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HMC performs first robotic kidney transplant in Qatar

Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) succeeded in performing the first robotic kidney transplant surgery in Qatar on a patient in his seventies. The patient had been suffering from chronic kidney failure for several years, necessitating daily peritoneal dialysis, in addition to other health issues such as high blood pressure. The surgical procedure took place at Hamad General Hospital, led by a specialised team in robotic surgery and organ transplantation under the direction of Dr Abdullah al-Ansari, chief medical officer at HMC. **Page 8**

US 'wants answers' from Israel on Gaza mass graves

The US White House yesterday said it wanted "answers" from Israeli authorities after the discovery of mass graves at the two main hospitals in the Gaza Strip. "We want answers," National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan told reporters. "We want to see this thoroughly and transparently investigated." Israel has repeatedly targeted hospitals during the war. Gaza's civil defence agency said nearly 340 bodies were uncovered at the Nasser Hospital in the southern city of Khan Yunis. Meanwhile, in war-battered Gaza, there has been mounting concern over Israeli plans to launch an assault on the southern Gazan city of Rafah, where 1.5mn people have sought refuge, many in makeshift encampments. Aid groups warn any invasion would create catastrophic conditions for civilians. Hospital and security sources in Gaza reported Israeli air strikes in Rafah as well as the central Nuseirat refugee camp.

Pro-Palestinian student protests spread in US



Hundreds of pro-Palestinian protesters at the University of Texas were in a tense standoff with mounted state troopers yesterday, the latest in a series of confrontations rocking campuses across the US. As students at the university staged a boisterous walkout chanting "down with occupation," state troopers on horseback were making their way through campus - while elsewhere police in riot gear were pushing back protesters, according to videos on social media. At least two people had been arrested, the student newspaper *The Daily Texan* reported.

Extreme heat scorches southeast Asia

Extreme heat scorched parts of south and southeast Asia yesterday, prompting schools across the Philippines to suspend classes, heat warnings in the Thai capital and worshippers in Bangladesh to pray for rain. The high temperatures were recorded just a day after the United Nations said Asia was the region that suffered the most disasters from climate and weather hazards in 2023, with floods and storms the chief causes of casualties and economic losses. Extensive scientific research has found climate change is causing heatwaves to become longer, more frequent and more intense. **Page 11**

Amir, Nepal PM talks focus on enhancing ties



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and Nepal's Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal witness the signing ceremony yesterday.

QNA
Kathmandu

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal held official talks in Kathmandu yesterday.

The Nepal premier welcomed His Highness the Amir and the accompanying delegation stressing that the historic visit, the first by an Arab leader to Nepal, reflects the depth of relations between the two countries.

Dahal said he looked forward to working with His Highness the Amir to promote mutual co-operation and elevating relations.

His Highness the Amir extended his deep thanks to the Nepal prime minister for the warm reception and hospitality.

His Highness the Amir affirmed the significance of the visit, in light of the distinguished relations between the two countries, saying he looked forward to the outcome of the visit contributing to consolidating bilateral co-operation in various fields, for the benefit of the two countries and its peoples.

His Highness the Amir praised the Nepalese community in Qatar and its contribution to various development areas in the State.

During the session, the two sides discussed aspects of co-operation between the two countries and ways of promoting and developing them, in addition to the most prominent regional and international issues of common concern.

The session was also attended by HE the Chief of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Saoud bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, HE the Minister of Transport Jassim bin Saif al-Sulaiti, HE the Minister of Commerce and In-

Slew of agreements signed

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and Nepal's Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal yesterday witnessed the signing ceremony of several agreements and memoranda of understanding and co-operation between the governments of both countries. His Highness the Amir and Nepal premier witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding for co-operation in the field of education, higher education and scientific research, a memorandum of understanding for co-operation between the Public Prosecution in Qatar and the Office of the Attorney General in Nepal, and a memorandum of understanding for co-operation in the field of youth and sports. They also witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding in the field of culture and arts between Qatar's Ministry of Culture and Nepal's Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, an

agreement on co-operation and news exchange between the Qatar News Agency (QNA) and the National News Agency of Nepal (RSS), a memorandum of understanding for co-operation in the field of diplomatic training and education between the Diplomatic Institute in Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Institute of Foreign Affairs of the government of Nepal, as well as the renewal of the memorandum of understanding signed between Qatar Chamber and the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce, and an agreement to establish a joint business council between Qatar Chamber and the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce. The signing ceremony in the capital, Kathmandu, was attended by members of the official delegation. On Nepal's side, it was attended by a number of ministers and senior officials. **(QNA)**

dustry Sheikh Mohamed bin Hamad bin Qassim al-Thani, HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi, and members of the official delegation accompanying His Highness the Amir.

From Nepal's side, the session was attended by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Narayan Kaji Shrestha, the Minister of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Shakti Bahadur Basnet, the Minister of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Hit Bahadur Tamang, the Minister of Communications and Informa-

tion Technology Rekha Sharma, Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security Dol Prasad Aryal, Minister of Education, Science and Technology Sumana Shrestha, Minister of Youth and Sports Biraj Bhakta Shrestha, and senior officials.

His Highness the Amir and the prime minister of Nepal earlier held a bilateral meeting, and discussed a host of issues of common concern.

The Nepal premier hosted a luncheon banquet in honour of His Highness the Amir and the accompanying delegation. **(QNA)**



His Highness the Amir is seen off at the Tribhuvan International Airport, Kathmandu, by Nepal's President Ram Chandra Poudel.

Amir leaves Nepal

QNA
Kathmandu

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani yesterday left the capital Kathmandu after a state visit to Nepal at the conclusion of a tour that also included the Philippines, and Bangladesh.

His Highness the Amir was seen off at the Tribhuvan International Airport by Nepal's President Ram Chandra Poudel. Also present were Nepal's Vice-President Ram Sahaya Yadav, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Speaker of the House of Representatives Devraj Ghimire, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Narayan Kaji Shrestha, Minister of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Shakti Bahadur Basnet, Qatar's ambassador to Nepal Mishaal bin Mohamed al-Ansari, Nepal's ambassador to Qatar Naresh Bikram Dhakal, a number of senior Nepal government officials and members of Qatar's embassy.

His Highness the Amir was accompanied by an official delegation. **(QNA)**

Sheikha Moza honours 2024 Akhlaquna Award winners



Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser honoured the winners of the 2024 Akhlaquna Awards yesterday. **PICTURE: AR Al-Baker Page 5**

Qatar Airways opens state-of-the-art Animal Centre

By Pratap John
Business Editor

Qatar Airways Cargo has opened a state-of-the-art world-scale Animal Centre, which significantly enhances the handling capacity of animals arriving in or transiting through Doha's Hamad International Airport.

The 5,260sq m fully temperature controlled facility is equipped with many cutting-edge features and manned by trained veterinary staff, said Mark Drusch, chief officer (Cargo) at Qatar Airways.

The facility has separate rooms for birds, live fish, reptiles and animals loaded on unit load devices (ULDs).

The animal centre has 140 dog kennels and 40 cat kennels. It has 24-horse stables distrib-



Mark Drusch, chief officer (Cargo) at Qatar Airways, speaking to media yesterday. **PICTURE: Shaji Kayamkulam**

uted in four zones with separate airflows for proper segregation.

Custom spaces have been designed for day-old chicks, birds, fish, reptiles and exotic animals, Drusch said.

The facility has a "modern" attendant lounge for specialists accompanying animals, providing a comfortable living space within the animal centre.

Animal Centre handling features include airside and landside interfaces with multiple docks for efficient operations. It is equipped with a sophisticated HVAC system for maintaining optimal air quality.

Qatar Airways Cargo said it has introduced "significant enhancements" to its live animal transport services.

These include kennel calculator tool, streamlined customer service, digitalised IATA Live Animals Regulation (LAR) training and pet card service.

Kennel calculator tool is an innovative online resource for determining the ideal kennel size, ensures comfort and compliance with IATA LAR standards.

Under pet card service, updates and photos of pets are shared during transit, offering a "personal touch, peace of mind and enhancing customer experience."

Pets have a minimum transit time of 180 minutes in Doha. All other animals have a minimum transit time of 90 minutes.

Qatar Airways freighters have enough room for accompanying attendants. Some freighters are able to accommodate up to 11 attendants for specialised movements.

The airline uses dedicated pet vans to transport them from the aircraft to its state-of-the-art animal centre. **To Page 9**

Qatar Airways Cargo flies more than 550,000 animals in 2023

Qatar Airways Cargo has flown in more than 550,000 animals including 10,000 horses in 2023.

According to the airline, it serves a global network of more than 70 freighter destinations. Qatar Airways freighter fleet includes 28 Boeing 777 freighters

and 230 belly-hold planes. It also has an extensive road feeder service (RFS) network.

The airline is the launch customer of the innovative Boeing 777-8F featuring advanced technology and a 25% improvement in fuel efficiency and emissions, with the first delivery arriving in 2027.



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South Africa 1kg



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استرالي 1 كيلو
Lamb Forequarter
Australia 1kg



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Awafi White
Cheese 1kg



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4 th Prize 10,000 QAR. x 30 Winners = 300,000/- (Vouchers 10,000 x 30 Winners)
5 th Prize 5,000 QAR. x 50 Winners = 250,000/- (Vouchers 5,000 x 50 Winners)
6 th Prize 2,500 QAR. x 60 Winners = 150,000/- (Vouchers 2,500 x 60 Winners)

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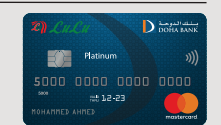
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Amir lauds fruitful visit to Nepal, affirms development of relations



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani underlined that the discussions with President of Nepal Ram Chandra Poudel, and Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, addressed the development of economic relations and bolstering them with a variety of partnerships that elevate the bilateral co-operation to the desired level. His Highness the Amir expressed thanks and appreciation for the warm reception during his first visit to Nepal. "All thanks and appreciation to Nepal, its leaders and people for the hospitality during my first visit to this friendly country, which allowed me to learn about part of its ancient history, and to discuss with President Ram Chandra Poudel, and Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal the development of our economic relations and bolstering them with a variety of partnerships that elevate the bilateral cooperation to the desired level," His Highness the Amir said on his official "X" account. (QNA)



Cabinet applauds Amir's Asian tour

QNA
Doha

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani chaired the Cabinet's regular meeting held at its seat at the Amiri Diwan yesterday. After the meeting, HE the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali al-Mohammadi issued the following statement:



The Cabinet affirmed that the exceptional welcome and hospitality that His Highness the Amir received during the tour reflected the depth and strength of Qatar's relations with the three countries

At the outset of the meeting, the Cabinet commended the outcomes of the Asian tour of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, which His Highness began on Sunday and concluded on Wednesday, and included a state visit to the Philippines, Bangladesh, and Nepal.

The Cabinet affirmed that the exceptional welcome and hospitality that His Highness the Amir received during the tour reflected the depth and strength of Qatar's relations with the three countries, and the extent of respect and appreciation that the peoples of these countries have for Qatar and its leadership.

The Cabinet pointed out that the fruitful discussions that His Highness held with the leaders of the three countries, and the atmosphere of friendship and understanding that prevailed, as well as the agreements and memoranda of understanding that were signed during the tour, have solidified and distinguished the bilateral relations with these countries, and opened horizons for expanding and developing co-operation in various fields, particularly commercial initiatives and investment partnerships, for the benefit of the Qatari people and the peoples of the three countries, as they enhance joint efforts for development, peace and stability in the region and around the globe.

After that, the Cabinet considered the topics on its agenda as follows:

First - Approval of a draft Cabinet decision amending some provisions of Decision No 8 of 2020 to reorganise the central rent committee.

Second - Approval of a draft Cabinet decision to reconstitute the Lawyers Admission Committee.

Third - Approval of a draft decision of the Minister of Municipality regrading organising compensation for animal health.

Fourth - Approval of:

1- A draft memorandum of understanding (MoU) regarding conducting political consultations on issues of mutual interest between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Qatar and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Interna-

tional Co-operation of Djibouti.

2- A draft MoU for co-operation in the field of civil aviation between Qatar's Qatar Civil Aviation Authority (QCAA) and the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC).

Fifth - the Cabinet reviewed the following topics and took the appropriate decisions in their regard:

1- The first report on the results of the work of the Steering Committee of the Government Resource Planning and Management System project.

2- A report on the results of the participation of Qatar's delegation, headed by Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in the first session of the Qatari-Turkish Joint Committee for Economic and Cooperation.

3- A report on the results of the participation of Qatar's delegation, headed by Minister of Commerce and Industry, in the 13th Ministerial Conference of World Trade Organisation (MC13).

PM meets Greek counterpart

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met yesterday at his Amiri Diwan office with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece George Gerapetritis, who is visiting the country. During the meeting, they discussed co-operation relations between the two countries and ways to strengthen and develop them, in addition to discussing developments in the region and ways for de-escalation, notably stopping the war in the Gaza Strip. (QNA)



PM receives written message from Egypt's foreign minister



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani received a written message from Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt Sameh Shoukry, pertaining to bilateral relations and ways to support and enhance them. HE the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi received the message during his meeting with ambassador of Egypt to Qatar Amr El Sherbini. (QNA)

Agreement underlines significance of Qatar-Nepal media co-operation

QNA
Doha

HE the Director-General of Qatar News Agency (QNA) Ahmed bin Saeed al-Rumaihi highlighted that the memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between QNA and its counterpart in Nepal, during the current visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to Kathmandu, echoes the vision of the wise leadership and its belief in the importance of media communication and co-operation between Qatar and other nations.

Speaking to QNA, HE al-Rumaihi said the wise leadership in Qatar possesses an overarching insight for Qatar's co-operation with countries of the world, pointing out that media field is one of the foremost pillars of this co-operation since it underpins cross-cultural communication and understanding between nations.

The MoU signed with the National News Agency in Nepal represents the linchpin of forging constructive and productive co-operation in sharing news,

training skills, expertise, and visits between the two sides to further serve issues of shared interest at the level of development, technology, and best practices in the new media field, as well as other issues of shared concern, HE al-Rumaihi highlighted.

In conclusion, HE the Director-General of Qatar News Agency (QNA) Ahmed bin Saeed al-Rumaihi underlined that such co-operation proves, once again, the tremendous role QNA plays at the regional and global levels, and underscores its trailblazing in distributing superb news based on high professional standards.

Executive Chairman of the National News Agency of Nepal (RSS) Dharmendra Jha underlined the importance of the memorandum of understanding signed between RSS and Qatar News Agency (QNA), saying that it establishes an important and pivotal stage for the media sector in his country.

In a statement to QNA, he noted the significance of the MoU as it was signed during His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's visit to Nepal; stressing that His Highness the Amir's visit will enhance the rela-

tions between the two countries in various fields.

He indicated that the MoU signed between the two news agencies paves the way for co-operation between the two sides in several areas, including the exchange of news, visits and experiences, as well as co-operation on media topics of common interest.

This co-operation allows for learning about the vibrant media atmosphere in Qatar, the rich experience of the Qatari media and its role in enhancing the Qatari presence regionally and globally, he added.

He noted that the MoU between the two sides will certainly enrich news content and coverage in the two countries' media because it will pave the way to exchange news related to two countries.

He highlighted the role of Qatar News Agency in providing a distinguished and comprehensive news service, pointing to its vital role in updating the world about various local activities in their national, regional and international dimensions, as well as covering regional and global events. He also noted other Qatari media outlets. (QNA)

Qatar attends Arab League's extraordinary session on Gaza



Qatar participated in the extraordinary session of the Council of the League of Arab States at the level of permanent delegates. Held at the headquarters of the League's General Secretariat in Cairo, the session discussed the continuing crime of genocide against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip as well as the escalation of Israeli aggression and settler terrorism in the occupied West Bank including Jerusalem. Qatar's delegation to the meeting was headed by Deputy Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the League of Arab States Khalid Abdullah al-Ibrahim. This meeting is at the request of the State of Palestine to discuss developments in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, as well as in light of the United States' recent use of veto in the UN Security Council against the State of Palestine's full membership in the United Nations. It also aims to listen to an in-depth briefing from UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories Francesca Albanese. (QNA)

QNA director-general meets ambassador of Singapore

HE the Director-General of Qatar News Agency (QNA) Ahmed bin Saeed al-Rumaihi met yesterday with ambassador of Singapore to Qatar Wong Chow Ming. The meeting discussed aspects of joint co-operation between the two countries in the field of media. (QNA)



Awqaf felicitates 'Little Muhaddith' competition winners



HE the Minister of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs Ghanem bin Shaheen al-Ghanem has honoured the winners of the 10th edition of 'Little Muhaddith' competition. A total of 55 boys and girls with the highest scores in the public competition received the prizes, an Awqaf statement said. The General Administration of Endowments director-general Sheikh Dr Khalid bin Mohamed bin Ghanem al-Thani noted the response for the 10th edition from the participants was overwhelming. He explained that the competition turned out to be an opportunity to encourage students and parents to compete in memorising and studying Hadiths. The 'Little Muhaddith' competition, organised under the supervision of Awqaf and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, aims at inculcating the love of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the hearts of the participants while inspiring them to emulate him.



Awqaf's Al Ummah symposium on April 30

Al Ummah symposium series by the Department of Islamic Research and Studies at the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs will be held on April 30. According to a statement from Awqaf, the symposium will be attended by researchers, academics and cultural activists. The symposium focuses on three topics which are 'the Qur'anic vision for a culture of moderation and tolerance', 'the culture of moderation and tolerance' and 'future vision on how to advance the culture of moderation and tolerance'. Sheikh Dr Ahmed bin Mohamed bin Ghanem al-Thani, director of the Department of Islamic Research and Studies, said the department is keen to deepen the culture of Islamic values in society. He noted that this symposium comes as an expression of the extent of the research department's sensitivity and awareness of the importance of spreading the values and culture of moderation and tolerance. "The symposium is a cultural project and a quarterly intellectual scientific symposium that the Department of Islamic Research and Studies is keen to organise to discuss a number of the most pressing issues and problems at the level of society and the nation with the participation of an elite group of people of thought, opinion and knowledge," he said.

Doha hosts Arab Healthcare Development annual forum

QNA
Doha

Doha will host the AHDAF QATAR - Arab Healthcare Development Annual Forum on April 29-30, which will be organised by the Arab Hospitals Federation (AHF) under the patronage of the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) in Qatar and supported by AHF strategic partner Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), and in the presence of several Arab health ministers.

In a statement, the MoPH said that the forum will be held in collaboration with the Arab League and the World Health Organization - EMRO, Arab Ministers of Health Council, and various healthcare authorities from the Arab world.

The ministry indicated that themed "Shaping Healthcare Future", this year's forum will address evolving challenges and leverage opportunities in the healthcare landscape. It involves integrating emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and telemedicine, enhancing patient care and optimising healthcare delivery in addition to focusing on value-based care, sustainability, and Digital Healthcare transformation.

In this context, Adviser to HE the Minister of Public Health for Communication and Chair of the Supreme Committee for Healthcare Communications, Ali Abdulla al-Khater, said: "We are pleased to work with our AHF partners to host this significant forum, which will bring together Arab Ministers of Health, key decision makers, top healthcare executives, healthcare professionals and healthcare workers from around the Arab countries to sit, network, discuss, share information and best practices and address the latest issues related to the industry."

He added: "Through our participation in such forums and large conferences, we are keen in the State of Qatar to exchange best practices and successful experiences, and maximise the benefit of distinguished international expertise, which contributes to the enhancement of the healthcare sector and promotes the health of the community in line the Qatar National Vision 2030."

For her part, AHF Chief Executive Officer Alice Yammine Boueiz said: "The AHF continues its long-standing efforts to highlight distinguished health sectors in the Arab world. Qatar has set a goal of achieving world-class healthcare standards to be a global leader and it has played a multifaceted role in healthcare, with a focus on improving healthcare and contributing to many health initiatives through investment, research, and humanitarian efforts. Qatar is characterized by modern infrastructure, comprehensive services, regulatory oversight, and a commitment to excellence in patient care. The government continues to invest in the sector to meet the growing healthcare needs of its population and enhance the quality of healthcare delivery."

She added: "Our choice of Qatar to hold such a significant event reflects the distinguished and strategic partnership between AHF and HMC that has enabled us to present a sophisticated image of Arab integration and constructive health cooperation for fifteen years."

Old Doha Port in strategic tie-up with Qatar marinas

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

Old Doha Port has forged a strategic partnership with prominent marinas across Qatar to enhance the yachting experience and promote luxury marine tourism in the country. Marking the milestone collaboration, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed yesterday.

The pact brings together Old Doha Port, Ronautica Middle East (operator of The Pearl Island marinas), Banana Island Resort Doha, Aura Group (Beebar Marina), and Resort and Leisure Company WLL (Corinthia Yacht Club, Porto Arabia) marinas, uniting their efforts to offer comprehensive solutions and exclusive benefits to their clientele.

"This partnership marks a pivotal step towards unifying our strengths and diversifying the experiences available to yacht and boat owners," said Old Doha Port CEO Mohamed al-Mulla in a statement. "By leveraging each marina's unique charm and offerings, we are collectively advancing our shared vision of becoming a premier global yachting destination.

"Old Doha Port is proud to lead and play a significant role in this collaborative initiative. Through shared objectives and pooling our resources, we aim to significantly elevate Qatar's marina



The MoU-signing between prominent marinas in Qatar held at Doha Port yesterday. **PICTURE:** Shaji Kayamkulam

culture, setting new standards for luxury and service excellence. "This agreement is more than a commitment to collaboration; it is a roadmap for a future aligned with Qatar National Vision 2030. We will continue to offer unique, unparalleled experiences that reflect Qatar's rich maritime heritage and innovative spirit," al-Mulla said.

Central to the collaboration are the exclusive benefits extended to locals, residents, and tourists, including discounted rates at restaurants and accommodations, complimentary docking and berthing, and specialised catering services.

Discounts ranging from 15-20% will be available across a spectrum of services, from food and beverage and hospitality to nautical activities, berthing, and

The pact brings together Old Doha Port, Ronautica Middle East (operator of The Pearl Island marinas), Banana Island Resort Doha, Aura Group (Beebar Marina), and Resort and Leisure Company WLL (Corinthia Yacht Club, Porto Arabia) marinas, uniting their efforts to offer comprehensive solutions and exclusive benefits to their clientele.

maintenance facilities. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the event, al-Mulla said this initiative has been meticulously studied, culminating in a successful launch through the signing of the MoU with the prominent marinas in Qatar.

He added that this launch marks the beginning of more initiatives yet to come, serving the yachting industry in Qatar, indicating a new era of luxury marine experiences and heightened convenience, especially for boat and yacht owners.

Al-Mulla cited key highlights

of the agreement, including reciprocal berthing privileges between marinas, allowing customers to access berthing facilities free of charge at either location.

According to stakeholders, this collaboration represents just the beginning of new avenues for co-operation among marine entities in Qatar. With the potential to expand offerings and provide innovative solutions, this multi-marina experience promises to elevate Qatar's status as a leading luxury destination for boat owners and a dynamic hub for marine tourism on the global stage.

MoPH, its partners launch awareness campaign marking immunisation week

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), in co-operation with Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), the Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC), Sidra Medicine, and the private health sector, launched an awareness campaign to observe World Immunisation Week from April 24-30 under the theme (Humanly Possible: Saving lives through immunisation). In a statement, the ministry said that the campaign aims to highlight the importance of vaccines and how immunisation contributes to saving the lives of community members against vaccine-preventable diseases whose complications can lead to death, in addition to supporting community members to increase coverage of immunisation against diseases that can be prevented through immunisation for themselves and their children. The MoPH indicated that awareness messages about the significance of vaccinations will be posted on all social media platforms, as well as enhancing awareness among visitors of a number of primary health care centres, private centres, and clinics. In the statement, the ministry pointed out that Qatar has one of the best vaccination programmes in the world. **(QNA)**

QATAR FUEL ADDITIVES COMPANY LIMITED QAFAC

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

The Tender Committee of QAFAC invites qualified local suppliers to participate in the following Tenders in accordance with QAFAC tendering procedures:

No.	Tender No.	Description	Collection Fees Qrs.	Tender Bond Qrs.	Bid Closing Date
1	QTC/037/24	Four (4) Years Call off Contract for Supply of Cylinder Gases	300/-	Qrs. 28,000/-	19 th May 2024

Interested companies are invited to collect the above tender documents as follows:

- **Collection Date** : From **Thursday, 25th April, 2024** (QAFAC working days from Sunday to Thursday only)
- **Collection Time** : 08:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
- **Location** : The Gate, Bay Tower 2, 13th Floor, West Bay, QAFAC
- **Tender Fees** : As shown above, **(non-refundable)** can be paid at QAFAC Doha Office
- **Validity** : Offers must be valid for 120 days from closing date.
- **Bid Bond** : Offers must include a Bid bond issued from a local bank and valid for 120 Days from closing date.
- **Authorization** : Tenders will be issued to authorized company personnel with the following:
 1. Official authorization on Company Letter Head
 2. Proper Identification
 3. Copy of Company's Commercial Registration
 4. Focal Point of Contact (Name, Telephone, Mobile & Email)

الهلال الأحمر القطري Qatar Red Crescent

Qatar Red Crescent – Medical Affairs Division

Tenders Announcement: -

Sr. #	Tender No.	Description	Temporary Tender Bond	Documents Fees (Non-Refundable)	Closing Date
1	QRC/WHC/05 -2024	Trend Micro Renewal & Upgrade for Medical Affairs Division	10,000 Q.R	500 Q.R	16/05/2024

The documents can be collected from Medical Affairs Division, Ain Khalid Area, Sunday to Thursday from 07:00 am to 02:00 pm till the closing date.

Required Documents:

1. Authorization letter to receive tender documents + ID copy of the person will be receiving the documents.
2. Company's Commercial registration copy.
3. Bank deposit voucher with the value of documents (500 QR) not refunded & account details:
 - Account Name: Qatar Red Crescent.
 - Bank: Al Rayan.
 - Account Number: 11199970201
 - IBAN Number: QA56MAFR000000000011199970201

For more information: please call: (50044554), or Email whc.tenders@qrcs.org.qa



Qatar Foundation Chairperson, Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, honoured the winners of the 2024 Akhlaquna Awards during a ceremony held at Qatar National Library in Education City yesterday. The ceremony was attended by QF Vice-Chairperson and CEO HE Sheikha Hind bint Hamad al-Thani, alongside ministers, officials, and parents of the awardees. **PICTURES:** AR al-Baker

Sheikha Moza fetes winners of Akhlaquna Awards

Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation (QF), honoured the winners of the 2024 Akhlaquna Awards during a ceremony held at Qatar National Library in Education City yesterday. The ceremony was attended by HE Sheikha Hind bint Hamad al-Thani, Vice-Chairperson and CEO of Qatar Foundation, alongside ministers, officials, and the parents of the awardees.



Akhlaquna, initiated in 2017 by Her Highness Sheikha Moza, highlights the connection between ethics and knowledge, and reflects the strong ties between virtuous traits and ethical behaviours that are a key driver for social progress and development. This year's edition of QF's Akhlaquna Awards received entries for the Individual Contributions Award from across Qatar and also the Gulf region.



Among them was Ali Mohamed al-Kuwari, from Qatar, for his Etqan Programme: a television programme that emphasises the significance of performing tasks with skill and precision and make it an integral part of religious and societal commitment. The programme spans a wide range of topics, highlighting how Islamic ethics can be applied in all areas of life.

Yousuf Ahmad al-Omran from Kuwait was honoured in the Individual Contributions from the Gulf Region category - presented for the first time - in recognition of his initiative Boujarrah Makes a Change. This project focuses on the repair and restoration of infrastructure in Kuwait, involving over 3,000 volunteers and completing more than 55 projects.

The Akhlaquna Youth Award for 2024 - honouring school students aged 15-18 years who develop projects and initiatives for, and make contributions to, their community and their school - was won by Jassem Khamis al-Meraikhi, from Qatar Academy Al Khor; Ghalya Ebrahim

al-Maraghi, from Al-Arqam Academy for Girls; Roudah Mubarak Abdullah, from Al-Eiman Girls Secondary School; Mohamed Abdulla Ebrahim, from Ahmed Bin Mohammad Boys Secondary School; Moza Abdulla Alfakhroo, from Al-Arqam Academy for Girls; and Noof Khamis al-Merakhi, from Al-Maha Academy for Girls.

Mohamed Abdulla Ebrahim, an 18-year-old winner of this year's Akhlaquna Youth Award, said: "I'm really excited to have been chosen among this year's participants. It's been a tough and long

journey, but a rewarding one. My projects focused on sharing the moral values taught by the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), particularly within my school community."

"Receiving this award is truly amazing, and I'm incredibly proud," said 17-year-old, Moza Abdulla Alfakhroo, who was also honoured with the Akhlaquna Youth Award and named as an Ethics Ambassador for Akhlaquna. "However, for me, the real achievement has always been about making a meaningful difference in my community."

During the ceremony, the launch of the Ambassadors of Akhlaquna Club - aimed at strengthening community bonds among individuals through a series of interactive activities planned throughout the year - was announced. The Akhlaquna initiative also announced its 2025 campaign under the slogan 'Our Compassion is Our Strength', to continue Akhlaquna's journey of promoting positive and ethical values within the community.



Kahramaa's Innovation Week concludes



The activities of the Innovation Week 2024 by the Creativity, Innovation and Scientific Research Incubator at the Qatar General Electricity & Water Corporation (Kahramaa) concluded yesterday. According to a statement by Kahramaa on its X account, the activities of the fourth day included brainstorming workshops, a hackathon competition, and presentations of the competing teams' ideas. Qatar Research, Development and Innovation Council and global companies such as Microsoft and Google participated in the activities that started on Sunday. Kahramaa officials also attended the sessions.

GCC water resources meeting held in Doha



The 42nd meeting of the Permanent Committee for Water Resources of the Gulf Co-operation Council was held yesterday in Doha. Qatar General Electricity & Water Corporation (Kahramaa) posted on its X account. The meeting, headed by engineer Fahad Yousef Tolefat, director of Water Networks Affairs at Kahramaa, discussed the latest challenges faced by the Arab Gulf countries in the water security sector. It also discussed updating the unified strategy for water in the Gulf countries while reviewing the recommendations of the working groups.

MoECC's beach cleaning campaign continues

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change has carried out a campaign to clean Ras Al Nuof beach, with the participation of a number of students from Noor Al Khaleej International School. A large quantity of industrial and plastic waste were collected. This campaign comes as part of the vision and strategy of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC), emphasising the importance of community participation in local environmental protection campaigns, targeting students and the younger generation to raise environmental awareness among all members of the local community. Abdulla al-Khelaifi, assistant director of Marine Life Protection Department, MoECC, stressed that the beach cleaning campaign is part of the efforts of the Ministry to protect the local environment, involving Qatari society to spread the culture of environmental sustainability and caring for local environment. He pointed out that such ongoing cleaning campaigns include educational lectures to introduce students and participants to their duties and responsibilities towards the Qatari environment, encouraging each individual to play their part in conserving and developing the environment.





Alf Foundation honours 'Plant Your Homeland' programme winners

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Al Faisal Without Borders (Alf) Foundation, in partnership with the Ministry of Municipality, represented by the Public Parks Department, and in co-operation with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE), honoured the winning schools in the "Plant Your Homeland" programme for the academic season 2023-24.

The ceremony was attended by Alf Foundation chairman HE Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim al-Thani, HE the Minister of Municipality Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah al-Attiyah, and HE Dr Ibrahim bin Saleh al-Nuaimi, undersecretary of the Ministry of Education and

Higher Education. This year, the ninth consecutive edition saw the participation of 400 students representing 36 public and private schools. The students learned the skill of ways to produce healthy food and to grow vegetables and ornamental plants at school and home gardens.

Ruqaya Preparatory School for Girls won the Excellence Award announced by Alf Foundation last year in co-operation with the MoEHE, by implementing an integrated botanical garden inside the school.

HE Sheikh Faisal thanked the Ministry of Education and Higher Education for their continued support of the Foundation's programmes throughout the previous years. He also thanked the Ministry of Municipality for the fruitful co-

operation in the "Plant Your Homeland" programme.

HE Sheikh Faisal expressed happiness with the level of schools and students participating in this year's edition of the programme. He stated that the Foundation's programmes have always aimed to provide students from all categories with the basic scientific, engineering and technical skills that will help them in their educational and future lives.

The competition in this edition of the programme continued throughout the agricultural season from November 2023 until March 2024, providing practical farm training to the participants while enhancing their sense of responsibility to preserve the environment in accordance with the Qatar National Vision 2030.

Qatar welcomes independent panel report on UNRWA

Qatar has welcomed the contents of the report of the Independent Review Committee appointed by the United Nations regarding fairness to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), after allegations that affected its work in the Gaza Strip. In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed that the formation of the Independent Review Committee, per se, is a transparent and credible institutional work, in the face of previous accusations. The ministry also underscored the necessity of adhering to the approach of investigation, and independence in all controversial issues, in order to avoid issuing hasty judgments for which consequences are borne by innocent

people. Furthermore, the ministry noted that Qatar recently provided \$25mn worth of additional support to UNRWA, and in this regard, it also expressed its great satisfaction with the announcements made by several donors of resuming their support for the agency, thus enhancing its pivotal and indispensable role in helping millions of Palestinians in Gaza, West Bank, Jordan Lebanon and Syria. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs renewed Qatar's unwavering support for UNRWA, moved by its firm and supportive position for the legitimate rights of the brotherly Palestinian people, foremost of which is their right to establish their independent state on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. (QNA)

Katara to launch Naham Al Khaleej Art Award activities

The drama theatre at Katara - Cultural Village will launch the activities of the 7th edition of the "Naham Al Khaleej" Art Award tomorrow (Friday), with the participation of 13 artists from Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, the UAE, Bahrain and Iraq.

The competitions, continuing until April 30, will witness the crowning of the winners of the "Naham Al Khaleej" Award, launched by Katara as part of its ongoing initiatives to revive the authentic heritage of Qatar and the GCC region, and to preserve the artistic heritage associated with the sea, especially of fishing and pearl diving.

Mohamed al-Shahwani, vice-chairman of the Katara Naham Art Award Committee, explained that the competition of the fourth edition of the award features a first prize of QR50,000, second prize of QR40,000, third prize of QR30,000, and the fourth prize of QR10,000.

Naham art is considered one of the most prominent maritime heritage arts, flourishing during fishing and pearl diving expeditions. It contributed to the appearance of such artists who mastered singing and chanting, to entertain sailors on the deck, bringing joy and enthusiasm to their hearts, and helping them endure the toil and effort of work.

QM hosts GCC antiquities and museums officials' meeting



The meeting of the GCC Undersecretaries Responsible for Antiquities and Museums was held in Doha, yesterday.

Qatar Museums (QM) hosted the 22nd meeting of the GCC Undersecretaries Responsible for Antiquities and Museums yesterday, in collaboration with the GCC General Secretariat, a statement said.

The agenda encompassed a review of the significant decisions made during the 21st session, chaired by Oman in 2023 via video conferencing, ensuring follow-up on key outcomes.

These decisions play a crucial role in advancing the collective efforts within the fields of antiquities and museums, while enhancing relationships among GCC countries, friendly nations, and international organisations operating in these spheres.

The meeting itinerary featured a recognition ceremony, honouring antiquities and museum specialists. The participating delegations also had the opportunity to explore an archaeological site during a guided tour.

The meeting was chaired by QM CEO Mohamed Saad al-Rumaihi,

in the presence of the representative of the GCC General Secretariat, and representatives of the GCC countries. The National Museum of Qatar director, Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Hamad al-Thani, led the Qatari delegation, which included Archaeology Department director Faisal Abdullah al-Nuaimi, and a group of archaeology specialists and experts from QM.

Al-Rumaihi said: "This assembly underscores our commitment to foster cultural and heritage co-operation among our nations. Together, we are crafting a roadmap to safeguard our heritage and elevate our cultural standing on the global stage. Effective co-operation, both globally and locally, is paramount in the preservation of our monuments and the evolution of our museums. We are dedicated to fostering co-operative efforts aimed at enriching our cultural heritage and showcasing it to the global community using cutting-edge scientific approaches. We extend heartfelt appreciation to all individuals who have contrib-

uted, and continue to contribute, to these endeavours."

Sheikh Abdulaziz said: "This programme marks a significant stride in translating the directives and recommendations laid out during the 21st GCC Undersecretaries Responsible for Antiquities and Museums meeting, reaffirming our dedication to fortify cultural and heritage co-operation. It presents a distinctive opportunity for participants to immerse themselves in the rich tapestry of our region's history, delving into ancient civilisations through interactive sessions and educational visits that illuminate the richness and intricacies of our cultural heritage."

This event underscores QM's unwavering commitment to enhancing regional co-operation in culture and heritage, further solidifying its position as a pivotal cultural hub in the region. It also exemplifies Qatar's steadfast dedication to fostering the growth and development of the cultural and heritage sector, the statement added.

Top thought leaders attend region's first Innovation by Design Summit



Hamad al-Amari (left) takes part in the event.



Ali al-Kuwari addressing the gathering yesterday.

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

The region's first Innovation by Design Summit yesterday brought together more than 400 thought leaders, innovators and delegates at Msheireb Downtown Doha's Doha Design District.

The event, organised by Msheireb Properties and Fast Company Middle East, also marked the debut of the Msheireb Award for Innovation in Design, covering four categories: human-centred, technology-powered, sustainable and luxury lifestyle design.

Msheireb Properties CEO, engineer Ali al-Kuwari, led the

opening of the event and stressed Qatar's leadership in design excellence.

"Qatar is leading the way in design across its many aspects. Smart, sustainable design is the future, and it's something we're proud to champion," he said.

Ravi Raman, publisher of Fast Company Middle East, echoed al-Kuwari's view and underscored the importance of design thinking in driving positive societal change.

The summit featured various design topics, ranging from biophilic design to integrating artificial intelligence (AI) in content creation. Discussions also included urban planning's role in fostering people-centric cities, the fusion of technology and creativity,

and the burgeoning experience economy and Gen Z preferences.

Speaking to reporters on the summit's sidelines, Msheireb Properties' Corporate Communications senior director Dr Hafiz Ali Abdulla said the event shed light on the transformative impact of emerging technologies such as AI on design processes and the importance of fostering a collaborative ecosystem.

In addition to featuring esteemed Qatari innovators, the summit showcased local talent, with Dana Alfaridan captivating audiences with her latest compositions and Hamad al-Amari adding flair to the event with his entertaining performance.

Awards presented as School Robotics Competition ends



The 16th School Robotics Competition organised by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) in collaboration with the Qatar Scientific Club (QSC) of the Ministry of Sports and Youth and supported by the Social & Sport Contribution Fund (DAAM) wrapped up on Tuesday.

Abou Baker El Seddik Preparatory School for Boys won the grand championship (advanced),

with Musab bin Amir Independent Secondary School for Boys in Doha being ranked first (elementary). Also, 28 awards were distributed to the teams ranked first, 21 awards to schools ranked second, as well as 21 awards to teams ranked third and included primary, elementary and secondary schools.

To mark this occasion, Assistant Undersecretary for Education Affairs at the MoEHE Maha Zayed al-Ruwaili hailed the superb organisa-

tion of the contests, along with the excellent participation of students in all categories of the event. She added that MoEHE is committed to supporting this championship as one of the most important and pivotal educational events that primarily aim to converge programmers with superb mindsets to innovate in technology.

Student Hazem Ahmed from Ahmed Ibn Hanbal Secondary School, Doha said he and his col-

leagues are so glad for winning the first place in the First Lego League and representing Qatar in the Arab and international contests.

Students Lulua Abdulaziz al-Haydos and Sarah Ahmed Musa from Hafsa Preparatory School for Girls lauded the efforts of their trainer, Dalia al-Badr, which resulted in winning the third place in the Sumo competition with advanced category. Sumo calibrates the learning outcomes of compu-



ter and information technology and witnessed a stellar participation from 2,150 students of both

genders hailing from 216 schools, and were distributed over 700 teams. (QNA)

Bangladesh media hails Amir's visit, new phase in bilateral ties

Amidst a warm welcome and significant appreciation of the Asian tour and its outcomes, Bangladesh media highlighted the tour of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to several Asian countries, commencing with visits to the Philippines then Bangladesh, and concluding in Nepal.

This tour aims to bolster Qatar's relations and strategic partnerships with Asian countries, manifested through the signing of agreements and memoranda of understanding in various fields.

Bangladesh media expressed great interest and closely followed the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to Dhaka, considering it a turning point in the bilateral relations between the two countries, signalling the beginning of a new phase in their bilateral partnership.

In this context, a report by *The Business Standard*, a Bangladeshi newspaper, mentioned that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's visit to Bangladesh is a result of a visit by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Doha in May 2023. During that visit, she participated in the Qatar Economic Forum and engaged in crucial bilateral discussions.

The report, titled "The Upcoming Visit of the Amir of Qatar to Bangladesh: Ushering in a new chapter in bilateral partnership", and written by Nahim Razaqa, a Bangladeshi member of parliament, stated that recent developments signal a growing partnership between Bangladesh and Qatar, with the foundation laid for enhancing co-operation between the countries through the signing of a long-term agreement for liquefied natural gas imports in June 2023. He pointed out that the positive development in relations between the two countries was driven by Qatar's commitment to supporting the media industry in Bangladesh at the Islamic Conference of Information Ministers in February 2024, along with other discussions that included military co-operation at the Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition in March 2024.

The report highlighted significant progress in various areas of Bangladesh-Qatar relations, surpassing the traditional economic dimension limited to oil and financial transfers. It noted that both countries' leadership successfully transformed their relations into deep strategic ties, exemplified by Qatar's commitment to exporting an additional 1.5m tonnes of liquefied natural gas annually to Bangladesh over the next 15 years. This agreement aims to address the energy generation supply shortfall in Bangladesh, highlighting Qatar's importance as a reliable energy partner for Bangladesh.

The *Bangladesh Post* showed keen interest in the visit of His Highness the Amir to Bangladesh, as reported in an article titled "Bangladesh Rolls Out Red Carpet for Qatar Amir". The paper said that the visit focused on various agreements concerning combating tax evasion, legal co-operation, maritime transport, as well as the development and protection of mutual investments, and the establishment of a joint business council. Several Bangladeshi TV channels provided extensive coverage of His Highness



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's visit to Bangladesh witnessed the signing of several agreements.

the Amir's visit to Dhaka, with the United News of Bangladesh agency reporting that Qatar and Bangladesh signed 11 co-operation documents, including six agreements and five memoranda of understanding.

The agency, in a report titled "Bangladesh and Qatar sign six agreements and five memoranda of understanding During the Official Visit of the Amir of Qatar", stated that the agreements covered areas such as double taxation avoidance, tax evasion, legal affairs co-operation, mutual investment promotion and protection, maritime transport services, and the formation of a joint business council. Additionally, the five memoranda of understanding were signed in areas of co-operation including the workforce sector, port management, higher education and research, youth and sports co-operation, and diplomatic training.

"With this visit, the relations between Bangladesh and Qatar will reach a new height. This is the first-ever high level visit from any country of the Middle East after the formation of a new government in January this year," the report quoted Foreign Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud as saying.

Furthermore, in addition to bilateral co-operation areas, global issues were also discussed, including the Israeli war on Gaza, with Bangladesh highlighting its stance. Dr Hasan Mahmud emphasised: "Naturally, this discussion can come up. Killings in Gaza should be stopped. Everyone wants it. We want it."

Qatar, a country rich in petroleum and natural gas with the highest average per capita income, is considered an influential country in the Middle East due to its strong economy, geopolitical position and diplomatic activity and mediation, said the foreign minister.

He pointed out that recently the areas of trade, investment and employment creation, energy, aviation, agriculture, food security, climate change etc have been identified to expand the scope of bilateral co-operation through diplomatic communication and discussions at various levels with Qatar.

In a related context, the *Bangladesh Post* stated that Dhaka seeks to increase Qatari investments in

Bangladesh and provide all possible trade benefits to the country, including allocating lands in special economic zones in Bangladesh. Additionally, according to sources from the Bangladeshi Foreign Ministry, Dhaka has invited Doha to import leather goods, pharmaceutical products and readymade garments from Bangladesh.

In an article for the *Blitz* newspaper in Bangladesh, writer Tajul Islam said His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani is among the leaders who left an indelible imprint on the path of their country, and over the past ten years his leadership has been characterised by vision and flexibility and commitment to progress.

A report said that the visit focused on various agreements concerning combating tax evasion, legal co-operation, maritime transport, as well as the development and protection of mutual investments, and the establishment of a joint business council

In his article under the title "A decade of praiseworthy leadership of His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani", the writer added that since assuming power, His Highness the Amir has expressed a clear vision for Qatar's future, with a focus on economic diversification, social development, and diplomatic engagement. Under his leadership, Qatar has implemented ambitious infrastructure projects, such as the modern Hamad International Airport and the Education City, which includes branches of leading international universities.

He added that given the finite nature of hydrocarbon resources,

His Highness gave priority to economic diversification, as it is the cornerstone of Qatar's development strategy. His Highness the Amir's commitment to social development is evident in his efforts to promote healthcare, education and cultural enrichment. The healthcare system in Qatar has witnessed great developments under His Highness the Amir's leadership through investments in state-of-the-art medical facilities and initiatives to promote public health awareness.

He noted that in the field of diplomacy, His Highness the Amir followed a practical and proactive approach, positioning Qatar as a mediator and facilitator of dialogue on regional and global issues. His Highness also played a pivotal role in promoting stability and peace in the Middle East through diplomatic initiatives and humanitarian aid. Qatar's mediation efforts have contributed to resolving conflicts in various regions, including Afghanistan and Sudan.

He indicated that Qatar is one of the most prominent providers of humanitarian aid to alleviate the suffering of displaced persons and refugees throughout the Middle East and beyond, reflecting His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's commitment to solidarity and compassion. The writer pointed out that the successful hosting of major international sporting events, such as the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, embodies the strategic use of sports diplomacy to enhance Qatar's global standing and enhance dialogue between countries.

He said His Highness the Amir gave priority to empowering and engaging youth through initiatives that promote education, entrepreneurship and civic participation. He added that the Amir stressed the importance of environmental sustainability as an essential element of Qatar's development strategy and that the establishment of the Qatar National Food Security Programme and the investments in renewable energy infrastructure demonstrates the proactive approach followed by His Highness the Amir in confronting environmental challenges and ensuring a sustainable future for generations.

He concluded the article by saying that the vision of the wise leadership was characterised by flexibility and a firm commitment to progress, and His Highness the Amir's strategic initiatives contributed to advancing development in Qatar on multiple fronts, from economic diversification and social development to diplomatic engagement and environmental sustainability. As Qatar continues on its path toward growth and transformation, the legacy of His Highness the Amir, as a visionary leader who overcame challenges with insight and determination, will continue to shape the nation's future for years to come.

In an article for the Bengali researcher Kamal Uddin, the *Eurasia Review* newspaper said that Bangladesh has always maintained a positive stance towards the Middle East with regard to its foreign policy, since gaining independence. The Gulf region has played a significant role in shaping Bangladesh's foreign policy, and this is evident through co-operative efforts in the areas of trade exchange, culture and strategic alliances. He added that the visit of His Highness the Amir is a clear example of the warm relationship between the two countries.

He added that recently, the relationship between Qatar and Bangladesh has reached an important stage, characterised by diplomatic progress, enhanced defence co-operation, notable educational achievements, and strong economic development. The writer emphasised that the co-operation between Qatar and Bangladesh in the field of energy contributes to improving relations between the two countries, considering that the visit highlights the great value that the two countries attach to their bilateral relations.

The Indian Orissa Diary website also highlighted the Asian tour undertaken by His Highness the Amir, which includes the Philippines, Bangladesh, and Nepal, considering that it is part of Qatar's consistent approach to strengthening strategic relations and partnerships with Asia.

In a report entitled "Qatar Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to Travel to the Nepal, Philippines, Bangladesh", the website said that His Highness the Amir's discussions with the lead-

ers of the Philippines, Nepal, and Bangladesh will focus on ways to strengthen relations in various fields and regional and international issues of common interest.

The report added that the well-established Qatari-Asian relations have witnessed steady development thanks to the mutual keenness of both sides to develop and enhance them in various fields. Recently, these relations have witnessed radical growth, as high-level visits were exchanged between Qatari and Asian officials, and Qatar and Asian countries intensified the implementation of joint economic, investment projects and co-ordinating stances on various regional and international issues.

"Aware of Asia's vital role in consolidating the regional and global economies and achieving global food security, Qatar has dived into Asia with the aim of fostering global and regional economic security. In turn, Asia's fast-growing economies attach overriding attention to further deepening relations with Qatar," the report added.

The report indicated that the mutually beneficial Qatari-Asian relations serve the national interests of both parties.

"Bearing in mind economic diversification as a top priority of the Qatar National Vision 2030, Doha considers the ample economic opportunities for diverse investments in Asia across several sectors, including agriculture, infrastructure, transportation, financial institutions and energy sectors. Meanwhile, multiple Asian countries appeal to potential multi-sector Qatari investments in a bid to push their economies, provide further job opportunities, and to rocket their foreign exports," the report said.

The report indicated that Doha hosts thousands of migrant workers from many Asian countries. Recognising their contributions to the Qatari economy and the development of their home nations, Qatar has adopted leading labour rights reforms that can serve as a role model for other countries in the region. Among these reforms comes the non-discriminatory minimum wage, a legislation highly commended by the International Labour Organisation and other international agencies concerned with workers.

The report considered that the relations of Qatar with the 10 countries of the Treaty of Amity and Co-operation in South-east Asia enhance co-operation in multiple fields, and support all efforts aimed at enhancing regional, international security and peace, and developing relations and co-operation with Asia in general, and Asean countries in particular.

The website pointed out that Qatar and the Philippines have signed various bilateral agreements that are constantly developing through the joint committee meeting, which was recently agreed to be held annually to advance bilateral relations to broaden horizons.

The website said that one of the consistent results of Doha's policy aimed at strengthening relations with the Philippine government, and the strengthening relations between the people of the two friendly countries is seen in the opening of the Qatar Visa Center (QVC) in Manila on Sept 25, 2019. (QNA)

QYH picks Tourist Lens Competition winners

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Qatar Youth Hostels (QYH) has announced the winners of Tourist Lens Competition and on this occasion Abdullah Saeed, head of Public Relations and Communications, said: "The participants in the 2nd edition of the Tourist Lens Competition achieved desired goals by promoting domestic tourism and highlighting the tourist attractions in the country."

The participation took place on three social media platforms, namely Instagram, X, and TikTok, through the collection of the most beautiful pictures of



tourist attractions in Qatar. The competition included around a hundred participants on the three platforms. The most beautiful picture was chosen from each platform that received the

"QYH aspires to advance young people in the field of tourism and in various ways of life, as tourism helps the individual in cultural, civilisational and intellectual exchange"

most likes from the public. A prize of QR3,000 was allocated to each winner, and the winners were announced in the celebration of the International Day of Creativity and Innovation.

In conclusion, Abdullah Saeed said: "QYH aspires to advance young people in the field of tourism and in various ways of life, as tourism helps the individual in cultural, civilisational and intellectual exchange."

Asghal reveals closure on Sabah Al Ahmad Corridor

The Public Works Authority (Asghal) has announced an eight-hour overnight traffic closure on Sabah Al Ahmad Corridor to traffic coming from

HIA toward the North, from 2am-10am tomorrow (Friday), while keeping open the signal-controlled intersections and service roads. During the closure, in co-ordination with the General Directorate of Traffic, road users must use alternative local and service roads to reach their destinations as per the map. Asghal will install road signs advising motorists of the temporary closure and has requested all to follow them, and abide by the speed limit to ensure safety.



HMC performs first robotic kidney transplant in Qatar

Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) succeeded in performing the first robotic kidney transplant surgery in Qatar on a patient in his seventies.

The patient had been suffering from chronic kidney failure for several years, necessitating daily peritoneal dialysis, in addition to other health issues such as high blood pressure.

The surgical procedure took place at Hamad General Hospital, led by a specialised team in robotic surgery and organ transplantation under the direction of Dr Abdullah al-Ansari, chief medical officer at HMC.

The team also included Dr Omar Abu Marzouq, senior consultant in Robotic Surgery and deputy head of the Surgical Research Department at HMC, and Dr Omar Ali, senior consultant in Organ Transplantation and deputy head of the Organ Transplantation Department at HMC.

Dr al-Ansari explained that the preparation for the surgical procedure took several weeks through an integrated multidisciplinary team of experts at HMC, including robotic surgery specialists, organ transplant surgeons, anaesthesiologists, nephrologists, and nursing staff, alongside the patient's preparation.

"The surgical procedure was performed using the Da Vinci robot, in approximately two-and-a-half hours.



The team that conducted the surgical procedure.

During this time, the new kidney was transplanted from a deceased brain-dead donor after necessary examinations and ensuring tissue compatibility between the patient and the donor, following obtaining the necessary approvals from the donor's family," Dr-al Ansari said.

"This surgical advancement is an outcome of significant investment in healthcare sector in Qatar and has achieved many accomplishments in providing healthcare services to patients. This includes meeting the latest developments in medicine and surgery and adhering to the

highest international recognised standards," Dr al-Ansari added.

Dr Marzouq confirmed the rapid recovery of the patient following the robotic surgical procedure. The patient was able to walk just two days after the surgery, and the transplanted kidney gradually resumed its normal function.

The patient continues to follow up with doctors regularly. This success can be attributed to robotic surgery, which offers many advantages, including reducing the risk of complications, shortening hospital stays, and a quick return to normal life activities. Additionally, it minimises blood loss, aiding in speedy recovery, restoring normal bodily functions, and improving the patient's quality of life.

Dr Ali added the importance of using robots in kidney transplantation surgeries, as it provides an unprecedented level of precision and greater control. This includes precise manipulation and delicate handling of blood vessels and sensitive tissues, facilitated by a magnified, high-definition, three-dimensional view and robotic arms controlled entirely by the surgeon.

Robotic surgery also allows for smaller incisions in both the patient and the donor compared to traditional surgery, reducing the risk of damage to surrounding tissues and minimising post-operative pain.

Ladies-only night returns at Hilton Salwa

Hilton Salwa Beach Resort & Villas, nestled on the Qatar border, has announced the return of its ladies-only night, Waterpark Wednesday, from May 1, a statement said.

Held at the Desert Falls Water and Adventure Park, Waterpark Wednesday uniquely caters to women with extended hours. "As the sole waterpark in Qatar offering such privileges exclusively to female guests, the weekly event has become an essential part of the summer season," it was explained. Featuring water slides to river rides, Waterpark Wednesday takes place from 7pm to 11pm, with adult tickets priced at QR195 and QR150 for juniors (less than 1.2m), with complimentary access offered to guests staying at the resort. For those visiting the resort with their families, there are ample activities available for male family members to enjoy while women enjoy quality ladies-only time, including the Aquaglide, which also offers extended opening hours until 10pm on Wednesdays, priced at QR50 per person for individuals aged eight and above. The resort also offers lavish accommodations, ranging from suites to private villas. Other attractions include eforea Spa and a diverse array of dining experiences, from Arabic cuisine to Mediterranean flavours and Chinese delicacies, the statement added.

Ehsan organises 7th Research and Innovation Competition

QNA
Doha

The Center for Empowerment and Care of the Elderly (Ehsan), an affiliate of the Ministry of Social Development and Family's (MSDF) Qatar Social Work Foundation, organised the 7th Research And Innovation Competition 2024, raising social awareness on the issues and needs of the elderly.

The competition was organised in co-operation with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) and Lusail University.

The university hosted the student research exhibition in the attendance of a lineup of officials from the MSDF and MoEHE, and Lusail University, along with senior guests.

The competition saw 138 male and female students from 37 secondary and high schools participate with a total of 46 research project submissions, supervised by 46 research supervisors, and eight arbitrators to evaluate the research projects. The winner's research projects will be announced on May 6.

The research projects focused on the elderly, the issues and challenges they face, their needs, ways to protect them, as well as ways to enhance attitudes towards them and activate their social role.

Commenting on the event, Acting Director of the Planning and



Development Office at Ehsan, Al Anoud Mohamed al-Marri said the schools' eager and active participation in the competition is testimony to the awareness of the educational sector and the students' appreciation of the elderly.

Al-Marri added that Ehsan continues to organise this research competition given Qatar's great

interest in research and its role in innovation and development, as well as stemming from the centre's belief in empowering newer generations and students to find solutions for social phenomena and issues of the elderly.

It also hopes to forge an inter-generational connection and understanding.

MGD backs QC bid to save infant with rare illness



Qatar Charity (QC) has received a donation worth QR100,000 from Malabar Gold & Diamonds (MGD) in Qatar to support the treatment of a four-month old baby battling Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) Type-1. "Additionally, Qatar Charity appeals to philanthropists to complete the required funds for this rare and urgent humanitarian case, amounting to approximately QR12mn," a statement said yesterday. This contribution reflects MGD's corporate social responsibility (CSR). Ahmad Yousef Fakhroo, CEO of the assistant for the Resources Development and Media Sector at QC, received the donation cheque from Santhosh Thazhathadavanveed, regional head - Qatar at MGD for the treatment of the baby Malkha Rouhi fighting (SMA) Type-1. Fakhroo explained that the baby

is suffering from an extremely rare disease that requires highly expensive treatment and highlighted the significant response received by QC's fundraising campaign for her treatment from companies, institutions, and individuals, both citizens and residents. He also wished her a speedy recovery and expressed heartfelt gratitude to MGD for their generous donation, urging other companies and individuals to contribute to completing the required amount for the baby's treatment.

The MGD official said: "As part of our corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, we are pleased to extend our support to Malkha Rouhi, diagnosed with SMA Type-1. Our ultimate goal is to see Malkha recover swiftly, regain her health, and bring joy to her parents."

He also expressed his delight in collaborating with Qatar Charity on this initiative, noting that the company, as part of its CSR, focuses on providing support in various areas, including healthcare. Malkha Rouhi needs very expensive medicines and gene therapy. Patients diagnosed with SMA Type-1 experience progressive muscle weakness, respiratory failure, and swallowing difficulties. Without treatment, the majority of these patients do not survive beyond their first year of life.

QC has launched a fundraising campaign for the treatment of this rare case, urging individuals and companies to contribute to providing the necessary treatment to save her life. Donations can be made to the campaign through the following link: qch.qa/malkha

Qatar Post wins EMS, Customer Service awards

QatarPost has won two prestigious awards: the Bronze-level award for Best International Express Mail service and the Customer Service award. The awards were part of the annual results issued by the International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) and achieved by members of the International Express Mail Service Co-operative in 2023. The awards were handed over at the UPU International Bureau in Berne by UPU director general Masahiko Metoki, and UPU EMS Co-operative chair Patrick Richon, Qatar Post said in a statement. Commenting on the occasion, Qatar Post chief operating officer

Hamad al-Fahida said: "We are proud of Qatar Post's for winning the International Express Mail and Customer Service awards for the second consecutive year, and our recognition among the best postal service providers. "These awards reaffirm our continuous commitment to providing the highest levels of service to our valued customers, and we will remain committed to enhancing and continuously developing our services. We emphasise Qatar Post's dedication and excellence in providing postal services and continuously improving performance standards," al-Fahida added. - QNA



Qatar University launches first regional sustainability competition

The College of Business and Economics (CBE) at Qatar University (QU) unveiled the first regional edition of the Mena Business Schools Alliance for Sustainability (MEBAS) Sustainability Competition, an educational simulation challenge to foster an understanding of sustainability through interactive applied learning.

This challenge allows students to balance profitability and efficiency for the company with conservation of resources and the environment.

The innovative competition brought together student teams from across the Mena region to share practical strategies for sustainable business practices under the theme "Promoting Sustainability through Play and Learning."

The competition focused on integrating academic knowledge with real-life business scenarios to promote sustainability and ethical leadership among future business leaders.

The event saw the participation of 10 university teams from across the Middle East, including



The members of the teams with officials.

the ESCA College of Management in Morocco, King Talal School of Business Technology, Princess Sumaya University for Technology in Jordan, American University of Beirut in Lebanon, and both King Saud University and Prince Sultan University from Saudi Arabia.

In addition, the UAE contributed three teams from Ajman University's College of Business Administration, United Arab Emirates University (UAEU)'s College of Business and Economics, the University of Dubai, and the College of Business Administration at Kuwait University, along with QU hosting and participating in the event.

Prof Dr Rana Sobh, dean of the College of Business and Economics at QU and chair of MEBAS, said: "The launch of the Regional Sustainability Competition is an important step in the journey of promoting sustainability in the region, and we are proud to have played our part in guiding this inspiring effort that reflects students' engagement with the competition and their serious desire to achieve a positive change in society."

In this competition, each team faces strategic challenges that integrate environmental impacts and responsible economic prac-

tices into their decision-making processes. The objective of the competition extends beyond mere competition. It aims to create a network among students, helping them to build relationships and share ideas, thereby fostering a community of future leaders who are well-versed in balancing profitability with environmental stewardship.

QU's CBE won the first place, Prince Sultan University from Saudi Arabia's College of Business Administration the second place, and the American University of Beirut's Suliman S Olayan School of Business the third place.

STEM, vocational education in focus at UDST int'l symposium

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

A two-day International symposium that kicked off at University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) yesterday, highlighted the importance of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) education to meet the need for a skilled and capable workforce for the country.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the 'International Symposium on Education and Skills for a Future-Ready Workforce: STEM and TVET for a Sustainable and Resilient Society', Dr Ibrahim al-Naemi, undersecretary at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) said STEM education has to be a very important part of the syllabus.

"We want to integrate STEM education in all aspects of the curriculum. STEM and TVET are integral parts of the Third Qatar National Development Strategy 2024-2030. It is estimated that there would be large demand for employment in the STEM and TVET fields by 2030 as technical capabilities are essential to meet the needs of the society," said Dr al-Naemi.

The opening ceremony was also attended by Dr Salem Al-Naemi, president of UDST; Salah Khaled, director of the Unesco Doha Of-



A view of the exhibition on the sidelines of the symposium.

ice for Gulf States and Yemen; Max Tunon, head of the International Labour Organisation Office in Doha; and Sheikha Najwa bint Abdul Rahman al-Thani, assistant undersecretary for Qatar's Migrant Labour Affairs as well as a number of high-level delegates.

Welcoming the gathering, UDST president, Dr Al-Naemi, said: "There is a high number of job opportunities available in the STEM fields locally and globally, yet a remarkable shortage of graduates and professionals with the necessary qualifications and developed skills to take on these roles. It is our responsibility now, as educational institutions, to close the gap between future industry needs and educational output."

"The Third Qatar National Development Strategy 2024-2030 has set ambitious targets for the country, requiring 46% of the workforce to be in skilled roles, and 18% of students to graduate in STEM fields by 2030. These are significant goals, and it is more important than ever that we continue working with MoEHE to bolster access to STEM education at UDST, and amplify our TVET."

This seminar is being held in response to the decisions made by the Committee of Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research in the Gulf Co-operation Council countries to establish a forum for studying specialised fields that are required by the current and future job market.

The conference brings together



Some of the dignitaries at the opening session yesterday. PICTURES: Thajudheen and supplied



A panel discussion during the opening ceremony.

regional educational institutions, industry stakeholders and policy-makers to initiate dialogue on the role of STEM and TVET education in creating an industry-ready workforce.

The event also provides a plat-

form to develop a GCC-wide approach to education and workforce mobility in the region.

The symposium hosted keynote talks on aligning education with industry needs, focusing on technology and workforce-readiness

in closing the global skills gap, and an energised panel discussion on industry-academia partnerships. The day ended with specialised breakout sessions on academic programmes for a green economy, and digital literacy.

The second day will feature engaging presentations on governance frameworks and novel approaches to TVET teaching, as well as breakout forums centred on AI in Education and Skills Initiatives. The event will be concluded with policy recommendations on academic initiatives and related education policies, and a framework linking government, academia and industry towards developing a sustainable and resilient current and future ready workforce through the "Doha Declaration on Education for Future Jobs: A roadmap for a sustainable and resilient society".

Germany to resume working with UN agency for Palestinians

AFP
Frankfurt

Germany said yesterday it will resume co-operation with the UN agency for Palestinian refugees after a review found Israel had not yet provided evidence backing its claim that hundreds of staff were members of fighter groups.

Israel alleged in January that some UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) employees may have participated in the October first week Hamas fighters' storming that triggered the war in the Gaza Strip.

In the weeks that followed, numerous donor states, including Germany, suspended or paused some \$450mn in funding.

Many, including Sweden, Canada and Japan, had since resumed funding.

Following the independent review's release on Monday, Germany - Europe's biggest economy, and a major donor to UNRWA - said it would also "continue its co-operation" with the agency again.

"Germany will co-ordinate closely with its closest international partners to disburse further funds," said the German foreign and development ministries in a joint statement.

Germany said it was aiming to support "UNRWA's vital and currently irreplaceable role in providing for the people in Gaza".

UNRWA and other UN agencies must be able to carry out their jobs of distributing aid in



Displaced Palestinians, who fled their homes due to Israeli strikes, wash clothes as they shelter in a UNRWA-affiliated school, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, in Deir al-Balah, in the central Gaza Strip.

the territory, which was "more important than ever in light of the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza," the statement said.

The review, led by French diplomat Catherine Colonna, found some "neutrality-related issues" at the agency but noted "Israel has yet to provide supporting evidence" for its claim

that UNRWA employs more than 400 "fighters".

The neutrality issues highlighted included staff sharing biased political posts on social media and the use of a small number of textbooks with "problematic content" in some UNRWA schools.

The Israeli foreign ministry called Germany's decision "re-

grettable and disappointing". Berlin called for the report's recommendations to be implemented without delay.

The US has yet to restore funding to the agency, however, with the White House saying Tuesday it would "have to see real progress" before doing so.

Another UN probe is also looking into Israel's allegations.

Saudi king leaves hospital after 'routine' tests

AFP
Riyadh

Saudi Arabia's King Salman left hospital yesterday following "routine examinations", the royal court said in a rare public statement about the monarch's health.

The tests took place at King Faisal Specialist Hospital in the Red Sea coastal city of Jeddah, the court said according to the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA).

An earlier statement announcing King Salman's arrival at the hospital said the tests were expected to last "a few hours".

King Salman, 88, has been on the throne since 2015, though his

son, Mohamed bin Salman, 38, was named crown prince in 2017.

State media on Tuesday showed footage of King Salman attending a weekly cabinet meeting. The king last entered the same hospital in Jeddah nearly two years ago, in May 2022. He was also admitted to hospital in March 2022 to undergo what state media described as "successful medical tests" and to change the battery of his pace-maker.

King Salman served as Riyadh governor for decades and also as defence minister. His reign as king has been marked by ambitious social and economic reforms largely managed by his son, who is trying to position Saudi Arabia for an eventual post-oil future.

14 migrants found dead off southern Tunisia

AFP
Tunis

The bodies of 14 migrants have been found in recent days off the coast of Tunisia's southern Djerba island, a public prosecutor in the city of Medenine said yesterday.

Tunisia as well as neighbouring Libya have become key departure points for migrants, often from other countries, who risk perilous Mediterranean sea journeys in the hopes of reaching better lives in Europe. Fethi Bakkouche, prosecutor at the court in Medenine, said that "bodies began to

appear near the coast of the island of Djerba since Friday". "The toll reached 14 bodies," Bakkouche said.

Most of them had come from sub-Saharan African countries, he said, and one was an Egyptian man identified by the passport he was carrying. Some 2,498 people died or went missing while attempting to cross the central Mediterranean route in 2023, a 75% increase from the previous year, according to the UN's International Organisation for Migration.

On Tuesday, Tunisian authorities in Sfax said they found the bodies of 22 migrants who had also washed ashore over several days.

Qatar Airways opens state-of-the-art Animal Centre

From Page 1

"We are the world's top cargo carrier," Drusch told *Gulf Times*.

"At Qatar Airways Cargo, we recognise our responsibility extends far beyond the mere transportation of animals. We are committed to advocating for their welfare globally, ensuring our operations respect and contribute positively to their overall well-being.

"This holistic approach to animal care is a fundamental part of our ethos, driving us to innovate and lead in the industry. With our new Animal Centre and service enhancements, we are not just setting new standards for animal transport, we are actively working towards a future, where every aspect of our operations reflect a deep respect for animal welfare, embodying our commitment to making a meaningful difference in their lives."



Cat kennels at Qatar Airways Cargo's Animal Centre.



The facility has separate rooms for birds.



Qatar Airways Cargo uses dedicated pet vans to transport them from the aircraft to its state-of-the-art animal centre. PICTURES: Shaji Kayamkulam



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GULF TIMES

Recovery of ozone layer shows how to protect the planet

There was a time, not so long ago, when the depletion of Earth's ozone layer seemed like an insurmountable challenge. Decades of using harmful chemicals, such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), had threatened to cause irreparable damage to our planet. Without swift action, we faced the risk of climate destabilisation, ecosystem collapse, and the breakdown of our food system. Consequences that were once almost unthinkable became painfully real.

But then, the most remarkable thing happened: humanity united to protect the ozone layer. Heeding the warnings of Nobel laureate scientists Paul Crutzen, Mario Molina, and Sherwood Rowland, whose research underscored the severity of the threat, we did not ignore or dismiss the scientific evidence, nor did we bury our heads in the sand and claim that the challenge was too daunting. Instead, the global community recognised the urgent need for collective action.

By harnessing scientific knowledge, entire industries have been transformed, and equitable policies have been put in place to shield countries that did not contribute to the problem. Thanks to the Montreal Protocol, ratified by 197 countries, nearly 99% of ozone-depleting substances have been phased out. This includes the reduction and replacement of CFCs, which has slowed climate change by at least a decade.

The successful global effort to protect the ozone layer should serve as a beacon of hope for all of us. It is one of humanity's greatest environmental achievements, showing what we can achieve when we act together with commitment, respect, and determination.

But it can also serve as a warning. A 2023 study by Johan Rockström and 28 other leading climate scientists revealed a startling new reality, underscoring the need to adopt a collaborative approach to protecting the planet before it is too late.

While our planet's resources are finite, there is no limit to human ingenuity and our capacity for solving complex problems

The planetary boundaries model, introduced by Rockström and others in 2009, provides a useful framework for assessing the planet's health. It identifies nine interconnected factors – including climate, freshwater availability, biodiversity, and land use – that are crucial for the planet's stability and habitability. In their recent study, Rockström and his co-authors found that six of these nine boundaries have already been breached, putting Earth on a dangerous course that undermines the planet's resilience and jeopardises human well-being. Notably, the ozone layer is the only area showing signs of improvement. Given that Earth functions as an interconnected system, we cannot solve one problem without addressing the others. Despite being aware of the critical role of planetary boundaries in preserving our Earth's habitability, we have not acted decisively enough to halt our slide toward catastrophe.

For example, we know that more than a million species are on the brink of extinction, potentially triggering the collapse of entire ecosystems. We also know that nitrogen and phosphorus runoff leads to the proliferation of toxic algae blooms in oceans and freshwater systems, thereby breaching the biogeochemical flow boundary. Similarly, tolerating dangerous levels of chemical pollution and allowing our children to ingest microplastics compromise the life-support systems necessary for humanity's survival. To restore Earth's stability, governments must recognise the need to respect the nine planetary boundaries. This requires a steadfast commitment to reducing greenhouse-gas emissions and protecting biodiversity and water resources. Moreover, our chances of success increase exponentially when we cooperate: if the international community can unite as it did when it agreed to repair the ozone layer, there is hope.

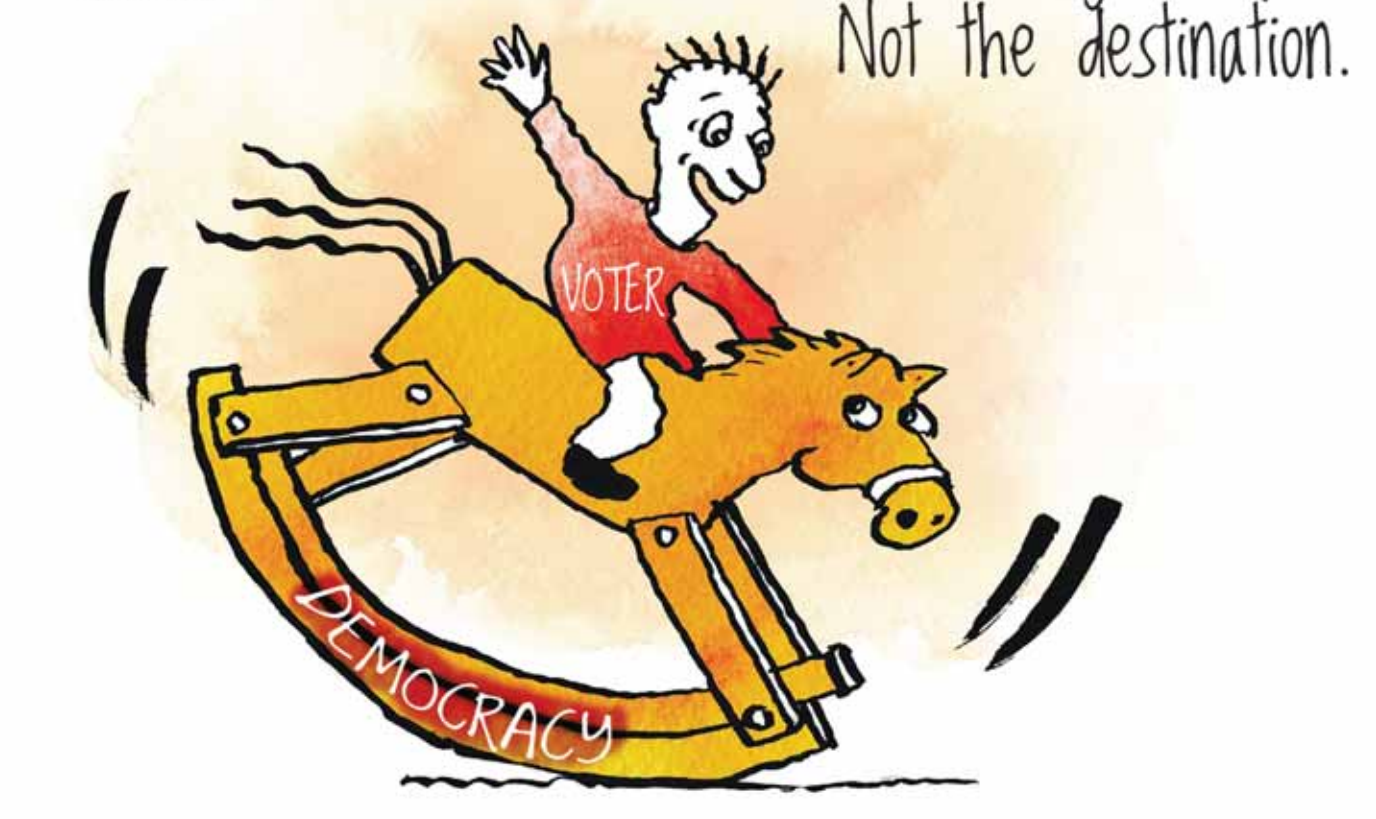
But first, we must heed the advice of indigenous peoples and local communities and listen to what nature is telling us. Despite making up less than 5% of the global population, indigenous communities act as the planet's wise custodians, protecting at least one-quarter of the world's land and seas and 80% of its biodiversity.

To advance this approach, we have joined forces with Planetary Guardians, an independent collective of global leaders, scientists, and environmental advocates championing the planetary boundaries model. Our goal is to promote its adoption as a framework for assessing and guiding collective climate action.

By bringing together leaders from various countries, industries, age groups, genders, and cultures, Planetary Guardians aims to leverage our diverse backgrounds and experiences to find solutions to protect the planet. While our planet's resources are finite, there is no limit to human ingenuity and our capacity for solving complex problems. The real question is what Earth we wish to leave to future generations.

To be sure, there are no simple answers or quick fixes. Our future hinges on the steps each of us is willing to take. — Project Syndicate

Reynold
GULFTIMES
25-04-2024



Youth at rally see Trump as answer to economic woes

By Nathan Layne and Tim Reid
Green Bay (Wisconsin)

Thin with a boyish face and earrings in both ears, 23-year-old Isayah Turner does not look like a stereotypical Trump supporter, who tend to be middle aged or older.

Nevertheless, Turner drove two hours from his home outside Milwaukee on a recent Tuesday to see Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump at a rally in Green Bay, Wisconsin, one of a contingent of young voters there that some opinion polls suggest could be a growing and important demographic for Trump.

For Democratic incumbent Joe Biden, who overwhelmingly won the youth vote in 2020, an erosion of his support among young voters could potentially dampen his hopes of a second term.

Turner, who runs a dog breeding business with his mother, voted for Trump in 2020. He supports Trump's pro-oil drilling stance, his opposition to gun control – Turner owns several firearms – and his pledge to crack down on illegal immigration.

"I cannot think of one thing that Trump did that upset me while he was in office. And now with Biden in office there are countless things I disagree with," Turner said. "A lot of my friends are on the same page as me."

A Reuters/Ipsos poll in March showed Americans age 18-29 favouring Biden over Trump by just three percentage points – 29% to 26% – with the rest favouring another candidate or unsure of who if anyone would get their vote.

If Trump, 77, stays close to Biden, 81, in this demographic all the way to Election Day on November 5 it would be a major gain compared to 2020, when Biden won the youth vote by 24 points.

Concerns about Biden's age and his support of Israel in its war in Gaza have fuelled the erosion of his support among young voters at a time he is also losing Hispanic voters.

There are also signs young people are slowly warming to the Republican Party, despite Biden's efforts to keep them on side by trying to cancel student debt, expand affordable housing and reverse curbs on abortion rights.

The share of Americans between 18-29 who identify as Republicans has ticked higher, from 24% in 2016 to 26% in 2020 and 28% so far this year, Reuters/Ipsos polling shows.

Despite a mixture of cold winds, sleet and rain, some 3,000 Trump supporters lined up outside a Green Bay convention centre on April 2 to see Trump. The crowd skewed older, as usual, but there were hundreds of young people as well.

Reuters interviewed 20 people under the age of 30 to understand their support. The most common reason given for backing the former president was inflation and the perception the economy was not working for them, underscoring how the rise in prices for daily staples is more salient for some than high stock prices and low unemployment during the Biden years.

"I make decent money and I can't afford a home on the salary I make now," said Steve Wendt, 26, a security guard at a nearby hospital. "It's time to get a man back into office that is going to lower our prices."

At the same time, a majority said they agreed with Trump's reticence about aiding Ukraine in its war with Russia, an isolationist stance at odds with Biden's favouring Biden over Trump.

Collin Crego, 19, a history student, said funds spent overseas would be better used to tackle domestic issues like drug addiction.

"I don't really like what we are doing with Ukraine," Crego said. "When I hear him (Trump) talk, he's very patriotic, very 'America First' and I like that."

Of the 20 people Reuters interviewed, 15 cited inflation or other economic concerns for why they support Trump, while a dozen said his plan to restrict immigration was important to them.

All said they were unbothered

by the four criminal cases Trump is facing, or the idea that his efforts to overturn the 2020 election made him a threat to democracy. One was Black, the other 19 were white. Eight will be casting their first presidential ballot this year.

Caitlyn Huenink, 20, said being a young Trump supporter can be hard because left-leaning young people tend to frown on her views. She said, however, that she has recently seen changes among her peer group at University of Wisconsin-Green Bay.

"They're more open to the way I think and more of my friends are becoming Republican," she said.

To be sure, a group of young people willing to brave inclement weather to see Trump are not a representative sample of the broader electorate, and polling this early in the cycle could prove off. Younger people vote less frequently than older Americans, making them especially difficult to predict.

Moreover, some opinion surveys indicate that Biden is holding on to his significant advantage with the youth.

An Economist/YouGov poll conducted last week showed 51% of voters under 30 picking Biden, versus 32% for Trump, while the Harvard Youth Poll put Biden's lead over Trump among likely young voters at 19 points.

"Donald Trump is not winning the youth vote," John Della Volpe, director in charge of the Harvard poll, said.

The Biden campaign is not sitting still. In March it launched a \$30mn ad buy across digital platforms and announced a project to reach students and recruit volunteers in high schools and on college campuses. It is working to inform younger people of the administration's investments in green energy and efforts to protect abortion access.

"That's why the campaign is working tirelessly to earn the votes of young voters – investing earlier than ever and leveraging every opportunity to connect with young voters," said Eve Levenson, the campaign's youth engagement director.

The latest Marist College poll

was nevertheless a red flag for Biden. Conducted in March, it showed Trump two points ahead among Millennial and Gen-Z voters, with 61% of 18 to 29-year-olds saying they disapprove of the job Biden is doing as president.

The Trump campaign sees young people as a demographic for potential gains in 2024, a campaign adviser told reporters last month. He said the economy and overseas conflicts – Trump often claims Russia's attack on Ukraine would not have happened on his watch – were key topics to message about to this group.

"Like many Americans, young people can't afford rent, gas, or groceries, and they're struggling to buy a home because real wages have plummeted," said Anna Kelly, a spokesperson for the Republican National Committee.

Kelly also pointed to a finding in the Harvard poll – that only 9% percent of young Americans think the US is on the right track – as proof that some were turning to Trump.

Among young voters, Trump appears to be doing better with males. The Harvard poll put Biden's lead among young men at just six percentage points, down 20 points from four years ago. Trump's deficit with women was 33 points, largely unchanged.

Della Volpe says that gender gap likely reflects several factors. One is that young men feel they are losing the right to speak frankly due to progressive views they believe are imposed on them about political correctness and toxic masculinity. These concerns are reinforced by Trump and podcasters like Jordan Peterson, popular with young men.

Trump has attended several Ultimate Fighting Championship events this election cycle, which are favoured by young men. He also showed up at a Philadelphia sneaker convention where he put his golden "Never Surrender High-Tops" up for sale.

It was the kind of campaign stop meant to resonate with voters like Turner, a sneaker aficionado who was wearing a \$400 pair of Nikes when Reuters spent an afternoon with him at his dog business two days after the rally.

Turner talked about the challenges of operating a business. He said gasoline was a major expense as he frequently drives to breeders hours away.

Turner said it was his Trump-loving mother, a former backer of president Barack Obama, who got him interested in politics.

Like other young people Reuters met at the rally, Turner said it was Trump's way of speaking without care for the political consequences that made him attractive. He said some of Trump's dehumanising rhetoric bothers him, but he believes – as Trump has claimed – that Biden is the true threat to America.

"Some of it is extreme," Turner said of Trump's speech. "But at the same time if it means the country is going to do phenomenally better...and it's still going to be a free country I can take my feelings getting hurt in exchange for that." — Reuters



A young Donald Trump supporter holds up a sign, at a Trump rally in Green Bay, Wisconsin. (Reuters)

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DATA

282mn people faced acute hunger in 2023: UN-led report

Food insecurity worsened around the world in 2023, with some 282mn people suffering from acute hunger due to conflicts, particularly in Gaza and Sudan, UN agencies and development groups said. Extreme weather events and economic shocks also added to the number of those facing acute food insecurity, which grew by 24mn people compared with 2022, according to the latest global report on food crises from the Food Security Information Network. The report, which called the global outlook "bleak" for this year, is produced for an international alliance bringing together UN agencies, the European Union and governmental and non-governmental bodies.

APPEAL

Iran, Pakistan urge UN to take action against Israel

Iran and Pakistan called on the United Nations Security Council in a joint statement issued yesterday to take action against Israel, saying it had "illegally" targeted neighbouring countries and foreign diplomatic facilities. The joint statement, released by Pakistan's foreign ministry, followed a three-day visit to the country by Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi at a time of heightened tensions in the Middle East. Iran and Pakistan are seeking to mend ties after unprecedented tit-for-tat military strikes this year. Raisi, who wrapped up his visit and flew on to Sri Lanka yesterday, vowed to boost trade between Iran and Pakistan to \$10bn a year.

CONTROVERSY

Two India spice firms probed over alleged contamination

India is inspecting facilities of spice makers MDH and Everest for compliance with quality standards after sales of some of their products were halted in Hong Kong and Singapore for allegedly containing high levels of a cancer-causing pesticide. India's spices export regulator said it had sought data on MDH and Everest exports from relevant authorities in both countries and was working with the companies to find the "root cause" of the issue. Hong Kong this month suspended sales of three MDH spice blends and an Everest spice mix for fish curries. Singapore has also ordered a recall of the Everest spice mix and advised against its consumption.

CRIME

Three injured in apparent stabbing at Welsh school

Three people were injured in an apparent stabbing at a secondary school in Wales yesterday. The attack occurred at the Amman Valley School northwest of Cardiff. Two air ambulances were seen at school along with police vehicles. "Three people have been injured and are receiving treatment," a police spokeswoman said, adding one person has been arrested. Police said they are aware of footage of the incident circulating on social media. One video purports to show the aftermath of a stabbing. Karen Davies, a governor at the school, told Wales Online that she believed the incident was a stabbing and that two members of staff were injured.

Biden signs Ukraine aid, TikTok ban package after Republican battle

Reuters
Washington

President Joe Biden yesterday signed a hard-fought bill into law that provides billions of dollars of new US aid to Ukraine for its war with Russia, notching a rare bipartisan victory for the president as he seeks reelection and ending months of wrangling with Republicans in Congress.

"It gives vital support to America's partners so they can defend themselves from threats to their sovereignty," Biden said.

The bill includes \$61bn in aid to Ukraine and \$26bn for Israel, as well as \$1bn in humanitarian assistance to Gaza and \$8bn to counter China's military might.

The impact of the legislation was immediate. Biden said he had approved an initial \$1bn in weapons supplies for Ukraine and that the flow of these arms would start within hours.

The initial aid package includes vehicles, Stinger air defence munitions, additional ammunition for high-mobility artillery rocket systems, 155mm artillery ammunition, TOW and Javelin anti-tank munitions and other weapons that can immediately be put to use on the battlefield.

Biden, a Democrat who is expected to face Republican former

president Donald Trump in the November election, had pressed lawmakers for six months to approve more funding for Ukraine, which has been fighting a full-scale Russian invasion for more than two years.

Trump objected to the Ukraine aid, and some Republicans in Congress refused to back it, questioning whether Ukraine could ever prevail.

Biden thanked House of Representatives Speaker Mike Johnson, the top Republican in Washington, for breaking the deadlock on the legislation and vowed to return soon to addressing border security, a top issue for Republicans.

"This is a reminder of what America can do when we come together despite our differences," he said.

Biden blamed "MAGA Republicans" loyal to Trump for spending months blocking the aid, referring to Trump's Make America Great Again slogan.

He said passage of the legislation sends a direct message to Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose military has been making gains in Ukraine.

"He's failed again. American stands with our friends. ... We bow to no one, no one, certainly not Vladimir Putin," he said.

Biden also signed a separate bill tied to the aid legislation that bans

TikTok in the US if its owner, the Chinese tech firm ByteDance, fails to divest the popular short video app over the next nine months to a year.

The social media platform is particularly popular with left-leaning young Americans, a group crucial to Biden's victory in November.

Congress's stalemate on the Ukraine aid bill ended when the Republican-controlled House of Representatives abruptly changed course and approved four bills that included funding for Ukraine, Israel, Taiwan and other US partners in the Indo-Pacific on Saturday.

Biden and House Speaker Johnson held intense talks about Ukraine in February and the president has both pleaded with Republicans to back the package and scolded them for not doing so. Johnson, who faces calls by some right-leaning Republicans to oust him for his turnaround on aid, met with Trump in Florida earlier this month; the former president said Johnson was "doing a really good job."

The US senate followed the House on Tuesday evening, passing a sweeping bill that provides \$61bn in aid to the country, which has suffered setbacks in the war that supporters blame on the delay in getting the additional US funding.

Blinken arrives in China



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and US ambassador to China Nicholas Burns walk through the Yu Gardens in Shanghai, China, yesterday. Blinken is on his second visit to China, as the US ramps up pressure on its rival over its support for Russia while also seeking to manage tensions with Beijing.

EU probes fair access to China medical device market

Reuters
Brussels

The European Commission yesterday launched a probe into China's public procurement of medical devices, the latest in a series of moves that ratchet up trade tensions ahead of President Xi Jinping's visit to Europe next month.

The investigation - which Beijing swiftly criticised - aims to determine if European suppliers of devices ranging from nee-

dles and orthopaedic appliances to complex scanners have been given fair access in China.

If it concludes that they have not, it could lead to the bloc placing restrictions on Chinese medical device companies bidding in EU public tenders, from giving a lower score for bidding Chinese companies to full exclusion.

The probe is the first under the EU International Procurement Instrument (IPI), which aims to ensure reciprocity in access to international public

procurement markets, following complaints from European companies and governments over access to the Chinese market.

"The EU has always boasted that it is the most open market in the world, but of course what the outside world sees is that the EU is moving step by step towards protectionism," Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin told reporters. The EU should "stop using all kinds of excuses to suppress and restrict Chinese enterprises for no reason", he said.

UK police arrest three after migrant deaths off France

Three men have been arrested in the UK after five migrants, including a child, died this week trying to cross the Channel from France, police said yesterday. The National Crime Agency said two Sudanese nationals aged 19 and 22, and a South Sudan national, also 22, were detained on Tuesday and yesterday. Three men, a woman and a seven-year-old girl lost their lives in the early hours of Tuesday in the sea near the northern French town of Wimereux. They had been in a packed boat that set off before dawn but whose engine stopped a few hundred metres from the beach. Several people then fell into the water. About 50 people were rescued and brought ashore but emergency services were unable to resuscitate the five. The tragedy happened just hours after UK lawmakers approved plans to deport undocumented migrants crossing to Rwanda.

Floods wreak havoc in Nairobi



Residents gather outside their shelters after the Athi River burst its banks following heavy rainfall in the Kwa Mang'eli settlement of Machakos county near Nairobi, Kenya, yesterday. The flash floods has wreaked devastation across the Kenyan capital yesterday, claiming at least four lives.

Four injured as horses bolt through London

AFP
London

Four people were taken to hospital after spooked army horses broke loose during morning exercises in central London and galloped through the streets at rush hour, the army and emergency services said.

Photos and video posted on social media by British news outlets showed two horses running along busy roads, dodging buses, taxis and other traffic.

Both were wearing saddles and bridles, with one apparently covered in blood on its chest and forelegs.

"A number of military working horses became loose during routine exercise this morning," an army spokesman said. "All of the horses have now

been recovered and returned to camp.

"A number of personnel and horses have been injured and are receiving the appropriate medical attention."

A number of prestigious army cavalry regiments have stables in the British capital and horses are a regular sight around government buildings on Whitehall, Buckingham Palace, The Mall and in nearby Hyde Park.

The seven horses and six soldiers from the Household Cavalry were on an extended exercise in Belgravia, near the regiment's barracks off Hyde Park, when the chaos erupted.

Four service personnel were thrown from their horses and five of the animals got loose.

It is believed the animals were spooked when some concrete being moved by builders hit the ground.

Extreme heat scorches southeast Asia

AFP
Manila

Extreme heat scorched parts of south and southeast Asia yesterday, prompting schools across the Philippines to suspend classes, heat warnings in the Thai capital and worshippers in Bangladesh to pray for rain.

The high temperatures were recorded just a day after the United Nations said Asia was the region that suffered the most disasters from climate and weather hazards in 2023, with floods and storms the chief causes of casualties and economic losses.

Extensive scientific research has found climate change is causing heatwaves to become longer, more frequent and more intense.

"It's so hot you can't breathe," said Erlin Tumaron, 60, who works at a Philippine seaside resort in Cavite province, south of Manila, where the heat index reached 47 degrees Celsius on Tuesday.

"It's surprising our pools are still empty. You would expect people to come and take a swim, but it seems they're reluctant to leave their homes because of the heat."

March, April and May are typically the hottest and driest months in the archipelago but conditions this year have been exacerbated by the El

Nino weather phenomenon.

The heat index was expected to reach the "danger" level of 42C (108F) or higher in at least 30 cities and municipalities yesterday, the state weather forecaster said earlier.

The heat index measures what a temperature feels like, taking into account humidity.

The Philippine department of education, which oversees more than 47,600 schools, said nearly 6,700 schools suspended in-person classes yesterday.

There was also a 50% chance of the heat intensifying in the coming days, Ana Solis, chief climatologist at the state weather forecaster, said. She said people needed to limit

the time they spent outdoors, drink plenty of water and take umbrellas and hats when going outdoors to guard against the "extreme heat".

Global temperatures hit record highs last year and the UN's World Meteorological Organisation said Asia was warming at a particularly rapid pace, with the impact of heatwaves in the region becoming more severe.

The WMO's State of the Climate in Asia 2023 report found Asia was warming faster than the global average, with temperatures last year nearly two degrees Celsius above the 1961 to 1990 average.

"Many countries in the region experienced their hottest year on

record in 2023, along with a barrage of extreme conditions, from droughts and heatwaves to floods and storms," said WMO chief Celeste Saulo, who described the report as "sobering".

WMO deputy secretary-general Ko Barrett said: "extreme heat is increasingly becoming the big silent killer".

The report highlighted the accelerating rate of key climate change indicators such as surface temperature, glacier retreat and sea level rise, saying they would have serious repercussions for societies, economies and ecosystems in the region.

But "heat-related mortality is widely under-reported and so the

true scale of premature deaths and economic costs... is not accurately reflected in the statistics," Barrett said Wednesday.

In Bangladesh, thousands gathered in Dhaka to pray for rain as an extreme heatwave forced authorities to shut schools around the country.

Bangladesh's weather bureau said average maximum temperatures in the capital over the past week have been 4-5C higher than the 30-year average for the same period.

The Indian Meteorological Department said in a news release severe heatwave conditions were likely in the eastern and southern states of Odisha, West Bengal, Sikkim and Karnataka over the next five days.

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