping living environments and family lifestyles affecting the well-being of Asian families.”

Focal point of the UNDESA's Family at the Division for Inclusive Social Development (DISD), Renata Kaczmarek, said: “As we are celebrating the 30th anniversary of the IYF in 2024, we have been focusing on the impact of megatrends on families at regional levels.”

“The Expert Group Meeting held in Malaysia has contributed to the understanding of the impact of megatrends on families, especially in terms of fertility and family formation in the region,” she said. “The importance of investing in parenting education assisted by new technologies has been highlighted as needing co-operation between government agencies, civil society, academia, and the private sector in overall family policy development and implementation.” – QNA

10,000 people to benefit from Qatar Charity's "Ramadan Supply" Project

Qatar Charity (QC) distributed shopping coupons to low-income families, widows, and community members to purchase essential supplies as part of the "Ramadan Supply" project that aims to benefit 10,000 individuals within Qatar in the blessed month at a cost estimated at QR 2.5 million.

The project is part of Qatar Charity's Ramadan campaign "Endless Giving" and comes under the "Feed the Fasting" projects.

Most of the vouchers were distributed during the days preceding Ramadan, while the distribution will continue until the early days of the holy month.

The "Ramadan Supply" project aims to support low-income families by providing essential food supplies they need, promoting positive societal values.

The project is implemented through the distribution of shopping vouchers to low-income families. These families present the vouchers to the selected commercial centers to receive the essential food supplies.

It is worth mentioning that Qatar Charity's Ramadan campaign encompasses numerous significant projects within Qatar. Approximately 920,000 people are expected to benefit from these Ramadan projects valued at QR over 95 million, with the support from of benevolent people in Qatar.

The campaign's projects include Mobile Iftar for Workers, Mobile Iftar, Iftar for Expatriates, Eid Gifts for Orphans and Children of Low-income Families, Assistance through the "Alaqraboon" platform, in addition to cultural, social, and volunteer programs and events.



Qatar Charity simplifies Zakat calculation and payment for benefactors

Qatar Charity (QC) has brought many easy, smart, and secure ways to help benefactors calculate and pay their Zakat during the blessed month of Ramadan.

The 'Zakaty' app and the digital portal for Zakat are integrated tools that Qatar Charity provides for every philanthropist looking for the easiest and the best way to calculate the Nisab of Zakat.

The 'Zakaty' app and the digital portal for Zakat are integrated tools that Qatar Charity provides for every philanthropist looking for the easiest and the best way to calculate the Nisab of Zakat. The app has an easy-to-use calculator for all types of assets (wealth, stocks, livestock, gold)) subject to Zakat. Additionally, the app has an option to request expert assistance from Qatar Charity for Zakat calculation.

The app provides services for both individuals and companies to calculate and pay Zakat, keeping



their information safe, secure, and confidential.

Qatar Charity has a Zakat section headed by an expert, who calculates Zakat for commercial activities, in addition to calculating it for individuals. The expert can be reached through 55035744 / 44290152.

Working Hours

Qatar Charity has meticulously outlined the working hours for the dedicated employees of the Zakat section as follows:

- First Shift: From 10:00 AM to 03:00 PM
- Second Shift: From 09:00 PM to 12:00 AM (midnight)
- Friday: From 09:00 PM to 12:00 AM (midnight)

Diverse Services

Moreover, Qatar Charity goes the extra mile by offering a 'Home Collector' service for donors, ensuring that benefactors can effortlessly contribute from the comfort of their homes.

Qatar Charity goes the extra mile by offering a 'Home Collector' service for donors, ensuring that benefactors can effortlessly contribute from the comfort of their homes.

Besides, Zakat can be paid through collection points in markets, malls, hospitals, and other locations, in addition to paying Zakat at Qatar Charity's branches across the country.

It is worth noting that Qatar Charity has 33 branches, including 22 for men and 11 for women, across the country. Furthermore, it has 94 collection points, in addition to 2,209 collection boxes, as well as 47 donation devices that aims to meet donors' aspirations for easy and secure contributions in a way that ensures confidentiality and security.

People can contact the call center at 44667711, where the center staff efficiently redirect callers to a Zakat calculation expert. The expert, in turn, addresses any inquiries related to Zakat, providing valuable assistance and guidance.



QU Health wins award for pavilion at Alumni Reunion 2024

Qatar University Health (QU Health) was honoured with the distinguished college award in recognition of the engaging and captivating pavilion at the Alumni Reunion, which embodied the essence of roots and branches.

Dr Alla El-Awaisi, director of Clinical Operations and Engagement at QU Health, received the award from QU president, Dr Omar al-Ansari, and the president of QU's Alumni Association,

HE Sheikh Dr Faleh bin Nasser al-Thani.

QU Health's corner was transformed into a symbolic 'Roots & Branches' tent, meticulously designed to reflect the history of QU Health colleges, while embracing the limitless possibilities that lie ahead.

The corner, with its intricate design and attention to detail, became a visual representation of how QU Health is finessing its past and nurturing the fu-

ture of its students.

As a graduate of QU, the vice president, Health and Medical Sciences, Prof Asma al-Thani said: "This recognition not only celebrates our collective achievements but underscores the significance of unity, collaboration, and the profound impact of interconnected efforts within QU Health's journey. Alumni events are more than just trips down memory lane, they are also a chance to revisit the foundations of your education and

rediscover the values that shaped who you are."

Dr Alla El-Awaisi expressed gratitude for the recognition and credited the success of the QU Health pavilion to the collective efforts of QU Health's dedicated team. Dr El-Awaisi stated: "Our pavilion, situated within the reunion event, serves as a testament to QU Health's dedication to shaping the future of health through teamwork, innovation, inspiration and adherence to core values."



Dr Alla El-Awaisi receives the award from QU president as HE Sheikh Dr Faleh bin Nasser al-Thani looks on.

QIIB unveils 'Best Financing' campaign in partnership with Qatar Airways

QIIB has unveiled the 'Best Financing' campaign during the holy month of Ramadan, in partnership with Qatar Airways Privilege Club, offering members with competitive profit rates and a chance to enter a draw for millions of 'Avios'.

The benefits that come with this campaign include personal, car, and real estate financing. Customers will also receive an opportunity to enter the draw for every QR10,000 financed, with a chance to be one of 20 winners of 1mn 'Avios' each. The offer has a grace period of up to 12 months.

For a seamless experience, customers can avail of the 'Best Financing' offer from QIIB throughout Ramadan by visiting any bank branch or using mobile and online banking, round-the-clock.

QIIB Deputy CEO Jamal Abdullah al-Jamal congratulated the Qatari people and residents on the occasion of Ramadan.

He emphasised the campaign's competitive features tailored to diverse customer segments, aligning with the speed and flexibility characteristic of the bank's services and products.

"The offer, which is designed to meet the needs of a broader customer base, is available to the bank's customers and those of other banks who transfer their salaries and commitments to QIIB, aiming to benefit from the numerous offers, advantages, and innovative services we provide."

Highlighting the collaboration with Qatar Airways



QIIB Deputy CEO Jamal Abdullah al-Jamal



Privilege Club, al-Jamal expressed pride in the extended partnership, benefiting both parties and customers who see QIIB as a leading bank and Qatar Airways as a globally reputable airline.

Ehab Amin, senior vice-president (Qatar) at Qatar Airways, said, "As we approach the holy month of Ramadan, we are delighted to collaborate with QIIB to bring Qatar Airways Privilege Club members opportunities to collect bonus Avios on their financing options.

"This partnership campaign with QIIB demonstrates our dedication towards enriching our leading loyalty programme for valued members, and strengthening our loyalty partnerships to benefit our members with further rewarding opportunities."

Detailed information about the 'Best Financing' offer during Ramadan from QIIB can be obtained through the bank's website, social media pages, or by contacting the bank's call centre.

MoPH launches National Oral and Dental Health Survey

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has launched the 3rd National Oral and Dental Health Survey for adolescent male and female students aged 12-16 in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Hamad Medical Corporation, Primary Health Care Corporation, the Medical Services Department at the Ministry of Interior, Qatar University and Qatar Energy.



Sheikh Dr Mohamed bin Hamad al-Thani.

The survey targets about 2,300 students in public and private schools. It aims to find out dental caries and gum disease prevalence among students in all public and private schools participating in the survey in Qatar for the age group 12-16.

MoPH recently organised a number of training workshops for the medical staff participating in the implementation of the survey. The workshops, conducted by specialised doctors, included advanced hands-on training on the survey steps.

Sheikh Dr Mohamed bin Hamad al-Thani, director of the Non-Communicable Diseases Prevention Programmes Department, Ministry of Public Health, said that the survey

contributes to getting more accurate results on oral and dental healthcare level among male and female students from the target group and relevant health problems.

A specialised and trained medical team examines the students participating in the survey through a mobile clinic, and the examination includes filling out a questionnaire by the students' parents. The survey contains questions related to food eaten by young students to determine the percentage of caries they have and to identify the relationship between the type of food and the rate of caries, in addition to assessing the impact of oral health on the lives of young students. At the

end of the examination, students will be advised on their need to see a dentist.

The survey contributes to providing officials and supervisors of oral health in Qatar with the necessary information to make recommendations on how to reduce the spread of oral and dental diseases and develop optimal plans for their prevention.

MoPH is also getting ready to launch the fourth national oral health survey for adults aged 18 and above, as part of the ministry's keenness to include all segment of the society in dental surveys to promote awareness and provide high-quality oral and dental health services in Qatar.

MoPH conducted two other surveys, the first in 2011 and the second in 2017, during which they found out the prevalence of tooth decay among male and female students, Qatari and non-Qatari, in addition to identifying the relationship between the level of oral health information and health practices, including dietary habits. It was found that the rate of tooth decay among school students at that time was about 85.4%.

Qatar Mobility Innovations Centre adopts C-V2X technology

In preparation of the country-wide adoption of Vehicle-to-everything (V2X) technology and applications, Qatar Mobility Innovations Centre (Qmic) announced the readiness of its V2X platform to support the new Cellular-V2X (C-V2X) standard and technology, in addition to the traditional Dedicated Short Range Communication (DSRC) standard, that has been already supported.

By supporting both technologies, the C-V2X and the DSRC-V2X, Qmic's V2X platform can enable the rapid adoption of V2X in the country and region.

C-V2X is a cellular-based communication technology that allows vehicles to communicate with other vehicles, infrastructure, pedestrians, and networks.



Qmic announces readiness of its V2X platform to support the new Cellular-V2X.

It can utilise the existing cellular network infrastructure, such as LTE and 5G, but as needed it runs in a direct mode

where the vehicle can communicate with the vehicles around it through a direct wireless link and without passing through the cellular infrastructure.

The first benefit of V2X is enabling active road-safety applications, where V2X allows the vehicle to collect timely information about other vehicles around it as well as its environment.

This information is crucial when it comes to avoiding accidents. Other benefits include traffic efficiency, where V2X can provide the vehicle and the road users with rich localised information such as the status of traffic along with alternative routes.

Additionally, V2X is considered as an enabler for autonomous vehicles.

In fact, V2X is a valuable sensor that can improve the accuracy of the other autonomous-driving sensing technologies. For example, contrary to lidar and other line-sight sensors, V2X can offer a view that can go longer in terms of distance and also in terms of crossing obstacles and in all weather conditions.

With this new implementation, Qmic now supports both C-V2X and DSRC-V2X technologies in order to increase preparedness and readiness towards the country-wide implementation of the technology.

Qmic has successfully piloted both technologies, DSR and C-V2X, and has been working with its national partners and stakeholders to plan the next step in

making Qatar the first country in the region to adopt V2X technology.

Dr Hamid Menouar, principal R&D & Innovation lead at Qmic, "Both C-V2X and DSRC-V2X are aimed at improving road safety, traffic efficiency, and enabling advanced vehicle services. They have slightly different technical implementations but share the common goal of facilitating communication and collaboration between vehicles and their environment. The choice between C-V2X and DSRC-V2X will depend on various factors, including regional infrastructure and regulatory requirements. In any case and in whichever direction the country and region decides to go in the future, we are ready to support both technologies."

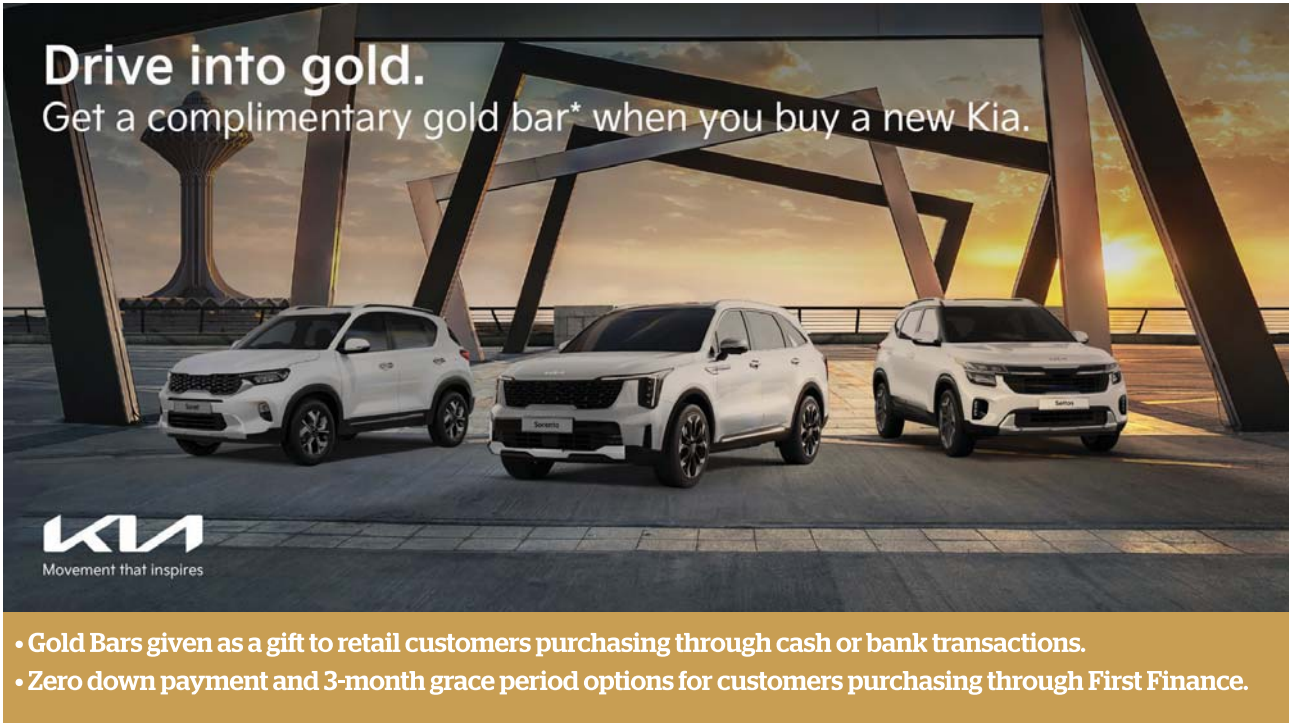
Kia Qatar kick starts Ramadan with its Golden Offer

Wishing to give their valued customers a precious gift for Ramadan, Al-Attiya Motors and Trading Co. (AMTC) has launched its Golden Offer for Kia models in the Qatar market. The headliners of the promotion include, 24-karat Gold Bar gift (up to 2 Tola weight), free periodic services for 1-year or 10,000kms. (whichever comes first) and free registration. Kia Qatar also tied up with First Finance who can provide generous zero down payment and 3-month grace period options as well as the usual competitive financing rates.

The offer is valid for individual customers with purchasing through cash or bank. The offer comes after an eventful past year that saw Kia Qatar reach their highest sale unit sales and a 4% year on year growth.

"We are happy to announce the start of the offer of Kia Qatar this year for the local market during the holy month of Ramadan. This is a gesture of our appreciation for our clients, for their continued preference for Kia as a comfortable, modern and reliable family car," as mentioned by AMTC in a statement.

Showing no signs of slowing down, Kia has gone from strength to strength



- Gold Bars given as a gift to retail customers purchasing through cash or bank transactions.
- Zero down payment and 3-month grace period options for customers purchasing through First Finance.

in the past year with several citations from reputable organizations covering a wide array of areas such as safety, design and overall ride capability and comfort.

Examples of these are Top Safety Pick+ from the Insurance Institute of Highway Safety (IIHS) in the USA and Five-star ratings from the Euro New Car Assessment

Programme (NCAP) for safety; record-number of awards in a single year for the distinguished J.D. Power Automotive Performance, Execution and Layout

(APEAL) Study in 2023 with seven (7) models ranking number one in their segments; and even highly significant accolades at the iF Design Award 2023 for the Company Branding category and Shop / Showroom Interiors category for the Kia Store Identity (showroom).

This year serves as no exception with the official launch of the Kia EV lineup locally, starting with the globally acclaimed EV6 performance crossover. The EV6 is an EV meant to be driven joyfully with its excellent handling dynamics and powerful acceleration as well as modern EV tech such as fast-charging capabilities with 80% in 18 minutes, Vehicle-to-Load (V2L) capability to enable powering of appliances through the car in off-road situations. Prospective customers are encouraged to schedule test drives with the Sales Consultants to truly experience what the difference the EV6 has over its competition.

Interested parties can visit Kia Qatar's website, www.kiaqatar.com, to know more about the wide range and award-winning cars that are available to choose from. More details on cars and promotions are found in the website and through the Sales Consultants at both the Al Sadd and Kia City showrooms.

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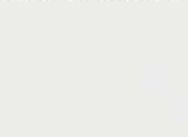
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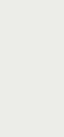
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QIB celebrates Ramadan with ‘Double Loyalty Points’ on supermarket spends

Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB) is celebrating the holy month of Ramadan by offering customers the exclusive ‘Double Loyalty Points’ campaign. Running until April 10, 2024, the month-long campaign uplifts the rewards experience for credit card holders, offering them the opportunity to double their points with every supermarket purchase of daily essentials during this festive season.

Following the success of last year’s campaign, which ran throughout Ramadan, QIB unveiled its second edition, inviting customers to embark on another rewarding journey. During the campaign, customers can choose from a range of eligible cards, including co-brand cards, such as Qatar Airways and Marriott Bonvoy, Visa and Mastercard credit cards, and indulge in their supermarket shopping.

To double the points, the minimum of each transaction should be equal to or more than



QAR1,000 with local and international supermarkets at any POS, including online local or international purchases. The maximum loyalty points that customers can receive is 25,000 per customer, which will be credited by the end of May 2024 in the customer’s respective Absher, Avios, or Marriott Bonvoy accounts, adding an extra layer of delight to their journey.

D Anand, QIB general manager – Personal Banking Group, said: “During the holy month of

Ramadan, there is a significant increase in supermarket spending. By enhancing the shopping experience and doubling rewards, we extend our connection with the community we serve, reaffirming our commitment to supporting them during this holy season. We are pleased to once again offer our customers the opportunity to maximise their rewards during Ramadan.”

For more information, visit <http://www.qib.com.qa/en-ramadanoffer>

HMC holds international conference on obstetrics and gynaecology

The Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Women’s Wellness and Research Center (WWRC), Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) hosted ‘Qatar International Conference on Obstetrics and Gynaecology’ recently at Sheraton Grand Doha.

The conference focused on a comprehensive agenda covering topics ranging from general obstetrics and gynaecology to reproductive health, maternal-foetal medicine, gynaecologic oncology, urogynaecology, and fertility issues. The conference, geared towards fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, spanned three days, commencing with first day morning preconference workshops at the ITQAN Clinical Simulation and Innovation Centre – a state-of-the-art facility under HMC.

The inaugural day continued with opening ceremony, welcome address, keynote lecture and networking events. Subsequently, the following two days were dedicated to core conference activities at the same venue. These days featured a diverse range of sessions including lectures, interactive workshops, informative oral and poster presentations, thought-provoking panel discussions and paper presentations.

Attendees experienced abun-



The conference focused on topics ranging from general obstetrics and gynaecology to reproductive health.

dance of opportunities for learning, collaboration, and staying updated on the latest advancements in obstetrics and gynaecology.

Dr Salwa M Abuqaqoub, conference chair as well as senior consultant, WWRC, said: “Our conference covered topics ranging from general obstetrics and gynaecology to reproductive health, maternal-foetal medicine, gynaecologic oncology, urogynaecology, fertility issues and interdisciplinary collaboration. We are very proud of all the attendees who have grabbed the opportunity to be part of this international conference advancing

women’s health: unveiling global trends, progression, and innovation.”

Dr Moayyad Younis, co-chair and senior consultant as well as chair of gynaecology, WWRC said the conference participants attended diverse sessions including lectures, informative oral and poster presentations, panel discussions and paper presentations. “We believe that our conference participants have had transformative experience, and their participation has contributed to the enhancement of healthcare practices and the betterment of women’s well-being worldwide,” he added.

Padel competitions at Education City



Edu Franza talks about padel’s growing popularity. **PICTURES:** Shaji Kayamkulam

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

The Dome Padel Club is poised to host padel competitions post-Ramadan, capitalising on the sport’s growing popularity in the country, according to its head coach and sports manager, Edu Franza.

“People who play padel here in Qatar are so interested in the sport, not only to play in a friendly way but also they like to compete so we are planning to organise some kind of ranking,” he told reporters at a recent tour to the padel facilities at Education City.

Franza said they also intend to host major tournaments at The Dome Padel Club and at Education City Golf Club, which saw the construction of several world-class padel courts. Teaming up with Adidas Padel, he noted that these indoor and outdoor sports facilities (including dedicated ladies-only courts) at Education City offer superior turf and exceptional materials, promising unparalleled quality and performance.

Open to Qatar Foundation members and non-members from 7am to 12 midnight, Franza said people can book lessons and play through the Playtomic ap-



World-class padel facilities at The Dome Padel Club.

plication. “We are also working on some kind of membership so people can enjoy the bookings and the lessons,” he said, adding that discounts would also be offered. About the sport’s increasing appeal and rapid growth, Franza highlighted its strong social aspect as it draws people into the vibrant padel community.

“It’s not that you need a long time to learn the right technique, people can easily pass the ball to the other side and enjoy (the game). It doesn’t mind your level (of play), your age, and you can enjoy the sport from the very beginning. It is one of the many things that makes padel very attractive,” he pointed out. This kind of accessibility, Franza said, led to a surge

in players, underlining the sport’s inclusive nature and its emphasis on enjoyable learning experiences. He noted that the country has just hosted one of the most important tournaments during the year, the Ooredoo Qatar Major Premier Padel 2024, held recently at the Khalifa International Tennis and Squash Complex.

Franza stressed that Qatar has solidified its status as an international hub for padel, as Qatar Sports Investments now owns the professional circuit, World Padel Tour. With dedicated efforts to foster the sport’s expansion, he said the country is at the forefront of advancing padel worldwide, making it the premier destination for players and enthusiasts.



ECGC also hosts a number of padel courts.

Msheireb Museums fosters spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation

In line with its vision to be a platform for community engagement and education, Msheireb Museums recently hosted a panel discussion exploring the intersection of entrepreneurship and technology.

Held in collaboration with the Youth Entrepreneur Club, the event aimed to inspire and enlighten young Qatari entrepreneurs.

The panel took place recently at Msheireb Downtown Doha (MDD). As a locale steeped in Qatar’s entrepreneurial heritage, the setting served as the ideal backdrop for rich discussions on innovation and business development. “We are committed to raising awareness on topics that empower our local community,” Msheireb Museums’ acting general manager Abdulla al-Naama said.

“Entrepreneurship and technological advancement are key drivers for Qatar’s continued growth. Through insightful dialogue, we hope to cultivate an environment where our youth can thrive as business leaders and pioneers.”

The event featured prominent speakers from the entrepreneurial and technology sectors who shared valuable insights from their journeys. Panellists examined how startups can leverage cutting-edge tools and digital transformation to



The event featured prominent speakers from the entrepreneurial and technology sectors.

gain a competitive edge.

Youth Entrepreneur Club president Ibrahim al-Sulaiti expressed his appreciation for the platform provided by Msheireb Museums, saying: “At the Youth Entrepreneur Club, we aspire to a future where every young man and woman has an active role in building Qatar’s vibrant economy. We focus on empowering youth by providing them with tools, knowledge, and opportunities to become tomor-

row’s leaders and entrepreneurs who bear the responsibility of shaping our nation’s future.”

Amid the historical surroundings of MDD, participants were reminded of the region’s longstanding legacy as a hub for trade and business innovation. By nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit among its youth, Msheireb Museums reinforces its role as a contemporary space for sparking new ideas that shape the future.

‘Diplomat for a Day’ initiative empowers women in diplomacy, international affairs

In celebration of International Women’s Day, women leaders representing nine embassies and international organisations in Qatar convened for the fifth consecutive year to host the ‘Diplomat for a Day’ (DFAD) programme.

This initiative paired 20 young women from Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q) with senior women diplomats and officials to gain first-hand insight into the realm of diplomacy and international affairs.

US deputy chief of mission, Natalie Baker, praised the programme, saying: “The Diplomat for a Day programme is a fantastic initiative highlighting the critical role of women in promoting peace and security. It gives me hope for the future to see such talented and driven individuals, including numerous Qatari women, who will undoubtedly make a significant impact in their chosen fields and in advancing Qatar’s National Development Strategy and National Vision 2030.”

US Embassy Doha hosted a tea reception on March 7, providing a platform for students to network and interact with women lead-



Natalie Baker, Isabelle Martin, and other senior women diplomats with GU-Q students.

ers from around Qatar. Attendees included participating GU-Q students and women diplomats from nine embassies and international organisations, Qatari partners, and prominent figures from the Qatari media, education, business, and cultural sectors.

Reflecting on her experience shadowing, GU-Q student Moza al-Kaabi said: “My options post-graduation were wide, but now they are even wider after seeing how influential the women in the field are. I don’t have to have everything figured out right now I

have time to join the Foreign Service. The possibilities are even bigger than what I imagined.”

Ambassador of Canada Isabelle Martin, who served as the official 2024 DFAD programme co-ordinator on behalf of all participating missions, added: “Diplomat for a Day is an opportunity to demonstrate the power of investing in women. From education to diplomacy to entrepreneurship, supporting women benefits everyone! Gender equality builds healthier, more prosperous, and more inclusive communities.”

CUC Ulster University hosts International Women’s Colloquium

CUC Ulster University recently hosted the 3rd International Women’s Colloquium while featuring women achievers and holding panel discussions. Themed “Inspire Inclusion,” the colloquium served as a beacon for gender equity and empowerment, featuring distinguished guest speakers who shared their inspiring journeys and emphasised the rising prominence of women in STEM careers.

Among the esteemed speakers were Dr Noora Fatis al-Marri, Founding Secretary-General of the Arab Association for Cybersecurity and Associate Professor at Qatar University (QU), Shaika al-Nasser, Director-Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) with Qatar Museums (QU), Raida Abdulsalam, Founder and Chairwoman at Al Jedad Holding, Shams al-Qassabi, Entrepreneur and Qatar’s first woman to create innovative spice mixes and food combinations and Professor Jackie McCoy, Ulster University Belfast, Northern Ireland, Associate Dean of Global Engagement.

In a profound recognition of Qatar’s Vision 2030, discussions during the colloquium highlighted the pivotal role of women’s equity in achieving the country’s expected growth, particularly in STEM-related fields. Qatar’s ambitious National Vision aims to transform the nation into an advanced society of innovation and progress,



with female empowerment at its core. However, the attainment of such objectives hinges crucially on harnessing the full potential of its female workforce.

Dr Faris Gorashi, Executive Dean of CUC Ulster, said the event was held to honour the indomitable spirit and remarkable achievements of women around the world. “Inclusion is not just a buzzword; it’s a cornerstone of our values, shaping a diverse and vibrant community where every voice is heard and every story matters.” The active participation and leadership of women in STEM fields are essential for driving innovation, fostering economic growth, and ensuring Qatar’s competitiveness on the global stage,” Dr Faris said.

The opening address was presented by Komal Beg, Dean of Operations at CUC Ulster University. The moderator of the event was Eman al-Abdulla, who is a student at CUC Ulster University’s MBA Women in Leadership programme. Lamese Abrahams, Director of

Education for ACES, addressed the group with an exciting preview of the new CUC Ulster University campus being built in Lusail and set to open this September.

In addition, inspiring messages from the university faculty were shared via video amplifying the event’s impact. Students from CUC Ulster University also contributed messages of support adding to the collective spirit of empowerment. According to a statement from CUC Ulster University, the event, broadcast live on YouTube, attracted a diversified global audience from over 40 countries, underscoring the universal importance of gender equity and inclusivity in achieving sustainable development goals.

Michael Stellwag, MBA, Head of Marketing and Recruitment at CUC Ulster University, emphasised the significance of the day’s proceedings. “Together, we can build a future where equality and diversity are not just ideals but ingrained principles that guide our actions,” he said.

Objectives of fasting

Allah, the Almighty, enjoined fasting on His servants not to make them suffer, nor that He, the Almighty benefits from their fasting, as He is not in need of His servants and the acts of worship they offer.

Rather, Allah enjoined fasting in order to benefit His servants in the worldly life and in the Hereafter, physically and spiritually, and in relation to their morals and religion. Allah, the Almighty, evidently mentioned in the Qur'an the intention of fasting is to become righteous. Moreover, the one who reflects on the objectives of fasting will find that these benefits are limitless and beyond description.

According to Ibn al-Qayyim, fasting acts like a rein for pious people, protection for fighters, and a sport for righteous people and those drawing closer to Allah. It is also offered for the sake of Allah more than any other act of worship and is considered a secret between Allah and His servant as no one else sees it. Fasting has an amazing impact on guarding the outward limbs and inward powers and protecting them from anything that may spoil them or make them unsound. Fasting protects the heart and the organs and restores to them that which illegal desires have stolen from them, as fasting is the greatest helper with piety.

The benefits of fasting include the following:

Fasting maintains the power of Allah's servant and protects him from the diseases which are caused by repletion and satiety, as the stomach is the home of disease and diet is the basis of remedy. Imam Ahmad, Imam At-Tirmithi, and Imam Ibn Majah reported from Al-Miqdam Ibn Ma'd Yakrib, may Allah be pleased with him, that he heard the Messenger of Allah, sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam (may Allah exalt his mention), saying: "No man fills a utensil worse than his stomach. A few morsels that keep his back upright are sufficient for a man. If eating is necessary, he should fill one-third with food, one-third with drink, and leave one-third



for easy breathing." (Saheeh Al-Jami'a, 5674)

The fullness of one's stomach leads to the arousal of desires and enables Satan to control the person and lead him to sins, evils, and abominable acts, as satiety and gluttony lead to all evils. Al-Qurtubi said: "Whenever a person decreases the amount of food he eats, his desire will be weak; whenever the desire becomes weak, acts of disobedience will decrease."

When the stomach becomes full, the person becomes inclined to acts of disobedience and oppression, but when a person fasts, he becomes calm, tenderhearted, and tranquil. Therefore, the person who fasts is protected from all evils, preserved from all abominable acts, and guarded against all pitfalls. The two Saheeh (authentic) Books of Hadith (Saheeh Al-Bukhari and Saheeh Al-Muslim) stated the following Hadith: "Fasting is a protection against sins." Ibn Mas'ood, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Messenger of Allah, sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam, said: "He who can afford to marry should marry because it will help him refrain from looking at other women, and save his private parts from committing illegal sexual relation; and he who cannot afford to marry is advised to fast, as fasting will di-

minish his sexual power." (Imam Al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim)

Fasting guards the servant's organs, as Jabir Ibn Abdullah said: "If you fast, then let your hearing, sight, and tongue refrain from lying and forbidden deeds; do not annoy your servant, and be dignified and tranquil on the day of your fast; do not let the day when you fast and the day when you do not fast be the same."

Al-Musnad and Saheeh Al-Bukhari stated that Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet, sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam, said: "Unless one abandons falsehood and indecent deeds, Allah will have no need in his abstaining from food and drink."

The intention for the acts of worship and the result of the acts of obedience is piety, as Allah, the Almighty, Says in the Qur'an (what means): {O mankind, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, that you may become righteous} [Qur'an 2: 21]

Piety is also one of the greatest objectives of fasting, as fasting is the main act that leads to piety. Moreover, the person who fasts in the manner prescribed by the Messenger of Allah should attain piety, as Allah, the Almighty, Says (what means): {O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous} [Qur'an 2: 183]

Due to the above-mentioned reasons, fasting is an act of worship offered sincerely to Allah Alone, as Allah singles it out for Himself. Although all the other acts of worship are for the sake of Allah, fasting has some speciality with regard to sincerity, rather than any other act of worship. This is in accordance with the Sacred Hadith: "All the deeds of Adam's sons (people) are for them, except fasting which is for Me, and I will give the reward for it." (Imam Al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim)

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



Ramadan cannon being fired at Souq Waqif to mark the end of the fasting on the first day of Ramadan. A large number of people who had gathered to witness were also offered food kits to break the fasting on the first day of Ramadan this year. **PICTURES:** Shaji Kayamkulam

Ramadan cannon: sound of a tradition that lives on

The holy month of Ramadan has unique spiritual atmospheres that can hardly replicate in the rest of months of the year.

The holy month features exclusively religious rituals on the map of the Islamic world. One of the traditions that has been associated with the holy month is Ramadan cannon which launches the first sound shot when the time for Maghrib call to prayer comes for Muslims to break their fast.

Speaking to Qatar News Agency (QNA), the writer and researcher in history and heritage Mohamed Hammam Fikri says Ramadan is the month of sacred whiffs, as well as good customs and traditions that nurture those traits during the whole month, such as the renowned traditions in Egypt since the Mamluk era.

He added that the most known sayings indicated that the cannon was found by coincidence, because there had been a new cannon that was about to be tested with the sunset so as to alert all people who hear the sound that the time has come for breaking their fast.

The cannon shot was originally a live round and would be placed far off until the time comes for breaking fast, Fikri highlighted, adding that it was eventually inherited and transferred to the neighbouring countries, including Qatar, but its origin can be traced back to Egypt, then moved to



Turkiye. Fikri said Qatar has been using the cannon as one of the most critical rituals of Ramadan. The cannon is named Warida in the local language. Earlier, mothers would send children to climb the roof of the houses to hear the first shot implying that the time had come for breaking fast, especially in the areas that are far away from mosques.

As per some historians, the cannon is the most important media for the people of Qatar besides its merit during the prayer time, as people fast and break the fast based on the sound of the cannon.

As for Qataris when sunset approaches, they circle around the Iftar table, waiting for the cannon sound as it coincides with the call to Maghrib prayer.

Qatari women also ask the young ones to either go out to the

yard or go up to the roof of the house, moments before sunset to wait for the sound of the cannon, or watch its flash and smoke rising in the sky, to inform them about the time for breaking fast.

Ramadan cannon was set up in recent years in both Souq Waqif and the southern side of Katara. In the past it used to be in a number of areas such as Al Koot Fort, next to the Eid prayer hall in Jasra, the old Salata area, the new Rayyan area, Al-Khalifat area, and until recently on Corniche (near the post office).

Currently, the cannon is set up in Souq Waqif and Katara, where people from all classes, especially children, visit to see it in action. Soldiers in uniform stand in a military arrangement behind the cannon, waiting for the order to give the signal to fire it, coinciding with the call for Maghrib prayer. **(QNA)**

QU professors stress significance of Ramadan

At the commencement of the sacred month of Ramadan, several professors from Qatar University's (QU) College of Sharia and Islamic Studies have discussed the impact of Ramadan on individuals and the Islamic community.

These scholars at QU also explored the preparations for Ramadan, emphasising noteworthy activities and events that the college will organise throughout the month.

Dr Mohamed Abdelrashid Soufi highlighted the tradition of early generations, who supplicated six months in advance for the arrival of Ramadan. According to him, righteous actions such as studying fasting rules, exploring the virtues of Ramadan and engaging in preparatory acts like fasting in Sha'ban and committing to Qur'anic recitation help believers anticipate and welcome Ramadan in a manner pleasing to Allah (SWT).

Dr Mohamed Ahmein mentioned that the college is organising four religious competitions during Ramadan for university students. These competitions include memorising and reflecting on specific Qur'anic verses, as well as understanding grammatical texts. Dr Mohamed also noted that prizes are awarded to the winners, and the college plans to hold daily sessions in the university mosque after the dhuhr prayer, featuring discussions led by professors on the contemplation of Qur'anic verses.

Dr Ibadah al-Tahan highlights the significant virtues of the month of Ramadan. He describes it as a time of abundant blessings, mercy and forgiveness, emphasising the importance of devout worship, including fasting during the day and praying at night.

Dr al-Tahan underlined the spiritual significance of Ramadan, with special mention of the profound blessings in its last ten

nights, including the remarkable night of Laylat al-Qadr, surpassing the goodness of a thousand months.

Dr Turki al-Marri emphasised the significance of fasting during Ramadan as a fundamental pillar of Islam. He highlights its role in promoting piety, as believers abstain from physical needs and exercise patience against the desires of the soul. Fasting serves to avoid sins and endure challenges in both religious and worldly matters.

Dr Omar al-Khatib noted that Ramadan is a time when the gates of paradise open, the gates of hell close, and the devils are chained. Each night brings emancipation from the fire, with the Night of Qadr surpassing the goodness of a thousand months.

Al-Khatib underscored that Ramadan is a period of divine mercy, fostering compassion among believers, and a time of multiplied rewards, lightened burdens and answered prayers.

Awqaf's food kit distribution to benefit more than 4,000 families

The General Administration of Endowments at the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs (Awqaf) will distribute food kits to more than 4,000 families during Ramadan.

The initiative is implemented in co-operation with Hifz Alnaema Centre.

This was announced during a press conference that was attended by the director general of the General Administration of Endowments Sheikh Dr Khalid bin Mohamed bin Ghanem al-Thani, Hifz Alnaema Centre executive director Ali Ayed al-Qahtani and several directors and section heads in the department. Al-Thani said the initiative is one of the pioneering schemes by the department and it has been functional since the beginning of Covid-19 to distribute food kits to needy families.

"We announce the continuation of the initiatives that will benefit a large group of needy families," Al-Qahtani expressed his thanks to the General Administration of Endowments for implementing the project and co-operating with the centre. He urged the benefactors to take part in the initiative and contribute to this charity through various endowment methods.

The initiative has had a good impact on the beneficiaries, in addition to many praises from those interested and following community affairs.

The initiative is aimed at promoting the culture of giving and spreading the spirit of compassion among the different segments of society, and sharing giving with needy families during Ramadan, which is the month of giving.

UDST opens admissions for Fall 2024 semester

University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) has announced that admissions are now open for the Fall 2024 semester.

The university offers more than 60 groundbreaking Master's, Bachelor's and Diploma programmes specifically designed to meet current market demands and foster economic growth both in Qatar and globally.

UDST's curriculum spans across five colleges Engineering and Technology, Business, Computing and Information Technology, Health Sciences and General Education. Prospective students,

including Qatari citizens and children of Qatari women who benefit from tuition fee exemptions for undergraduate programmes, are encouraged to apply online via the university's website, udst.edu.qa

President of UDST Dr Salem Al-Naemi expressed his gratitude to over 4,500 students who joined UDST in the last two years, making it the university of choice for most of those seeking a prestigious professional career in Science and Technology.

Dr Al-Naemi said: "UDST's exceptional growth, reaching now a total enrolment of 7,500 students, is a clear indicator of UDST's

excellence in applied technical education and learning, jointly designed and delivered with our industry partners."

Among the innovative programmes offered by the university is the Bachelor of Science in Marine Engineering, which stands as Qatar's first undergraduate offering in this field, tailored to support the nation's burgeoning LNG shipping industry.

Similarly, the Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering – Smart Manufacturing Engineering programme addresses the evolving needs of the modern economy, equipping students with the skills



to thrive in advanced manufacturing environments.

UDST has recently developed, in collaboration with Qatar Media Corp, a hybrid track in Arabic



and English within the university's Bachelor of Science in Digital Communication and Media Production programme.

This track is designed to at-

tract more Qatari students and to equip graduates with the necessary skills to deploy the latest digital technologies in media production. **(QNA)**

Princess Catherine apologises over edited photograph

AFP
London

Catherine, Princess of Wales, yesterday apologised and admitted to editing an official portrait of her released by the palace that prompted AFP and other agencies to withdraw the image.

Kate, 42, has not been seen in public since December 25, and underwent abdominal surgery in January, fuelling speculation about her health.

Her Kensington Palace office on Sunday sought to dispel rumours by distributing an official photograph said to have been taken by her husband Prince William of his wife with

their three children. But questions quickly emerged about the Mother's Day portrait of a smiling Kate, casually dressed and seated in a garden chair, surrounded by Prince George, Princess Charlotte and Prince Louis.

They included several inconsistencies such as the zip of Kate's jacket being misaligned in one place, while part of Princess Charlotte's sleeve is

missing. The eight-year-old princess's hair also ends abruptly on her shoulder.

Responding to the growing controversy yesterday, the palace issued a statement on X (formerly Twitter), signed by "C" for Catherine.

"Like many amateur photographers, I do occasionally experiment with editing," it stated.

"I wanted to express my apologies for any confusion the family photograph we shared caused."

Royal sources told several British media outlets that Kate had made "minor adjustments" to the picture. Kensington Palace, however, said it would not republish the original, unedited photo.

AFP, Getty, the Associated Press

(AP) and Reuters all have policies about distributing manipulated images. They initially published the photo but pulled it late Sunday.

They decided after consultation that the modifications were "in violation of the ethical standards of the profession", said AFP's deputy news director in charge of photo, Eric Baradat.

SBI must share electoral bonds' details by today: India's top court

Reuters
New Delhi

India's Supreme Court yesterday rejected a plea by government-run State Bank of India for more time to make public names of individuals and companies who donated billions of rupees to political parties through an opaque funding system.

The court had on February 15 scrapped the seven-year-old election funding system that allowed unlimited and anonymous donations to political parties, calling it "unconstitutional".

That decision was a setback for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party, which has been the largest beneficiary of the system introduced in 2017, and came ahead of a national election expected to be held in April or May.

SBI had been asked to share names of the donors, the beneficiaries and the amounts with the independent Election Commission of India (ECI) by March 6 and the poll panel was directed to make it public by March 13.

SBI, however, filed a petition on March 4 seeking time until June 30 - by when elections would be completed - saying the information sought by the court was in separate sections and it needed time to compile and match the information involving 22,217 donations.

Responding to the plea yesterday, the court said the information

SBI was asked to share is readily available with the bank and it should be shared with the ECI "by close of business" today.

The ECI should compile the information and publish the details no later than 5pm on March 15, the five-judge bench ordered, days before general elections are expected to be called.

"We place SBI on notice that we might be inclined to proceed on wilful disobedience of court order if it does not comply with the timeline given today," the bench led by chief justice D Y Chandrachud said.

"Our directions require SBI to disclose information which is already available," Chandrachud said. "We have not told you to do the matching exercise ... simply comply with the judgment. You have the details."

The election funding system, called Electoral Bonds, was challenged by members of the opposition and a civil society group on the grounds that it hindered the public's right to know who had given money to political parties.

Under the system, a person or company could buy bonds from SBI and donate them to a political party. Individuals and companies bought Rs165.18bn (\$2bn) of such bonds in total up to November 2023, according to the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), a non-government civil society group working on election funding in India. The group was a petitioner challenging the system.



Activists of the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) set alight copies of Indian government's Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) during a protest in Guwahati yesterday.

India govt moves to enact controversial citizenship law

Reuters
New Delhi

India yesterday announced rules to implement a 2019 citizenship law that critics call anti-Muslim, weeks before Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeks a rare third term for his Hindu nationalist government.

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) grants Indian nationality to Hindus, Parsis, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and Christians who fled to India from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan before December 31, 2014.

Modi's government had not crafted implementation rules for the law, after protests and sectarian violence broke out in New Delhi and elsewhere within weeks of the law's December 2019 enactment. Scores were killed and hundreds injured during days of clashes.

"The Modi government announces implementation of Citizenship Amendment Act," a spokesperson for the prime minister's office said in a text message.

"It was an integral part of BJP's 2019 manifesto. This will pave (the) way for the persecuted to find citizenship in India," he said, referring to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) 2019 election manifesto.

A home ministry spokesperson said the rules will enable those eligible under CAA-2019 to apply for grant of Indian citizenship, and that applications would be submitted online via a web portal that had been provided.

Muslim groups say the law, combined with a proposed national register of citizens, can discriminate against India's 200mn Muslims - the world's third-largest Muslim population. They fear the government might remove the citizenship of Muslims without documents in some border states.

The government denies it is anti-Muslim. It says the law is meant to grant citizenship, not take it away from anyone, and has called the earlier protests politically motivated.

Modi swept to power in 2014 and has

consolidated his hold since with a focus on growth, welfare economics, boosting infrastructure and aggressive Hindu nationalism.

Opinion polls suggest he will comfortably win a majority in a general election that must be held by May.

The main opposition Congress party said yesterday's announcement was motivated by the approaching election.

"After seeking nine extensions for the notification of the rules, the timing right before the elections is evidently designed to polarise the elections, especially in West Bengal and Assam," Congress spokesperson Jairam Ramesh said on X.

The eastern states of West Bengal and Assam are home to large Muslim populations and witnessed protests against CAA as some Muslims feared the law could be used to declare them illegal immigrants from neighbouring Bangladesh and take away their Indian citizenship.

Many poor Indians do not have documents to prove their nationality.

Ex-senior Tory defects to fringe right-wing party

A prominent former deputy chairman of Britain's governing Conservatives, who was suspended from the party over accusations of Islamophobia, yesterday defected to the small right-wing Reform UK party in a setback for Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. The move by Lee Anderson, a former miner who has courted controversy with his outspoken views, comes months before a national election in which Reform is expected to draw votes away from the Conservatives and in doing so threaten Sunak's re-election bid. Anderson's defection to Reform, which has Brexit campaigner Nigel Farage as its honorary president and backs populist causes such as tougher immigration laws, gives the party its first member of parliament. It also represents a blow to Sunak, given Anderson was appointed as the Conservatives' deputy chairman last year to appeal to voters in former Labour Party-voting heartlands known as the "Red Wall" that backed the Conservatives at the last election.



Philippine Department of Trade and Industry Secretary Alfredo Pascual shakes hands with US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo after holding a press conference in Paranaque City yesterday.

US firms 'to invest over \$1bn in the Philippines'

Reuters
Manila

American companies are set to announce investments amounting to more than \$1bn in the Philippines, US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo said during an official visit to Manila yesterday.

Raimondo is heading a two-day trade and investment mission, the first of its kind for the Philippines. The delegation includes executives from 22 companies including United Airlines, Alphabet's Google, Visa, KKR Asia Pacific and Microsoft. The investments will span areas like solar energy, electric vehicles and digitisation, she said.

United said last week it would launch new flights from Tokyo-Narita to Cebu, Philippines starting July 31.

US efforts to deepen economic ties with the Philippines come in tandem with increased co-operation in defence.

Both US President Joe Biden and Philippine President Ferdinand

Marcos Jr are keen to counter what they see as aggressive actions by China in the South China Sea and near Taiwan.

Speaking at a joint briefing with Philippine officials after meeting with Marcos at the presidential palace, Raimondo said Washington's commitment to expanding trade and investment in the Philippines extends to the larger Indo-Pacific region through the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework - a 14-nation US-led group.

Raimondo reiterated the US has no intention of "decoupling" from China but it would not be allowed access to Washington's advanced technology.

"My job is to protect the American people and to make sure that our most sophisticated technology, including semiconductor technology, artificial intelligence technology that we have and China doesn't have, that they can't access it and use it to enable the Chinese military," Raimondo said.

She also reaffirmed the US' alliance with the Philippines, calling it "ironclad".

50 injured as plane 'just dropped' mid-flight

Reuters
Auckland

At least 50 people were hurt when a Boeing 787 operated by LATAM Airlines dropped abruptly mid-flight from Sydney to Auckland yesterday, according to the airline and a New Zealand health service organisation that treated the injured.

The aircraft experienced a strong shake and as a result 10

passengers and three cabin crew members were taken to a hospital, the South American carrier said as it investigates the cause.

The flight with 263 passengers and nine cabin crew members landed at Auckland airport as scheduled yesterday afternoon.

One person is in a serious condition while the rest suffered mild-to-moderate injuries, a spokesperson for Hato Hone St John, which treated roughly 50 people at the airport, said.

"The plane, unannounced, just dropped. I mean it dropped unlike anything I've ever experienced on any kind of minor turbulence, and people were thrown out of their seats, hit the top of the roof of the plane, throwing down the aisles," passenger Brian Joket told the BBC.

The cause of the apparent sudden change in trajectory of flight LA800 could not be ascertained immediately. Safety experts say most airplane accidents are caused by a cocktail of factors that need to

be thoroughly investigated.

"Some of the roof panels were broken from people being thrown up and knocking through the plastic roof panels in the aisle ways. And there was blood coming from several people's heads," Joket, who was not injured in the incident, said.

He said passengers who were doctors on the plane provided bandages and neck braces for people who were severely injured.

The eight-year-old Boeing 787-

9 Dreamliner, according to flight tracking website FlightRadar24, was on its way to Santiago via Auckland.

LATAM Airlines said a new flight to Chile will depart from Auckland today.

In 2008, dozens of people were injured when another wide-body jet, an Airbus 330 operated by Qantas Airways, dropped sharply because of faulty readings from a flight data computer while heading for Perth in Australia.

Boeing said it was working to gather more information and will provide any support to the airline.

The US Federal Aviation Administration and the National Safety Board did not immediately respond to requests for comments.

Separately, the *Wall Street Journal* reported on Saturday the US department of justice has opened a criminal investigation into 737 MAX mid-air cabin-panel blow-out on an Alaska Airlines flight in January.

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GULF TIMES

Degrowth is a dead end

The concept of degrowth has recently captured the imagination of academics, activists, and politicians – particularly in rich countries – who are concerned about environmental sustainability and socioeconomic justice. Last May, the European Parliament organised a Beyond Growth Conference. Since then, a spate of articles (including in leading scientific journals) has documented the rise of this once-niche movement, which calls for abandoning GDP growth as a goal, reducing energy and material use, and focusing economic activity on human well-being.

But despite the fervour of its adherents, the degrowth movement lacks a coherent theory of change, and is thus a dead end. While the ideals that underpin the movement and some of its proposals, such as universal access to public services and a green-jobs guarantee, resonate powerfully, its overarching goals are politically impractical. Moreover, because degrowth is an all-or-nothing strategy, it would actually impede progress on climate policy.

For starters, degrowth is premised on the idea that “the system” is to blame for our climate predicament, which implies that the solution is to abolish capitalism. In this context, advocates do not view incremental progress toward the movement’s stated goals, such as reduced working hours or targeted bans on highly polluting activities, as a step in the right direction; on the contrary, they interpret such changes as a way for policymakers to defend the current system against criticism. In other words, reform is anti-revolutionary.

At the international level, degrowth calls for actively shrinking rich economies and launching a voluntary transfer of resources to the Global South. Notwithstanding abstract social-justice considerations, this would be a political non-starter: when fewer resources are available, countries become less, not more, generous. Even now, when advanced economies are expanding, securing adequate funding for the Loss and Damage Fund operationalised at last year’s United Nations Climate Change Conference in Dubai has proven difficult.

Instead of trying to halt growth, we must redefine and reorient our growth patterns toward sustainability

Westacott has shown, most world religions, including Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, and Confucianism, have long preached simple living. It is safe to assume, given the state of the planet, that these calls for moderation have done little to tame the relentless drive for consumption. Expecting a moral revolution to kickstart structural transformation is like waiting for Godot.

In fact, a backlash against the current pace of climate action – which is far from sufficient – is already gaining steam, with nationalist parties running in several upcoming elections exploiting fears about greener lifestyles. In this context, the idea that a swift change of heart among the rich would make degrowth politically feasible looks even more unrealistic.

The politics of climate change and environmental policy are complex precisely because of the need to balance people’s immediate demands for quality of life, affordable energy, and economic security with long-term sustainability. As the *New York Times’* Ezra Klein eloquently put it, the degrowth movement is “trying to take the politics out of politics” and is “attacking the flaws of the current strategy as not moving fast enough when the impediments are political, but then not accepting the impediments to its own political path forward.”

Instead of trying to halt growth, we must redefine and reorient our growth patterns toward sustainability, so that we can reconcile the persistent desire to consume more with the imperative to make greener choices. Technological advances, renewable energy, and a shift toward a circular economy offer ways to align economic progress with environmental stewardship.

The political obstacles facing the degrowth movement are insurmountable, which is why its newfound prominence will prove ephemeral. The most degrowthers can hope to achieve is to prod a privileged few toward more sustainable consumption habits. To the extent that it is successful, the movement will contribute, albeit modestly, to mitigating the effects of climate change.

As climate experts often remind us, there is no silver bullet for global warming. Avoiding a climate catastrophe demands a multifaceted strategy comprising multiple solutions. But degrowth is not one of them. — Project Syndicate

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X factor: How Twitter ban continues to hurt Pakistan



The country has restricted access to social media platform X



X blackouts hit businesses, free speech and news gathering



State-imposed bans can curb freedoms, warn campaigners

By Zofeen T Ebrahim
Karachi

From business owners fretting over lost clients to journalists seeking new sources, Pakistanis want the government to restore regular access to the social media platform X, formerly Twitter, which has been blocked for nearly three weeks.

Authorities have blocked X – either partially or fully – since February 17 after protests swept the country over allegations of vote rigging in a general election, according to the Netblocks global Internet monitor.

When users try to access X, they often see this message: “Something went wrong, but don’t fret – let’s give it another shot”

But Shaista Ayesha, who runs Karachi-based social enterprise SEED Ventures, is fretting.

“We do our social media postings through X, and connect with other organisations and funders so there is definitely social media outreach loss and one avenue of strategic visibility gone,” Ayesha told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

She said she had not yet calculated the financial cost of the X ban, which is just the latest in a series of Internet restrictions linked to the Feb. 8 election. The vote was marred by a mobile Internet shutdown on polling day and unusually delayed results,

leading to accusations of vote tampering.

The United States, Britain and the European Union have separately expressed concerns about the electoral process and said reported irregularities should be investigated.

The US State Department has also condemned the Internet shutdowns and urged the federal government to lift restrictions and respect freedom of expression.

On Tuesday, the Islamabad High Court summoned the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and the federal information ministry to answer a case filed by a resident of the capital challenging the disrupted access to X.

The case is scheduled to be heard next week.

Initially, the PTA denied any knowledge of Internet restrictions but in a similar case in the high court of Sindh province on Monday it said that the Interior Ministry had issued instructions to suspend mobile phone services on polling day.

Jibran Nasir, a lawyer who filed one of many petitions over X disruptions and slow Internet speeds in the Sindh high court, warned that such state-imposed shutdowns could start dictating “how we are to live our lives and what freedoms we can enjoy”.

On February 22, the Sindh court ordered the government to restore access to X immediately, but Nasir said the block continued,

leading to a contempt case against authorities. The case was adjourned until March 20.

Virtual Private Networks

Just over 45% of Pakistan’s population of 241mn people have access to the Internet and nearly 72mn – or almost 30% – use social media, according to research site DataReportal.

X had 4.5mn users in Pakistan in early 2024, meaning that the social media platform’s advertising reach in the country was equivalent to 1.9% of the population.

Hisham Sarwar, a popular tech guru who runs several digital marketing companies in Pakistan, said small businesses were making losses because the shutdown had hit social media marketing.

“The absence of (X) has resulted in panic as it takes time to create content on Meta platforms,” he said, referring to Facebook and Instagram.

Nor is TikTok a viable alternative, Sarwar said, as the platform has not rolled out a service for businesses in Pakistan. X offers a better return on marketing investment for companies like his, he said.

To circumvent the restrictions, many Pakistanis have turned to virtual private networks that encrypt data and obscure where a user is located, according to VPN service providers.

Farieha Aziz, co-founder of Bolo Bhi, a digital rights

advocacy group, said she used VPNs to access X, which she said was crucial to get “real-time information on everything that is blocked by authorities on mainstream media outlets like election irregularities, arrests of journalists”.

But she said that Internet speeds had been slowed down, meaning it was taking longer to connect, and the government was also believed to be trying to block VPNs.

Neither the PTA nor the information ministry responded to requests for comment on allegations of blocking VPNs.

Journalist Omair Alavi said that since the blackout he had not been able to use X to break news, share updates or find sources.

“I get news updates from (X) and embed links in my stories,” said the Karachi-based reporter at the Voice of America broadcaster. “Social media is an integral part of our lives and banning it is making things worse.”

Lahore-based environment lawyer Ahmad Rafay Alam said he worried that the X shutdown would cause him to miss important weather updates in a country hit hard by climate disasters, including floods, droughts and deadly heat.

But, taking a grim glass-half-full approach, he could see one silver lining to the blackout.

“Frankly, the ban is also relief from the overwhelmingly bad news about the climate crisis” – Thomson Reuters Foundation



To circumvent the restrictions, many Pakistanis have turned to virtual private networks that encrypt data and obscure where a user is located, according to VPN service providers

CEO of largest Pak bank new finance minister

Ishaq Dar to head Foreign Ministry to push ‘economic diplomacy’

Reuters
Islamabad

Muhammad Aurangzeb, the CEO of Pakistan's largest bank, was picked as finance minister in the country's new cabinet that was sworn in yesterday, as Pakistan looks to strike a new IMF deal and stabilise the economy. A national election last month resulted in no party holding a majority, after which a coalition alliance elected Shehbaz Sharif as prime minister for a second time to tackle the country's economic and political crises. Sharif has included Muhammad Aurangzeb, chief executive officer of HBL bank, in the cabinet and he will be given the portfolio of finance minister. "Mr Muhammad Aurangzeb officially took over the responsibility as Finance Minister of Pakistan after taking oath at the Presidency, today," the Ministry of Finance said in a post on X last night. HBL said he was stepping down from the bank.

Aurangzeb was picked over several veterans previously involved in handling the \$350bn economy, including four-time finance minister Ishaq Dar, as the country looks to plot a path out of its economic difficulties. Dar was also named a federal minister and has been appointed as foreign minister, Reuters saw in a government document outlining the allocation of portfolios. The document listed 18 ministers and their portfolios. "Economic diplomacy is the need of the hour for sure," Dar told Reuters. HBL yesterday informed the Pakistan Stock Exchange of Aurangzeb's resignation from the bank, in a letter to the bourse. In a statement from HBL, Aurangzeb said, "I am excited about the opportunity to serve our country in this new capacity and contribute to the economic growth and development of Pakistan." The bank called his stepping down from his position a "remarkable act of national service". Pakistan's current International Monetary Fund programme expires next month, and Sharif has said his government would look to negotiate a new, longer term bailout to keep the country's economy stable amidst high inflation and external financing requirements.



Newly appointed Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb poses after taking oath in Islamabad yesterday. (Reuters)

The new cabinet was sworn in at a ceremony yesterday where the oaths were administered by newly elected President Asif Ali Zardari, over a month since the February 8 national election.

LIST OF NEW CABINET MINISTERS

Federal ministers

- Khawaja Mohamed Asif, MNA – defence, defence production, aviation
- Mohamed Ishaq Dar, Senator – foreign affairs
- Ahsan Iqbal Chaudry, MNA – planning, development and special initiatives
- Rana Tanveer Hussain, MNA – industries and production
- Azam Nazeer Tarar, Senator – law and justice, human rights
- Chaudhry Salik Hussain, MNA – overseas Pakistanis and human resource development
- Abdul Aleem Khan, MNA – privatisation, Board of Investment
- Jam Kamal Khan, MNA – commerce
- Amir Muqam, MNA – states and frontier regions, national heritage and culture
- Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari,

- MNA – railways
- Attaullah Tarar, MNA – information and broadcasting
- Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, MNA – science and technology, federal education and professional training
- Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, MNA – maritime affairs
- Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada, MNA – housing and works
- Musadik Masood Malik, Senator – petroleum, power
- Muhammad Aurangzeb – finance, revenue
- Ahad Khan Cheema – economic affairs, establishment
- Mohsin Naqvi – interior, narcotics control

Minister of state

- Shaza Fatima Khawaja

A letter, seen by Reuters, sent by Sharif to the president for the appointment of the cabinet earlier yesterday included one woman on the list of proposed ministers, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, who was proposed as a state – or junior – minister. Aurangzeb does not have a seat in par-

liament but local laws say he can hold a post of minister for up to six months without one. The sources told Reuters that Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party planned to give Aurangzeb a Senate seat soon.

American gets life term for tourist rape-murder

AFP
Kempten

A German court handed an American man a life sentence yesterday for raping and killing a fellow US tourist near Bavaria's famed Neuschwanstein castle last year. The district tribunal in the southern town of Kempten convicted the defendant, identified only as Troy Philipp B., 31, after he made a wide-ranging confession on the first day of his trial last month. The judges also noted the "particular severity of guilt", meaning he is unlikely to be released after 15 years as is customary with life sentences in Germany. Troy Philipp B. was convicted of raping and murdering the 21-year-old US woman as well as the attempted murder of her friend, 22, also a US citizen. The two women were hiking in the Neuschwanstein area in June last year at the end of a European trip that had taken them to Italy and Spain. The pair got speaking to the accused after he and the younger of the women slipped at a similar point on a mountain trail, prosecutors said. "That's enough adventure for today," B is said to have remarked to the women, before offering to

take them to a nearby viewing point on the way back to the castle. At a secluded spot, the man, then 30, pushed the 21-year-old woman to the ground and proceeded to rape and strangle her, according to investigators. Her friend intervened, leading to a scuffle in which the accused pushed the 22-year-old down a steep, 50-metre (165-foot) slope. The suspect then continued his sexual assault of the 21-year-old woman, strangling her with a belt while filming the act. Interrupted by a pair of hikers who stumbled on the crime, he pushed the rape victim over the same ledge while she was unconscious. The 21-year-old landed at the bottom of the slope next to her friend, who called the emergency services, telling them her friend was "gasping". When mountain rescue workers found the two women, the 22-year-old was injured but able to talk. The rape victim was seriously injured and taken by helicopter to hospital, where she died that night from her injuries. The defendant, who is from the US state of Michigan, admitted the crimes as the high-profile trial opened on February 19, with his lawyer telling the court he was "deeply ashamed" of his actions.

US spy agencies fret over 'fragile world order'

US intelligence agencies said yesterday the country faces an "increasingly fragile world order," strained by great power competition, transnational challenges and regional conflicts, in a report released as agency leaders testified in the US Senate. "An ambitious but anxious China, a confrontational Russia, some regional powers, such as Iran, and more capable non-state actors are challenging longstanding rules of the international system as well as US primacy within it," the agencies said in the 2024 Annual Threat Assessment of the US intelligence committee. The report largely focused on threats from China and Russia, the greatest rivals to the United States, more than two years after Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine. China is providing economic and security assistance to Russia as it wages war in Ukraine, by supporting Russia's industrial base, the report said. "Trade between China and Russia has been increasing since the start of the war in Ukraine, and (Chinese) exports of goods with potential military use rose more than threefold since 2022," it said.

Emergency summit in Jamaica to address spiralling Haiti crisis

AFP
Kingston

US, Canadian, French and Caribbean envoys were meeting yesterday in Jamaica to address the spiralling instability in Haiti, where gang violence has crippled the capital and forced foreign diplomats to evacuate over the weekend. Armed groups, which already control much of Port-au-Prince as well as roads leading to the rest of the country, have unleashed havoc in recent days as they try to oust Prime Minister Ariel Henry. In power since the 2021 assassination of president Jovenel Moise, Henry had been visiting Kenya, in search of support for a UN-backed security assistance mission, when the latest burst of violence broke out. Unable to return to Haiti last week, he instead landed in the US territory of Puerto Rico, where he remained yesterday, according to a US official. The CARICOM group of Caribbean nations has summoned its leaders as well as envoys from the United States, France, Canada and the United Nations to a meeting in Kingston, Jamaica to discuss the crisis. Washington has sent its top diplomat Antony Blinken to the

EU pulls all diplomatic personnel

The European Union has evacuated all its diplomatic personnel from Haiti because of "the dramatic deterioration of the security situation" there with armed gangs taking control of much of its capital, a spokesman said yesterday. "Currently we have removed and evacuated all the EU staff from Haiti," said European Commission spokesman Peter Stano. The European Union is "extremely concerned" about developments in Haiti over recent days, he added. "As a response to the dramatic deterioration of the security situation, we took the decision to reduce our activities on the ground and we moved the staff of the EU delegation in Port-au-Prince to a safer location outside of the country," Stano said. Essential staff are continuing to work "but not from Haiti itself", he said. meeting, where he was to discuss a proposal "developed in partnership with CARICOM and Haitian stakeholders to expedite a political transition in Haiti," the State Department said. Guyanese President Mohamed Irfaan Ali, the current CARICOM chair, said talks to bring "stability and normalcy" to Haiti were ongoing, but that Haitian stakeholders "are not where they need to be." "Time is not on their side in agreeing to the way forward," Ali warned in a social media video, describing reports out of Haiti as "dire." AFP reporters saw bodies lying in Port-au-Prince streets, and some 362,000 Haitians have been displaced from their homes, according to the International Organisation for Migration. The European Union said yesterday all of its diplomatic personnel had been evacuated from Haiti, a day after the United States announced it had airlifted non-essential US staff from its embassy. The German foreign ministry meanwhile said its ambassador had departed on Sunday for the Dominican Republic "due to the very tense security situation." United Nations staff are remaining in Haiti "to do everything they can to deliver assistance to people in need, despite the risks for their own safety," the UN secretary-general's spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

Fancied Oppenheimer sweeps up at Oscars with 7 awards

Oppenheimer swept the board at the Oscars, Hollywood's biggest night of the year, with seven awards including best picture and best director, crowning a triumphant year for filmmaker Christopher Nolan. Nolan's masterful drama about the father of the atomic bomb, half of last summer's massive *Barbenheimer* phenomenon, also bagged acting prizes for lead Cillian Murphy and supporting actor Robert Downey Jr. Nolan – a British-American filmmaker hailed as a generational talent – said that film as an art form still has room to grow. "Movies are just a little bit over 100 years old. I mean, imagine being there 100 years into painting or theatre," he told the audience at the Dolby Theatre. "We don't know where this incredible journey is going from here. But to know that you think that I'm a meaningful part of it means the world to me." The haul was not quite complete – *Oppenheimer* was nominated for 13 prizes, but with seven statuettes on the night it is still one of the most awarded films in Oscar history. Robert Downey Jr was recognised for his stellar performance as J Robert Oppenheimer's political nemesis Lewis Strauss. "I would like to thank my terrible childhood and the Academy, in that order," Downey said after accepting the statuette. Downey, who had been the butt of a joke by host Jimmy Kimmel about his well-documented drug problems, lavished thanks on his wife Susan for her support. "She found me a snarling rescue pet and loved me back to life," he said.



BEST ACTOR: Cillian Murphy



BEST ACTRESS: Emma Stone



BEST PICTURE: British director Christopher Nolan and British producer Emma Thomas hold their Oscars for Best Picture *Oppenheimer*.

Full list of Oscar winners at the 96th Academy Awards

- BEST PICTURE**
Oppenheimer
- BEST ACTOR**
Cillian Murphy, *Oppenheimer*
- BEST ACTRESS**
Emma Stone, *Poor Things*
- BEST DIRECTOR**
Christopher Nolan, *Oppenheimer*
- BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR**
Robert Downey Jr., *Oppenheimer*
- BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS**
Da'Vine Joy Randolph, *The Holdovers*
- BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY**
American Fiction
- BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY**
Anatomy of a Fall
- BEST ANIMATED FEATURE FILM**
The Boy and the Heron
- BEST ANIMATED SHORT**
War is Over! Inspired by the Music of John & Yoko
- BEST INTERNATIONAL FEATURE**
The Zone of Interest, United Kingdom
- BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE**

- 20 Days in Mariupol*
- BEST DOCUMENTARY SHORT**
The Last Repair Shop
- BEST ORIGINAL SCORE**
Oppenheimer
- BEST ORIGINAL SONG**
What Was I Made For?, *Barbie*
- BEST SOUND**
The Zone of Interest
- BEST PRODUCTION DESIGN**
Poor Things
- BEST LIVE ACTION SHORT**
The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar
- BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY**
Oppenheimer
- BEST MAKEUP AND HAIRSTYLING**
Poor Things
- BEST COSTUME DESIGN**
Poor Things
- BEST VISUAL EFFECTS**
Godzilla Minus One
- BEST FILM EDITING**
Oppenheimer (Mary Milliken and Jonathan Oatis)

Nolan's cerebral take on the man he has called "the most important person who ever lived" also snapped up prizes for editing, cinematography and

best original score. It seemed fitting that the story of the development of nuclear weapons was recognised on a night where the drumbeat of war

was never far away. "We made a film about the man who created the atomic bomb. And for better or for worse, we're all living in Oppenheimer's

world so I would really like to dedicate this to the peacemakers, everywhere," Murphy said as he accepted his award. The other huge smash of 2023, Greta Gerwig's pop feminist blockbuster *Barbie*, featured heavily throughout the gala in Los Angeles. While the movie, which grossed \$1.4bn at the box office, only won one Oscar for best original song, the bubblegum fun it generated provided fodder for the whole evening. Supporting actor nominee Ryan Gosling brought the house down with a star-studded rendition of *I'm just Ken*, accompanied by Guns 'n Roses guitarist Slash, as well as some of his on-screen Ken pals like Simu Liu and Ncuti Gatwa. The performance slid into a karaoke session as Gosling passed the microphone around to some of the A-list guests. Billie Eilish's *What Was I Made For?* was the winning song from the summer hit film. The 22-year-old, who delivered a heartfelt rendition of the reflective song, now has two Oscars to her

name after a previous win two years ago for James Bond theme *No Time To Die* with her brother and frequent collaborator Finneas O'Connell. In one of the few competitive awards of the evening, Emma Stone won best actress for her daring performance in the surreal, Frankenstein-esque *Poor Things*, which won three other technical prizes. She pipped Lily Gladstone, who was bidding to become the first Native American to win an acting Oscar for her role in Martin Scorsese's crime saga *Killers of the Flower Moon*. Stone, who previously won an Academy Award for *La La Land*, paid tribute to the other women in her category, and the five women on stage who presented the category. Stone also beat out Sandra Hueller of Oscars sleeper *Anatomy of a Fall*. But the French courtroom thriller did not go home empty handed, with a win for best original screenplay. Co-writer Justine Triet revealed backstage that the 50 Cent song that features heavily in the film was originally going to be a Dolly Parton track. "But they refused to give us the rights," she told reporters. As well as the legacy of *Oppenheimer*, there were several other reminders of the toll of human conflict. The United Kingdom scored its first-ever best international film Oscar with Auschwitz drama *The Zone of Interest*, which also won best sound. Several nominees wore lapel pins calling for a ceasefire in the war in the Gaza Strip, while sporadic protests erupted around the event's security perimeter.

Amir receives Ramadan well-wishers



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani received many well-wishers on advent of the holy month of Ramadan at Lusail Palace in the evening yesterday. His Highness the Amir received HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, HE the Speaker of the Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem, sheikhs, ministers, undersecretaries of ministries, members of the Shura Council and citizens. His Highness the Personal Representative of the Amir Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad al-Thani, His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Khalifa al-Thani, His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Khalifa al-Thani, and HE Sheikh Jassim bin Khalifa al-Thani, alongside a number of sheikhs attended the reception ceremony. - QNA



Snapshots from the ceremony.

Minister lauds excellence of private school students

HE the Minister of Education and Higher Education Buthaina bint Ali al-Jabr al-Nuaimi has expressed her pride in her creative “sons and daughters” and in their distinguished schools that nurtured them, and congratulated them on their excellence.

In a press statement marking the annual ceremony organised by the ministry for outstanding private school students under the theme *We Are Proud of You*, the minister praised their achievements, saying: “Congratulations to you and your families. How proud we are of you and your achievements, which are not bounded by borders and are not stopped by challenges.”

“You shone in all fields and were at the forefront, carrying the name of your country, Qatar, high,” HE al-Nuaimi said. “You are Qatar’s real wealth. Tomorrow, you will shape its promising future.”

The ceremony, also attended by HE the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Edu-



cation and Higher Education (MoEHE) Dr Ibrahim bin Saleh al-Naimi, aimed to strengthen the partnership between the ministry and private schools and encourage outstanding students to continue to excel.

It also seeks to present the practices of distinguished private schools to exchange experiences and disseminate best practices of teaching and learning according to

different educational systems.

Assistant Undersecretary for Special Education Affairs Omar Abdul Aziz al-Naama thanked all the students who stood out for their exceptional achievements.

He also thanked those behind such achievements, starting with the family, the first school, and passing through the teachers and schools affiliated with it.

Al-Naama stressed that the students’



success reflects their will and determination to excel and is an example to be followed by the rest of the students.

He also expressed pride and confidence in the students’ ability to be pioneers and innovators in their various fields, contributing to the progress of the nation and that of humanity.

Department of Private Schools and Kindergartens Affairs director Dr Rania Mohamed stressed that celebrating the global excellence of our sons and daughters highlights the importance of educational inputs that contributed to developing students’ competencies and skills, and enhancing their learning outcomes by reviewing the experiences of private schools

and their students for various methodologies and practices during today’s sessions.

She said that the number of private schools in the country has reached 342, including kindergartens.

The numbers increase yearly, while the number of staff in private schools has reached 25,663.

The total number of students was 240,277 while the number of educational systems applied in private schools reached 23.

She added that the diversity of input to the educational process in private schools has impacted and enriched the students’ learning outcomes, achieving the achievements being celebrated. - QNA



Old Airport street decorated

On the occasion of Tree Week, the Doha Municipality – in co-operation with Qatar Scientific Club – has celebrated the completion of the beautification and tree planting of the Old Airport Street. Such works included planting of 24,000 shrubs and 600 acacia trees, in addition to decorating some spaces with white stones recycled from various construction sites.

Katara launches Prize for Manuscripts, Archaeological Sites in the Arab region

Katara – the Cultural Village Foundation has launched the Katara Prize for Manuscripts and Archaeological Sites in the Arab region.

Accordingly, an Arab country will be selected as the guest for each edition of the prize.

Participation in this edition will be limited to authenticated manuscripts and research studies on archaeological sites in that country.

However, participation will be open to participants of all nationalities and not limited to those from the selected country.

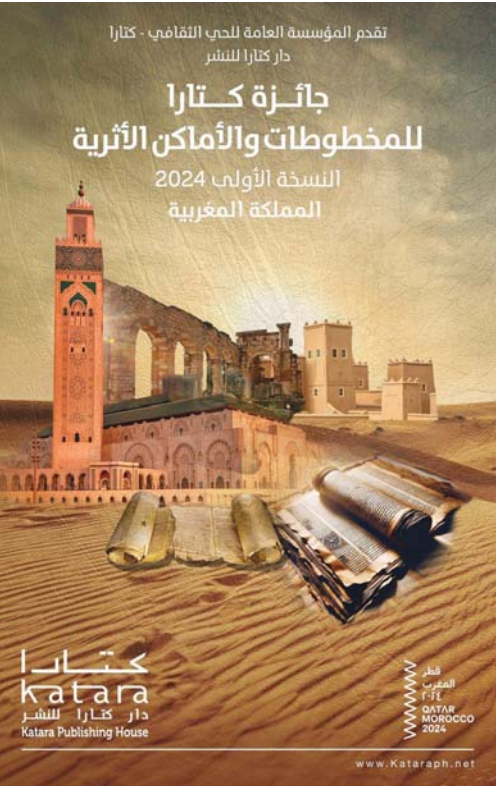
Morocco has been selected as the honorary guest for the inaugural edition of the Katara Prize for Manuscripts and Archaeological Sites, coinciding with the Qatar-Moroccan Year of Cultural 2024.

The new prize has two categories: the first is dedicated to conducting research on original manuscripts that have not been previously published, and the second is for the best research study on archaeological sites or landmarks in the Arab region, under specific conditions.

A specialised scientific committee will be entrusted with studying and evaluating the authenticated manuscripts and archaeological research submitted to select the top three authenticated manuscripts and the top three archaeological research papers.

The winning works will become the property of Katara Publishing House, which will have the right to publish and distribute them.

Submissions for the inaugural edition of Katara Prize for Manuscripts and Archaeological Sites will be accepted starting today, and will be open for three months.



The prize is aimed at encouraging manuscript owners, experts, and specialists in the field of archaeology to share their collections and research efforts for wider audience to enhance the Arab and Islamic culture.

Further, it aims to encourage Arabic publishing and urge publishers to contribute to the advancement of the Arab intellectual activities through presenting innovative and contemporary works that address contemporary issues.

The prize committee has set specific conditions for participation in the prize, including common requirements for both categories as well as specific requirements for each category.

For instance, manuscripts must be original, unpublished, and in Arabic, while archaeological research must provide comprehensive backgrounds on the historical context and cultural significance of the sites being studied.

The winners in both categories will receive cash

prizes, with the first prize winner receiving \$20,000, the second prize \$15,000, and the third prize winner \$10,000.

Katara general manager Prof Khalid bin Ibrahim al-Sulaiti said that the launch of the Katara Prize for Manuscripts and Archaeological Sites is part of Katara’s efforts to foster culture and preserve the Arab and Islamic heritage through the promotion of valuable manuscripts and facilitating their accessibility to researchers and scholars.

He added that shedding light on archaeological sites in the Arab region, which are essential elements of national heritage, provides an opportunity to explore valuable historical sources, enrich research, expand knowledge, and promote tourism in the Arab region.

Participants of the award should not be less than 22 years old of age, and send their CVs and IDs in addition to other related information to kphprizes@katara.net before the deadline of the application.