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Amir to patronise QU graduation ceremony today

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani will patronise the graduation ceremony of the 47th batch (Class of 2024) of Qatar University's students, which will be held at the University's Sports and Events Complex this morning. Meanwhile, Her Highness Consort of His Highness the Amir Sheikhha Jawaher bint Hamad bin Suhaim al-Thani will patronise the graduation ceremony for distinguished female students tomorrow. (QNA)

PM holds calls with UAE, Jordan, Turkiye foreign ministers

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani yesterday held phone calls with UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al-Nahyan, Jordanian Deputy PM and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Dr Ayman al-Safadi and Turkiye Minister of Foreign Affairs Hakan Fidan. During the separate calls, they discussed co-operation between Qatar and the respective countries, and ways to support and enhance relations. They also dilated on the latest developments in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories and ways to reach an immediate and permanent ceasefire agreement, release prisoners and detainees, and sustainably deliver humanitarian aid to all areas of the Gaza Strip. HE the Prime Minister reiterated, during these calls, Qatar's commitment to support all regional and international efforts aimed at achieving security and stability at the regional and international levels. (QNA)

Putin promises Russians victory at inauguration

Vladimir Putin said yesterday that Russia would emerge from the current "difficult" period victorious and stronger, as he took power for a record fifth presidential term. "We will pass through this difficult, decisive period with dignity and become even stronger," Putin, 71, said at his inauguration ceremony at the Kremlin, attended by an AFP journalist. "We are a united and great nation," Putin said in an upbeat speech, to applause from an audience of around 2,500 people including officials and military top brass. "Together we will overcome all obstacles, achieve everything we have planned, and together we will win," he said. Page 15

Aid to Gaza choked after Israel seizes crossing

Reuters
Rafah

Israeli forces seized the main border crossing between Egypt and southern Gaza yesterday, shutting down a vital aid route into the Palestinian enclave that is already on the brink of famine. Hamas accused Israel of trying to undermine efforts to secure a ceasefire in the seven-month-long war that has laid waste to Gaza and left hundreds of thousands of its people homeless and hungry. Israeli army footage showed tanks rolling through the Rafah crossing complex and the Israeli flag raised on the Gaza side. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said seizing the crossing was a "very significant step" towards its stated aim of destroying Hamas's military capabilities. UN and other international aid agencies said the closing of the two crossings into southern Gaza — Rafah and Israeli-controlled Kerem Shalom — had virtually cut the enclave off from outside aid and very few stores were available inside.

Red Crescent sources in Egypt said shipments had completely halted. "The Israeli occupation has sentenced the residents of the Strip to death," said Hisham Edwan, spokesperson for the Gaza Border Crossing Authority. As well as a key entry point for aid, the crossing was the only exit point for those needing to leave Gaza for medical treatment that is no longer available in the enclave. Lama Abu Holi, 8, has been in Al-Aqsa hospital for a month, waiting for a chance to leave for treatment to her injured legs. "Today my name was at the border, and I should travel to get my legs treated," she said, holding a toy in her hospital bed. "They hurt. I am supposed to have an operation. Because the border crossing is shut today, I could not travel. I am sad because I did not leave today." The seizure of the Rafah crossing came despite weeks of calls from the US, other countries and international bodies for Israel to hold off from a big offensive in the Rafah area — the refuge of more than one million displaced Palestinian civilians.



A Palestinian woman holds a girl wounded in an Israeli strike at a hospital as Israeli forces launch a ground and air operation in the eastern part of Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. (Reuters)

Amir grants Al Wajbah Decoration to ambassador of Tajikistan



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani met yesterday morning at his Amiri Diwan office with the ambassador of Tajikistan to Qatar Khisrav Sohizoda, who called on His Highness the Amir to greet him at the end of his tenure in the country. The Amir granted Al Wajbah Decoration to the ambassador in recognition of his role in contributing to enhancing bilateral relations between Qatar and Tajikistan, wishing him success in his future missions, and relations between the two countries further development and progress. The ambassador expressed his thanks and appreciation to the Amir and the state officials for the co-operation he received that contributed to the success of his work in the country. (QNA)

Sheikha Moza attends QF convocation

Qatar Foundation (QF) Chairperson Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser yesterday attended the QF Convocation Ceremony 2024, celebrating 953 graduates from the QF's unique education ecosystem. The ceremony was also attended by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani and QF Vice-Chairperson and CEO HE Sheikha Hind bint Hamad al-Thani, together with ministers, diplomats, university presidents, deans and faculty members, and families of the Class of 2024 graduates. PICTURE: Aisha al-Musallam Page 16



Hamas warns of 'last chance' as talks resume

AFP
Rafah

The thrust into the eastern sector of Rafah, packed with displaced civilians, came as negotiators and mediators met in Cairo in another effort to forge a hostage release and truce in the seven-month war. A senior Hamas official, requesting anonymity, warned this would be Israel's "last chance" to free the estimated 128 captives still held in Gaza, including 36 officials say are dead. Egypt's state-linked Al-Qahera News reported that mediators

from Qatar, the United States and Egypt were meeting with a Hamas delegation. It later reported that "all parties" including Israel had agreed to resume talks. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said earlier his country's delegation was already in Cairo. Israel's close ally Washington said it was hopeful the two sides can "close the remaining gaps". "We're going to do everything we can to support that process," National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said. "Everybody's coming to the table," Kirby told reporters. "That's

not insignificant." Despite the Cairo talks, an AFP correspondent reported that Israeli strikes continued to pound east Rafah late yesterday. Israel's long-threatened Rafah operation began hours after Hamas announced late Monday it had accepted a truce proposal, prompting cheering crowds to take to the streets — despite Israel saying it was "far" from plans it had previously agreed to. Netanyahu said that "within hours" of approving the operation, "our forces raised the Israeli flags at the Rafah crossing and took down the Hamas flags".

Qatar's first automated parking building under construction



Artist's impression of the exterior of the upcoming smart automated parking facility.



Artist's impression of an interior view of the multi-storey smart automated parking facility.

The construction on Qatar's first smart automated parking facility, is progressing at Grand Hamad Street, local Arabic daily *Arrayah* reported. Spread over an area of 5,121sq m, the building provides 600 parking lots, several shops and office spaces. The parking facility is meant to resolve parking woes in the area and consid-

ered a step towards achieving the objectives of the Qatar National Vision (QNV) 2030 in line with the Transportation Master Plan for Qatar 2050 (TMPQ). The smart parking building will be environment-friendly with its sustainable design and shape that combines innovative technology to use low-impact materials to reduce emis-

sions and reduce energy consumption. Also, the building will have an exterior design of a green plants covered wall to reduce pollution and temperature. The smart parking system is based on a multi-storey platform allowing to move cars between levels using a special lift. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Municipality is implementing a Smart Parking project that provides users with information on available parking spaces and allowing them to find and reach parking spots using their mobile phones. The launch of the Smart Parking service is part of the five smart sectors included in the Smart Qatar Programme (Tasmu). The Smart Parking Service contains parking spaces in adjacent parking lots on vital roads and areas, such as Corniche and West Bay in addition to parking spots in Souq Waqif, Al Bidaa Park, Gate Mall, Lusail, Msheireb and others. Earlier, a Ministry of Municipality official told Qatar TV that the sensors are functional with approximately 3,021 parking spaces in various regions.

Scattered rain across country



Scattered rain was reported from certain areas across Qatar last evening, with accompanying thunder, lightning and strong wind, the Met office said. Today's forecast for inshore is strong wind in most areas by evening and thundery rain at places offshore and strong wind and high sea by afternoon. The minimum and maximum temperatures expected today are in the 26-28C and 33-38C range, respectively. PICTURE: Shaji Kayamkulam

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Culture minister conveys condolences of the Amir on death of Prince Badr bin Abdulmohsen bin Abdulaziz al-Saud in Riyadh

HE the Minister of Culture Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-Thani conveyed condolences of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to Prince Saud bin Abdulmohsen bin Abdulaziz al-Saud on the death of Prince Badr bin Abdulmohsen bin Abdulaziz al-Saud. HE the minister also conveyed His Highness the Amir's condolences to Prince Sultan bin Badr bin Abdulmohsen bin Abdulaziz al-Saud. HE Sheikh Abdulrahman extended condolences to the Al-Saud family, during Prince Saud bin Abdulmohsen bin Abdulaziz al-Saud's reception of HE the Minister of Culture in the Saudi capital, Riyadh. (QNA)

Chief of Staff meets Malaysia defence minister



HE the Chief of Staff of Qatar Armed Forces Staff Lieutenant-General (Pilot) Salem bin Hamad bin Aqeel al-Nabit met with Minister of Defence of Malaysia Mohamed Khaled Nordin, on the sidelines of his participation in the Defence Services Asia and National Security Asia Exhibition 2024 (DSA & NATSEC 2024). During the meeting, they discussed topics of common concern, as well as the co-operation between the two sides and ways to enhance and develop it. The meeting was attended by ambassador of Qatar to Malaysia Salah bin Mohamed al-Sorour and a number of senior officers of the Qatar Armed Forces. (QNA)

Chief of Staff attends opening of Defence Services Asia Exhibition



HE the Chief of Staff of Qatar Armed Forces Staff Lieutenant-General (Pilot) Salem bin Hamad bin Aqeel al-Nabit participated in the opening of Defence Services Asia and National Security Asia Exhibition 2024 (DSA & NATSEC 2024), held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The exhibition is one of the most important defence events in the region, as it brings together 1,200 international companies specialised in the field of defence and security from more than 60 countries to display the latest products, technologies, and solutions in this field. (QNA)



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DOCTORS FROM LEFT TO RIGHT – FRONT ROW: Noor Essa Al-Nassr, Ridhima Kaul, Hamda Mohammed Al-Mansoori, Aljazi Hassan Al-Thani, Nojoud Ahmad Al-Ansari, Wafa Aftab Khan, Daneih Abdelaziz Hussain, Farah Wahbeh, AlReem Abdulrahman Al-Sulaiti, Mai Nasser AlSubaie, Noura Amine Rakab, Lina Ahmad Naif Shroof, Haya Rashid F A Alkaabi, Yasmeen A. Al-Hashimi, Ghadeer Ahmed Abdelwahab, Maryam Ali Al-Quradaghi.

SECOND ROW: Nada Khamis Alsharam, Mohammad Ibraheem Bhatti, Ibrahim Khalid Saeed Laswi, Ateeque Mohamed Ali, Ammar Khan, Shahd Hani Jaouni, Areej Nauman, Turki Almutairi, Tala Mustafa Abu Samaan, Safah Khan, Arwa Saed Aldien, Basma Wael Mohamed Abdelkader Abdellatif, Saada Mohammed Al-Mohannadi, Asmaa Farah, Aljazi Mubarak N. M. Al-Khalifa.

THIRD ROW: Ahamed Lazim Vattoth, Shehroz Tariq Rana, Aaron Youngjae Kim, Hamza Ibn Semab Chaudhry, Omar Mamoun Albashtawi, Muhammad Emmad Janjua, Shamin Hayat Mahmud, Abdullah Gulzar, Hussam Kawas, Syed Muhammad Saad Jalil, Ashton Ian D' Souza, Abdulla Mohammed Al-Suwaidi, Sultan Abdulla S K Al-Raban, Abdulrahman Saleh Al-Janahi.

NOT PICTURED: Nasser Al-Khawaga, Saad Salah Bahzad, Kuan-Han Chen, Sanjith Ganesan, Nebras Hadid.

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Sheikh Hamad Bin Ghanem Bin Ali Al Thani

Sheikh Ali Bin Ghanem Bin Ali Al Thani

Sheikh Faisal Bin Ghanem Bin Ali Al Thani

on the passing of their beloved father

Sheikh Ghanem Bin Ali Bin Abdulla Al Thani

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Qatar Rail marks 5th anniversary of Doha Metro

Doha Metro has earned acclaim for its reliability, safety, and outstanding travel experiences, catering to more than 170 million passengers and supporting over 20 events and sports tournaments

Qatar Rail Company (Qatar Rail) marked the fifth anniversary of the launch of Doha Metro services. Over the past five years, Doha Metro has consistently delivered reliable, safe, and exceptional travel experiences, earning the trust of over 170 million passengers in Qatar.

Additionally, Doha Metro has played a pivotal role in supporting more than 20 local, regional, and international events, as well as sports tournaments during this time.

The fifth anniversary of the Doha Metro marks a pivotal milestone for Qatar Rail, celebrating the significant achievements of the project since its inception and its instrumental role in advancing Qatar's public transportation system. With continued support and insightful guidance from Qatar's leadership, the Ministry of Transport, and other key partners, the metro has made a substantial contribution to the overall growth of Qatar's transportation sector and is shaping the future of mobility in Qatar. This progress is underscored by the ongoing operational successes that the Doha Metro has consistently demonstrated over the past five years.

The leading role that the Doha Metro has played in the transportation sector over the past few years is underpinned by the integrated operational plans developed and implemented to ensure the delivery of a seamless travel experience to the public every day, as well as providing reliable and safe transportation service during major events in Qatar. These events included the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, the AFC Asian Cup Qatar 2023, and other international and regional tournaments, which have contributed to enhancing our operational expertise at Doha Metro, improving performance, and continuously elevating service quality.



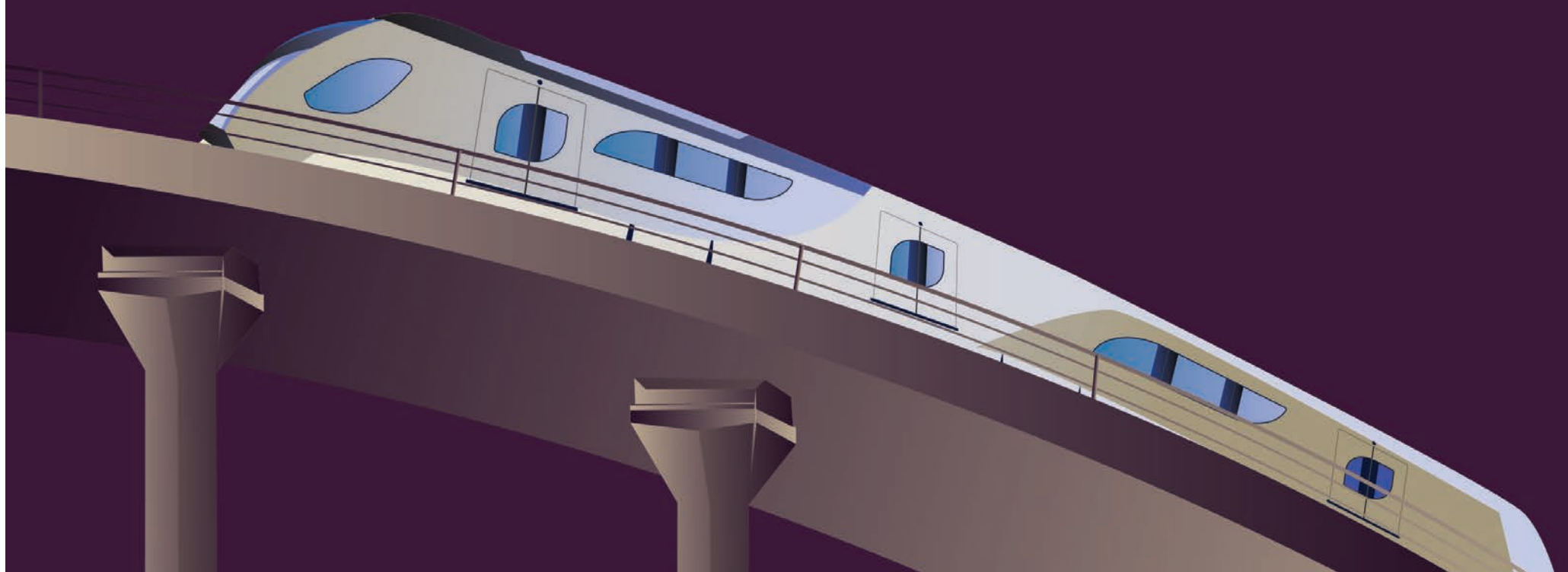
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5
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5th Anniversary

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Five Years

Of Service Excellence




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Outstanding operational performance

Doha Metro's Operational Excellence has played a pivotal role in the rise of public Transportation usage in Qatar

Qatar Rail's unwavering dedication to customer service is evident as Doha Metro achieves an outstanding 99.66% overall customer satisfaction rate, reflecting its commitment to excellence

In terms of operational performance during the past five years, the metro has achieved several remarkable milestones. With over 170 million passengers recorded, the highest daily number was on November 24, 2022, during the FIFA World Cup, when it safely transported 828,115 passengers to and from the tournament stadiums and other destinations.

Thanks to Qatar Rail's unwavering dedication to delivering top-notch service to its network's customers, the overall customer satisfaction rate with Doha Metro services reached an impressive 99.66%. Moreover, the overall accident frequency rate (AFR) was recorded at 0.01, underscoring the company's steadfast commitment to prioritizing safety above all else. Additionally, Metro service performance achieved stellar figures: 99.85% for Regularity, 99.66% for Punctuality, and 99.90% for Availability.

According to a 2023 survey conducted by Ipsos, the public holds a highly favorable view of the Doha Metro, with nearly 90% of respondents believing it to be a secure mode of transportation that alleviates traffic congestion and enhances accessibility for people with disabilities.

Doha Metro's operational excellence has played a pivotal role in the rise of public transportation usage in Qatar. It has become a dependable and efficient alternative for both residents and visitors when it comes to commuting. This can be attributed to its extensive network connectivity, linking key destinations, event areas, tourist landmarks, as well as crucial transportation hubs such as Hamad International Airport and the Lusail Tram network.



Transforming Qatar's Transportation Landscape

THE EXPANSION OF METROLINK ROUTES TO 55 AND METROEXPRESS COVERAGE OF 17 STATIONS WITHIN THE DOHA METRO AND LUSAIL TRAM NETWORKS SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCES ACCESSIBILITY AND MOBILITY FOR PASSENGERS



Over the past five years, as part of its First and Last Mile strategy, Qatar Rail has been committed to enhancing mobility solutions and facilitating passenger access to the metro network through accompanying services such as Metrolink and MetroExpress.

The Metrolink route network has expanded from 13 routes in May 2019 to 55 routes currently. Meanwhile, the MetroExpress service now serves 17 stations in both the Doha Metro and Lusail Tram networks, compared to only two stations when it launched in July 2019. Additionally, there are 15 parking spaces available around metro stations as part of the "Park and Ride" service.

Qatar Rail remains dedicated to fostering collaboration with all partners to enhance integrated and sustainable transportation solutions, aiming to increase metro usage among residents and visitors. Additionally, it strives to provide access options that facilitate commuting to and from the metro network.

A vital contributor to the success of major events

Since its launch, the Doha Metro has played an instrumental role in the success of more than 20 key local, regional, and international sports events and tournaments. Unprecedented operational plans were developed to serve the fans attending these tournaments, while ensuring the safety of all network users.

One of the most significant contributions of the Doha Metro was to the success of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, where it played a key role in facilitating the hosting of this global tournament - with 51% of fans utilizing the metro to reach the stadiums. Moreover, the metro transported nearly 17.4 million passengers during the tournament.

Doha Metro services have provided an effective alternative for commuting, facilitating individual movement, and managing crowds. It has also become the preferred choice for transportation for both residents and visitors during various events, serving as a key pillar of an advanced and sustainable railway system that meets the needs of Qatar's people and enhances the tourist experience for its visitors.



Operational excellence & international awards

QATAR RAIL'S OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE AND DELIVERY OF OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE DURING THE FIFA WORLD CUP QATAR 2022 EARNED RECOGNITION FROM THE UITP IN JUNE 2023



For its outstanding performance and delivery of operational excellence during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, Qatar Rail was honoured by the International Association of Public Transport (UITP) at the UITP Global Public Transport Summit held in Barcelona, Spain, in June 2023.

At the UITP-MENA Regional Recognition Awards and Members Gathering event, Qatar Rail received the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Recognition Award in the Operational Excellence category for its exceptional service during the World Cup.

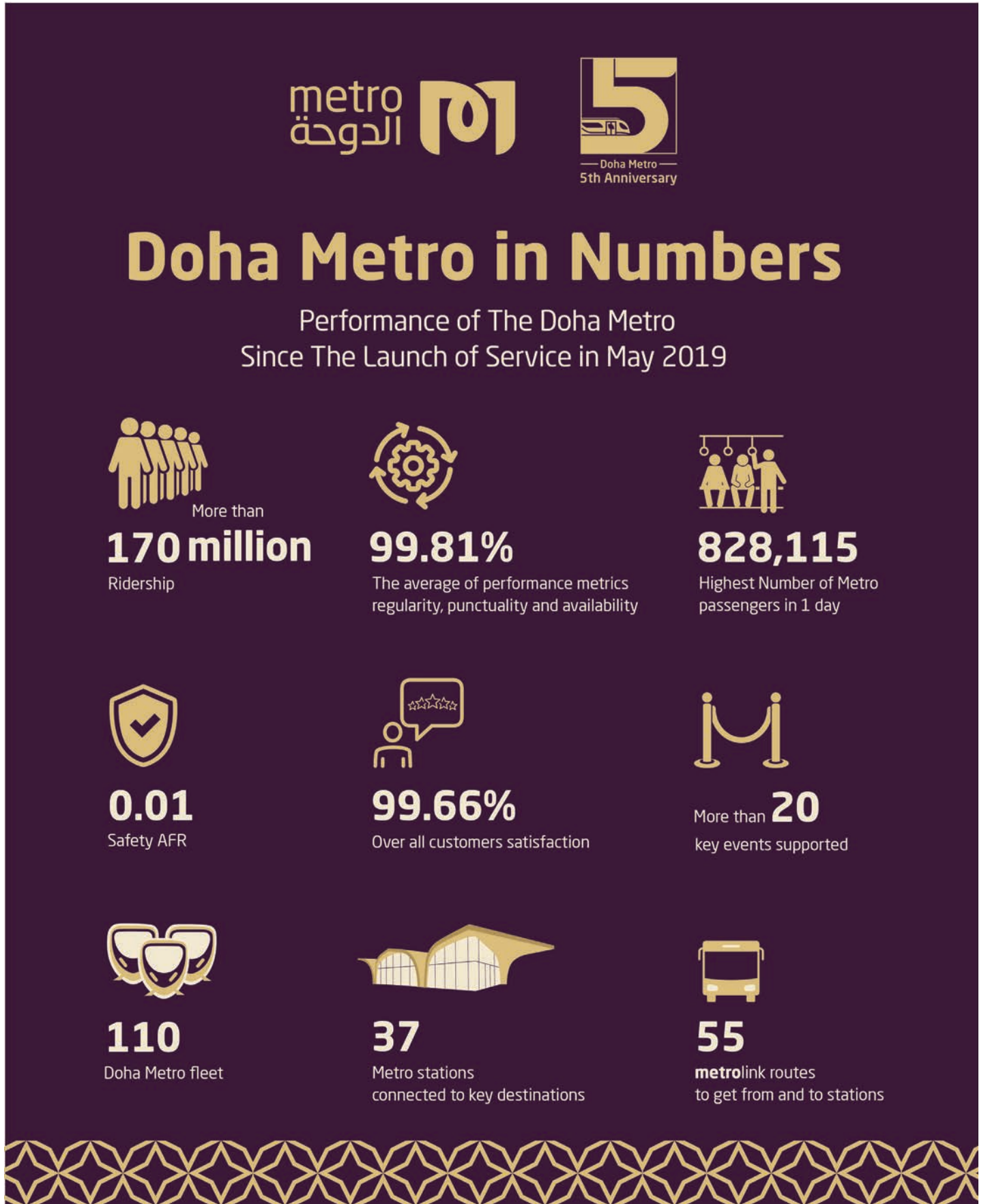
Corporate Collaboration and Brand Partnerships

Since the commencement of Doha Metro services, Qatar Rail has prioritized collaboration with the business sector. This has included the establishment and promotion of the Corporate Yearly Pass Program, demonstrating its commitment to offering comprehensive travel solutions for corporate staff. Leveraging the extensive networks of both Doha Metro and Lusail Tram, Qatar Rail aims to provide efficient transportation services.

Under this program, Qatar Rail has forged bilateral partnerships with various entities, entering contracts to supply annual travel cards for their employees. These cards are integral to the strategic plans of these organizations, facilitating employee transportation effectively.

Prominent entities across industries such as Oil & Gas, Hospitality, Leisure & Entertainment, and Pharmaceuticals have embraced the program, reaping its benefits. Qatar Rail remains dedicated to expanding the program's reach to benefit more entities.

Moreover, Qatar Rail has actively sought to broaden partnerships with local and international brands. This involves granting them visibility within retail and advertising spaces across the Doha Metro network. The initiative aims to enrich the travel experience for network users, transforming metro stations into attractions not only for passengers but also for residents in neighbouring areas.



Leading the way in sustainable transportation

THE DOHA METRO STANDS AS A CORNERSTONE OF QATAR'S SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE, ALIGNING WITH QATAR'S NATIONAL VISION 2030 AND ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES BY OFFERING ECO-FRIENDLY COMMUTING SOLUTIONS AND SUPPORTING ECONOMIC GROWTH GOALS

The Doha Metro has continued to play a vital role since the launch of its operations, contributing to the provision of a comprehensive national transportation system based on sustainable solutions that reduce the negative environmental impacts of commuting. It is considered an environmentally friendly mode of transportation compared to traditional cars, supporting the achievement of both sustainable development and economic growth goals outlined in Qatar's National Vision 2030. Additionally, it effectively contributes to realizing Qatar's National Environment and Climate Change Strategy and the National Climate Change Action Plan.

From the beginning, the Doha Metro project has been distinguished by its use of the latest technology and adherence to the highest standards in performance and sustainability. These efforts have resulted in obtaining various prestigious accreditations, certificates, and awards in the field of sustainability. Qatar Rail's endeavors have been recognized by prestigious global organizations, including the Gulf Organization for Research and Development (GORD), which awarded the Global Sustainability Assessment System (GSAS) certification, and the U.S. Green Building Council, which awarded the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification.

In this regard, the Education City, Al Bidda, and Sport City Stations have received the Global Sustainability Assessment System (GSAS) Platinum Certificate for sustainable operations from the Gulf Organisation for Research & Development (GORD). Other metro stations are also planned to undergo reviews and audits to obtain similar certification ratings.



Qatar Rail has actively promoted sustainability and raised awareness by introducing several initiatives and partnering with relevant entities. The company is committed to supporting national plans aimed at increasing green spaces and enhancing environmental sustainability through its leading annual initiative, "Plant a Tree," launched in 2021. Under this initiative, the company plants a tree for every million trips taken by passengers on the Doha Metro until the year 2030.

Furthermore, Qatar Rail has announced an initiative to utilize electric buses for transporting its employees working on the Doha Metro. The company completed the trial operation involving electric buses to transport its employees from stations to the Integrated Control Center (ICC) at Al Wakra Depot at the end of last year. This initiative aligns with the company's commitment to bolstering Qatar's shift towards sustainable transportation.



THE DOHA METRO HAS CONTINUED TO PLAY A VITAL ROLE SINCE THE LAUNCH OF ITS OPERATIONS, CONTRIBUTING TO THE PROVISION OF A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM BASED ON SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS THAT REDUCE THE NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF COMMUTING

At the forefront of resource conservation and efficient usage, the Doha Metro has been awarded "The Best Water Recycling Project" for the trains wash water recycling project. The award was presented at the 10th annual celebration of the National Campaign for the Conservation & Efficient Use of Water & Electricity "Tarsheed".



Commitment to Community

With the launch of the Doha Metro, Qatar Rail continued its commitment to social responsibility by adopting and implementing various community and awareness initiatives to enhance community engagement, build an interactive and inspiring environment that promotes learning and entertainment with the metro, and provide exceptional travel experiences for various occasions throughout the year.

In terms of raising awareness, Qatar Rail has specifically focused on enhancing collaboration with educational entities to introduce joint initiatives for school students at various levels. This includes the school visits program within the Doha Metro network, which aims to reinforce public transport concepts among students, encouraging them to utilize the metro for their daily commutes. Furthermore, through the Qatar Rail Training Center at KidZania Doha, the company offers an interactive experience for children to engage with the metro and promote the concept of public transportation. To date, over 48,000 children have visited the Center.

Furthermore, the company has continued to adopt and launch additional services and facilities to support the development and improvement of the travel experience for people with disabilities via the Doha Metro network.

As part of its commitment to providing a safe and reliable travel experience for customers with disabilities, the company has collaborated with "Mada," a technology-centered organization that aims to facilitate the lives of people with disabilities. Through this collaboration, the Doha Metro website has met the accessibility guidelines (WCAG 2.1) to gain Digital Accessibility Accreditation.

Additionally, Qatar Rail, in collaboration with the Al-Noor Center for the Blind, launched the "Al-Noor Center Guide for Doha Metro," which utilizes the Braille system to offer an overview of the Doha Metro, aiding in navigating the network and explaining the utilization of various services to ensure a seamless travel experience.

Qatar Rail continues to focus on delivering its strategic objectives and priorities for the Doha Metro, including increasing ridership while ensuring safe, reliable, and efficient operations, and enhancing business efficiency.

Omani delegation visits Judiciary Supreme Council

A delegation from Oman visited the Judiciary Supreme Council to be briefed on its experience in upgrading the judicial system the council currently implements as part of the national initiative to develop justice systems.

The visit came within the programme of shared bilateral scientific visits endorsed by heads of supreme and cassation courts in the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) states in their 9th meeting held in Riyadh last year, the Ministry of Justice reported in a statement.

The Omani delegation listened to a presentation on upgrading the judicial system delivered by the Chief Judge of the electronic

justice team Khalid al-Mansouri, during which he tackled the impact of developing the justice system as part of the themes set out in the initiative, along with the dismissal rates achieved by virtue of the technical and legislative development that has dramatically accelerated litigation and dismissal procedures, optimised the quality of litigation procedures, and benefited from AI-powered technologies, the statement continued.

The statement added that the Omani judicial delegation toured the Investment and Trade Court premises and reviewed the court's experience as a model for the judiciary steeped in investment and trade field, in addition to the progress of case management pro-

cedures and litigation procedures optimisation in support of the investment system in Qatar.

Also, the visit included an orientation tour of the Execution Court, the Court of Cassation, and the Judicial Inspection Authority. The visit programme features panel discussions between Omani judges and their Qatari counterparts in the fields of litigation jurisprudence and the judicial principles extracted from the rulings, which promote the objective of the visit in sharing expertise, and creating a common procedural and judicial environment that helps serve the higher goals of Gulf action, and in a way that reflects positively on the Gulf judicial arena. (QNA)



Shura delegation participates in Rome parliamentary symposium



The Shura Council took part in a symposium organised by the Nato Parliamentary Assembly, in collaboration with the Italian Parliament, as part of the activities of the Nato's Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group (GSM). Shura Council members Badi bin Ali al-Badi, Ahmed bin Ebrahim al-Malki, and Ahmed bin Sultan al-Aseeri represented the council in the symposium, which was held in the Italian capital of Rome. The event came within the framework of efforts to enhance international co-operation and co-ordination in confronting security challenges and boosting regional and international stability. (QNA)

15th Doha Conference on Interfaith Dialogue begins

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

The activities of the 15th Doha Conference on Interfaith Dialogue were launched yesterday in Doha, under the topic 'Family Structure in the light of changing world: Religious perspectives, integration of families, faith, values and education'. The two-day conference is organised under the patronage of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani.

In his welcome speech at the opening of the conference, Dr Ibrahim bin Saleh al-Naimi, chairman of Doha International Centre for Interfaith Dialogue (Dicid), pointed out the 15th Doha Conference on Interfaith Dialogue has become a global platform for discussing one of the most important issues on the international stage, which is the protection of family through highlighting the role of religions and educating young people taking into consideration the contemporary family changes.

"Our meeting is a renewal of the gathering of goodness, knowledge, and brotherhood that brought us together over fourteen previous conferences to continue the journey we have started together, bringing together a group of scholars of heavenly religions, academics, heads of dialogue centres from around the world, and in particular those interested in interfaith dialogue."

Dr al-Naimi considered it "a great opportunity for meeting, through which we can overcome discrimination among human beings and outline the path for life in its various fields on the basis of shared religious principles. I have no doubt that what our conferences have accomplished in recent years stems from a sense of responsibility and the role entrusted to all of us to serve humanity."

He further stressed that in spite of the various differences among

Interfaith Dialogue winners announced

The Doha International Centre for Interfaith Dialogue (Dicid) named the winners of the 5th Doha International Award for Interfaith Dialogue. HE Minister of State for International Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater and HE Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Digid, Dr Ibrahim bin Saleh al-Naimi honoured the awardees during the inaugural ceremony of the 15th Doha Conference on Interfaith Dialogue. The award is granted to the active religious institutions and individuals in supporting underprivileged families. For the individuals category, the award was claimed by General Director of the Jordan-based Princess Taghrid Institute for Development and Training, Dr Aghadeer Jweihan, and Professor Mads Gilbert, a physician and humanitarian activist in war zones and conflicts, especially in the Gaza Strip. The Japan Islamic Trust and the Chinese friendship organisation for sustainable development were the winners in

the institutions category. The Award Committee dedicated a special steadfast Palestinian family in Gaza award, which was received by CEO of Qatar Charity, Yousef bin Ahmed al-Kuwari, to be delivered as part of the aid provided to Palestinian families. During the awards ceremony, the Palestinian child, Ramadan Mahmoud Abu Jazar, from the Gaza Strip, gave a speech on the tragedies suffered by Palestinian families and the Gaza Strip population due to the Israeli aggression and the occupations confiscation of the rights of Palestinian families and children to live in dignity, pointing out that 15,000 children were deprived of their dreams because of this brutal war. The Doha International Award for Interfaith Dialogue was launched in 2013, with the aim of supporting and encouraging the efforts of initiatives and achievements of people and institutions that have a prominent impact in promoting the principle of dialogue and consolidating a culture of peace. (QNA)

people, all have a common consensus on the importance of enhancing family values, and the need to protect the family system against the contemporary risks and challenges involved in new media, social media and technological advancements.

The Digid chairman noted that the conference will discuss four main topics. The first tackles the family stature in religions, notion, obligation and status. The second topic tackles family. The third topic handles current family concerns: how to support, solve and remedy. The fourth topic discusses the family as the cornerstone of raising and education.

In her address, HE Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater, Minister of State for International Co-operation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, thanked all the participants at the conference, stressing the

importance of dialogue and the exchange of ideas to open new horizons for finding ways to deal with the contemporary issues and resolve them.

She also denounced the atrocities to which the families and children at Gaza are exposed to on the hands of the occupational forces. She also pointed to the sufferings of the Sudanese people due to the current situation there. She accordingly urged the participants to do whatever they can to help such people.

The conference, which concludes today, will hold several parallel panel discussions on related topics and issues with key international figures of Muslim, Christian and Jewish scholars and clergymen, in addition to several academics, researchers and members of related international entities.

Under the patronage of His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdul Rahman bin Jassim bin Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, Minister of Foreign Affairs, the 15th Doha Conference on Interfaith Dialogue was launched yesterday in Doha. The conference is organized under the patronage of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani.

The conference is organized under the patronage of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani.



HE Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater, Dr Ibrahim bin Saleh al-Naimi, and other officials with some of the participants of the 15th Doha Conference on Interfaith Dialogue yesterday.

Naseem Healthcare donates Friday consultation fees to baby Malkha Rouhi

Naseem Healthcare, a leading healthcare provider committed to enhancing the well-being of individuals and communities, is extending its collaboration with the community to support Malkha Rouhi's treatment. They will be donating their upcoming Friday consultation fees to Qatar Charity.



Naseem Healthcare is dedicated to delivering high-quality medical services and promoting health and wellness within our community. With patient strength across 7 branches in Doha, Naseem's status as one of the largest healthcare providers in Qatar ensures greater accessibility and support for initiatives like this, reaching more individuals in need.

Naseem Medical Centres at C Ring, D Ring, Al Wakrah and Al Rayyan, Naseem Dental Centres in Muntazah and Azzazia, and Premium Naseem Medical Centre, At Haloul Street will be donating their Friday consultation to the treatment fund of Malkha Rouhi.

Malkha Rouhi, a precious 4-month-old baby, is facing a challenging health battle. To help alleviate the financial burden of her treatment, Qatar Charity has initiated a crowdfunding campaign to rally support from individuals, businesses, and organizations alike. Earlier this week, Naseem Healthcare employees announced the one-day saalariya donation to join in this collective effort to support baby Malkha Rouhi and her family, and to encourage more people to contribute to the cause. Together, as a socially responsible organization, Naseem Healthcare encourages the support campaign for Baby Malkha Rouhi with the resources and hope needed to overcome this challenge and help the family emerge stronger.



NASEEM HEALTHCARE DONATES FRIDAY CONSULTATION TO BABY MALKHA ROUHI

Mohammed Miandad VP
Managing Director of Naseem Healthcare.

"As part of our commitment, Naseem Healthcare is contributing by offering upcoming Friday's consultation fees towards Baby Malkha's treatment. Additionally, we are actively participating in crowdfunding efforts internally among our stakeholders, employees, along with other groups and externally among the public, to ensure that financial barriers do not hinder Baby Malkha's access to essential medical care. Our purpose goes beyond providing medical services; it's about fostering a culture of care and compassion within our community", stated Mohammed Miandad VP, Managing Director of Naseem Healthcare.



Invitation to Tender

Tender / Auction Number	Subject	Tender / Auction Document Fees (Non-refundable)	Tender / Auction Bond	Tender/Auction Offer	Closing Date
AL-AWALIA/TD/2024/18	General Asset Insurance for Qatar Primary Materials Company ("Services")	1,000 QAR	200,000 QAR	Two Bids (Technical & Commercial)	15 May 2024 01:00 PM
AL-AWALIA/TD/2024/19	Supply & Delivery of 5 Tons Capacity Telescopic Telehandler (QEM Authorized Dealer) for Qatar Primary Materials Company ("Supplies")	500 QAR	13,000 QAR	Two Bids (Technical & Commercial)	15 May 2024 01:00 PM

- In accordance with the following conditions:
- Tender Documents can be collected online by sending email to tender.docs@qpmc.qa along with requested documents in point No.2.
 - Tender Documents will be shared only after delivery of Deposit Slip Stamped by Commercial Bank along with Authorization Letter to the delegated person signed by authorized person as per Computer ID, Copy of commercial Registration (CR), Business License and Computer ID.
 - Bids are to be submitted in two sealed (in red wax) envelopes (Technical & Commercial) and addressed to Tenders and Auction Committee. Tender reference number and subject are to be clearly written on the envelopes, provided that the last date for submitting bids is one o'clock in the afternoon on the closing day. Any bids submitted after this date and time will not be accepted.
 - Tenders shall submit the proposals to our head office located at Lusail, Building No. 108, St. No. 303, Bay Marina Tower, 17th Floor before the closing date. (To get the map of the new building, please scan the QR code below).
 - Tender fees are non-refundable and can be transferred online to Account of Qatar Primary Materials Company - Bank A/C (4050-65111-006) at Commercial Bank of Qatar. IBAN No. (QA 18 C5QA 0000 0000 4050 651111 006). Tender reference number and subject are to be written on the deposit slip.
 - Tender Bond (Bank Guarantee/ Manager Cheque) must be valid for 120 days after closing date and must be submitted in separate & sealed envelope along with technical bid and a photocopy is to be attached with commercial bid. Bids without tender bond will be rejected.
 - Bids must be valid for 90 days after the closing date.
 - Any queries relating to the Tender Documents must only be raised in writing, preferably by email, to the address specified in the respective Tender Document. Any response issued by Qatar Primary Material Company will be in the form of a question and answer and will be distributed to all Tenderers without revealing the identity of the originator of the queries in the Form of Tender Bulletins. Queries must be received at the address specified in the respective ITT Documentation at least five (5) calendar days prior to the tender closing date. Any queries received after such a date will be ignored.
 - The amount of the Performance Bond to be provided by the awarded bidder is (10% of the contract value) and its validity period must remain valid under the contract implementation period and the guarantee period according to the terms of the tender.
 - The Technical Bids shall be opened within one week of the closing date.
 - Qatar Primary Material Company has the right, during the contract period, to request an increase or decrease in the amounts of the items, works or services by a percentage not exceeding (20%) of the contract value with the same conditions and prices, provided that the increase is of the same type of contracted items, works or services.
 - Qatar Primary Material Company's tendering terms and conditions apply.
 - For any inquiries about the tender except collecting the documents, please contact tender@qpmc.qa
 - Location of the new building.



For further Inquiry, please send your queries at Fax Number: 44479559 or email to tender@qpmc.qa or visit Qatar Primary Material Company website at www.qpmc.qa

شركة قطر للمواد الأولية (ش.م.ع.ق) | مركزها الرئيسي: الجوحة - قطر، منطقة لوسيل، برج مارينا، رقم 108 | اتصل تجاري: 33204 | هاتف: 4447 9411 | 0974 4447 9411
Qatar Primary Materials Company (Q.P.S.C.) | Head Office: Doha-Qatar, Lusail, Marina Tower No. 108 | CR No. 33204 | P.O.Box 22095 | Tel: +974 4447 9411
رأس المال المصرح به 200,000,000 QAR | رأس المال المدفوع 200,000,000 QAR | Info@qpmc.qa | www.qpmc.qa

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, NAZAR PUZHANGARAILLATH PUZHAKKAL

holder of

Indian Passport No. L9374421
QID No. 27435616299

hereby change my name

from

NAZAR PUZHANGARAILLATH PUZHAKKAL

to

NASAR AMBALATH VEETIL

Any objection, please contact

THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR NATIONALITY AFFAIRS

within 15 days from the publication of this notice.

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, RAFIQU L ISLAM

holder of

BANGLADESH Passport No. EM0025916
QID No. 28005013972

hereby change my name

from

RAFIQU L ISLAM

to

MD RAFIQU L ISLAM

Any objection, please contact

THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR NATIONALITY AFFAIRS

within 15 days from the publication of this notice.

Qatar's all-out efforts against corruption highlighted at Arab League conference

QNA
Cairo

Qatar has participated in the 5th session of the Conference of States Parties to the Arab Anti-Corruption Convention, held at the General-Secretariat of the Arab League yesterday. HE the President of the Administrative Control and Transparency Authority (ACTA) Hamad bin Nasser al-Misnad led Qatar's delegation to the conference, during which he reviewed the distinguished Qatar-led efforts to prevent corruption, in addition to bolstering integrity and transparency measures, adopting an overarching policy to prevent all forms of corruption as part of Qatar's consolidated belief in the fact that transparency and integrity are the cornerstone of achieving sustain-

able development and governance. HE al-Misnad affirmed Qatar's keenness to enforce legal frameworks to ensure transparency and equality principles in alignment with the steadfast efforts devoted to promoting awareness and integrity culture among the community members and the cultural and societal values of the Qatari society. He underscored Qatar's commitment to supporting all regional effective efforts in anti-corruption field, in recognition of the significance of co-operation and sharing expertise with the fraternal Arab states in this area, as well as its unwavering work to launch initiatives that aim to foster integrity and transparency at the regional level. HE the President of ACTA recalled the Arab Youth Anti-Corruption Hackathon Initiative, which is a regional initiative launched by ACTA in collaboration



with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The initiative brought together young programmers from various fraternal Arab states and has been a stellar platform to develop innovation in enhancing integrity and anti-

corruption measures. HE al-Misnad highlighted that the initiative, in question, offered a unique opportunity for those young programmers to compete in presenting innovative solutions primarily intended to address in-

tegrity and transparency-related challenges, underscoring Qatar's readiness to host the 11th session of the Conference of the States Parties (COSP) to the UNODC in 2025, with the participation of the state parties from all over the world to share expertise and best practices in this field. Qatar has submitted a request to host the 6th session of the Conference of States Parties to the Arab Anti-Corruption Convention, since the conference would promote regional and global awareness on this Arab convention, HE the President of ACTA underlined, stressing the importance of uprooting corruption and strengthening transparency and integrity in the Arab nation. HE indicated that the joint Arab co-operation within the Arab Anti-Corruption Convention would enhance Arab legal and corpo-

rate systems to combat corruption through sharing expertise. The councils of Arab ministers of interior and justice approved the Arab Anti-Corruption Convention at their joint meeting on Dec 21, 2010, as part of emphasising the need for Arab co-operation to prevent and combat corruption as a phenomenon that transcends national borders. The convention primarily aims to operationalise the measures aimed at preventing, combating, and exposing corruption in all its forms, along with the rest of corruption-related crimes, prosecuting their perpetrators, boosting Arab co-operation, fostering integrity, transparency, accountability and rule of law, as well as encouraging the civil society's individuals and institutions to effectively engage in preventing and combating corruption. (QNA)

President of Malta meets Qatar's envoy



President of Malta Myriam Spiteri Debono met with ambassador of Qatar to Malta Rashid bin Abdulla al-Dehaimi. Bilateral relations were discussed during the meeting. (QNA)

GANHRI reviews efforts in responding effectively to human rights challenges

QNA
Geneva

HE the Chairperson of Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) and National Human Rights Committee of Qatar (NHRC) Maryam bint Abdullah al-Attiyah said that the GANHRI Annual Meeting and Conference are an occasion to exchange experiences and expertise to respond effectively to human rights challenges. During the GANHRI Annual Meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, HE al-Attiyah said that promoting and upholding human rights under the current circumstances poses major challenges in light of the numerous and interconnected threats to regional and international peace and security, including war, conflict, and repression in all regions, which is limiting the civic space's ability to defend fundamental rights and freedoms, which in turn exposes national human rights institutions (NHRIs) to threats and reprisals.



HE Maryam bint Abdullah al-Attiyah and other dignitaries at the GANHRI Annual Meeting and Conference in Geneva.

HE Maryam bint Abdullah al-Attiyah added that NHRIs' role is crucial in engaging communities, addressing discrimination, supporting the marginalised, and protecting the civic space and human rights defenders. She said that the alliance's absolute priority was and will always be to support GANHRI members in carrying out their complex and essential role, adding that among GANHRI's main areas of strength during such times is its ability to make NHRIs all over the world work together and find practical ways to meet their needs and priorities.

HE the Chairperson of GANHRI said that active contributions are essential at GANHRI, which works collectively to establish, support, and defend NHRIs. She added that the members of the alliance view responding to the impacts of climate change on human rights as a priority, exemplified in their open letter urging world leaders at the COP28 negotiations to take decisive human rights-based action on climate change. HE Maryam bint Abdullah al-Attiyah said that GANHRI obtained observer status at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, thus, enabling

the alliance and member NHRIs with an "A" classification to participate in the upcoming climate conference meetings, something she considered as a reflection of the international community's gratitude to the critical contribution of NHRIs in placing human rights and people at the centre of climate action. She underscored that the 2024 Annual Conference will deal with very relevant issues, including human rights, climate change, and business activities, and NHRIs' role in leading action, as well as discussing the threats to online civic space and human rights defenders in the context of technology and surveillance, focusing on opportunities for NHRIs to initiate protection strategies, in addition to evolving a framework of business and human rights regulations, and the role of NHRIs to promote a smart combination of measures. GANHRI discussed the possibility of seeking recognition as an international organisation under the Swiss Host State Act and this step's potential operational stability benefits.

NHRC signs MoU with Azerbaijan institute to promote human rights

Qatar's National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Azerbaijan Institute of Democracy and Human Rights, with the aim of opening up new prospects for future bilateral co-operation on a series of projects, including promoting the culture of human rights to the widest extent. HE the Chairperson of NHRC Maryam bint Abdullah al-Attiyah said the memorandum of understanding (MoU) is guided by the universally recognised principles of international human rights law and the Paris Principles, issued by the UN General Assembly in 1993 relating to the Status of National Human Rights Institutions. In her statements following her meeting with President of the Azerbaijan Institute of Democracy and Human Rights

Dr Ahmad Shahidov, as part of a series of meetings held with high-level human rights leaders in the Azerbaijan, al-Attiyah noted both sides' aspirations to strengthen their constructive partnership, exchange their expertise and experiences, and improve their national and international performance. She added that this MoU is the result of the committee and institute's joint interest in promoting humanity, equality, freedom of expression, rule of law, redressing the rights of affected persons, and volunteer work. HE the Chairperson of NHRC Maryam bint Abdullah al-Attiyah highlighted Qatar's efforts in supporting human rights and NHRC's role in that regard. Al-Attiyah also noted Qatar's legislative, policies, and measures with regards to empowering women in Qatari society, including the state's ratification

of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. She pointed to Qatar's progress in increasing job opportunities for Qatari women and supporting them professionally, with the aim of diversifying Qatari women's participation in the workforce, adding that the educational system is effectively reflecting this increase: a positive step on the path of empowering Qatari women. She underscored the role of NHRC in complementing the work of various state institutions and relevant authorities in empowering women at all levels, especially given the encouraging legislative environment. The Chairperson of NHRC added that the committee will continue its efforts to ensure comprehensive protection and care for women to exercise their effective role in society. (QNA)

Official

Official spokesperson for Ministry of Foreign Affairs meets Swedish officials

Official Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Majed bin Mohamed al-Ansari met in Stockholm with Director-General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs Dag Juhlin-Dannfelt, Deputy Director-General and Head of Communication and Media Department Anna Viktoria Li, and Head of the Middle East and North Africa Department at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden Magnus Helligren. The meeting discussed the latest developments in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories and the Qatari mediation efforts to end the war on the Strip, the latest developments in the Afghan file, as well as ways to enhance joint co-operation between the two countries in the field of diplomatic communication. (QNA)

WAREHOUSE FOR RENT

- ✔ Warehouse for rent in Industrial area
- ✔ Warehouse 600 Sqm/1200 Sqm
- ✔ Municipality Approved
- ✔ Civil Defence Approved
- ✔ Secure Boundary Wall
- ✔ 24/7 Security

 6672 2989

Alfa Romeo, Porsche, Range Rover models recalled

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), in co-operation with Alfardan Sports Motors, has announced the recall of Alfa Romeo Tonale, 2024 model, as the roof pressure limiter may not operate as specified. In the worst-case scenario it could result in potential injury to the customer's hand or arm if they were between the glass and the frame during the roof closing process. The MoCI, in co-operation with Porsche Centre Doha, Al Boraq Automobiles Co, has announced the recall of Porsche Taycan, 2020-2023 models, over a possible short circuit within the battery modules, which could lead to thermal events and later to a fire in the vehicle. Recall Campaign No: ARA4. The MoCI, in co-operation with Alfardan Premier Motors, also announced the recall of Range Rover Sport, 2023 model, over a possible defect in the right-hand tailgate and body mounted rear lamps which may fail due to water ingress. The MoCI said the recall campaign comes within the framework of its ongoing efforts to protect consumers and ensure that dealers follow up on vehicle defects and repairs.



Dolphin Energy Limited

Invitation to Tender

Tender Number	Description	Tender Bond	Deadline for Submission, 12 Noon (Qatar Time) on
RFP120000031	Supply of Methanol on Call-Off Basis for 1 Year	QAR 5,000	20 th May 2024
RFP-QP-PCU-1790	Supply of Caustic Soda at 50% on Call-Off Basis for 1 Year + 1 Year (Optional)	QAR 100,000	20 th May 2024

Dolphin Energy Limited (Qatar) is inviting companies to participate in the above Tenders. Only companies registered in the State of Qatar with proven experience, the required facilities and technical knowledge as well as a demonstrated track record in the supply of the services required should apply.

How to Tender

Expression of Interest (EOI) Form can be downloaded from the company's website www.dolphinenergy.com/procurement

Interested companies must complete the EOI Form and submit to the company's email address within two (2) working days from the publication date of this advertisement.

Following receipt of the completed EOI Form, interested companies will receive a Request for Proposal (RFP) through Dolphin Energy's SAP Ariba to tender.

NMoQ's first travelling exhibition opens in Mongolia

'On the Move', the first travelling exhibition produced by National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ), opened yesterday at the National Museum of Mongolia, located in Ulaanbaatar.

Sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Qatar, the exhibition's premiere in Mongolia follows extensive collaboration with the National Museum of Mongolia on the initial showcase, which was presented at NMoQ in October 2022.

The exhibition, which formed part of the Qatar – Menasa (Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia) Year of Culture 2022, first debuted in Doha from October 26, 2022 to January 14, 2023, with its portrayal of nomadic culture and heritage from Menasa.

The exhibition garnered significant attention during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, and was



one of Qatar Museums' (QM) most visited exhibitions that year.

Now, showcased outside of Qatar for the first time, the exhibition shifts its focus to the practices of Qatar's nomadic pastoralists.

Through an array of objects, historical images, and archival footage, On the Move highlights the complex and beautiful cultural

forms – as well as the meaningful social relationships – created and maintained by pastoralists in Qatar, who move with the herds that they tend.

The exhibition, featuring artifacts loaned from the collections of NMoQ and QM, will run until August 11 at the National Museum of Mongolia.



In a press statement, NMoQ director Sheikh Abdulaziz al-Thani said: "We are proud of presenting this special exhibition outside of Qatar for the first time,

celebrating our longstanding ties with Mongolia, and sharing our culture with the world."

National Museum of Mongolia director Enkhbat Galbadrakh

said: "We are reflecting on the diversity of human civilisation and the pastoralism value of nomadic culture, and this special exhibition gives the Mongolian audience a unique opportunity to feel the value of comparing the culture and history of Qatar and Mongolia."

The exhibition opening was officially inaugurated by Sheikh Abdulaziz, in the presence of Tania al-Majid, deputy director of Curatorial Affairs at NMoQ; Dr Alexandra Bounia, Senior Museum Development Specialist at NMoQ; Sung Hyun IM, head of Conservation at NMoQ; Najma Ahmed, Social and Oral History Researcher at NMoQ; and Talal Radan al-Shammari, Protocol Coordinator at NMoQ. Representing Mongolia at the opening was Bat-tur Purevsuren, State Secretary of the Minister of Culture.

PHCC promotes periodic health check-up for adults

The Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) has once again emphasised the importance of periodic health check-up for adults to detect early signs of illness and provide the necessary support and advice on how to reduce the risks of diseases, including diabetes and heart diseases.

Dr Samya al-Abdulla, executive director of operations, senior family medicine consultant at PHCC and deputy national lead for Mental Health and Wellbeing, said: "As we age, we become more susceptible to the risks of certain health conditions. Clinical research has shown that periodic health check-ups can identify undetected conditions earlier, allowing the medical teams to provide timely treatment after assessment and implement preventive measures to enhance the public health as well as maintaining the patient's health."



Dr Samya al-Abdulla

The service is provided through two visits. The first is for the periodic assessment carried out by the nursing team which involves measuring the vital signs, assisting the patient in completing the annual health assessment survey and conducting laboratory tests, whereas the second visit is a periodic consultation appointment with the physician.

During the consultation appointment, the family physician

reviews the results of laboratory tests. Thus, depending on the results and the patient's condition, the physician offers the necessary treatment plan or refers the patient to the appropriate support service, such as the specialised clinics or wellness services that are essential preventive care services in PHCC.

PHCC currently operates 31 health centres. Qatari patients are entitled to benefit from the periodic check-up service, as well as non-Qatari patients according to applicable criteria.

However, the periodic health check-up service, across all groups, excludes individuals under the age of 18, pregnant women, patients with identified non-communicable and chronic diseases, and unregistered individuals.

Patients can communicate with their family physician during their visits to the health centres, or they can call the helpline 107.



Vodafone Qatar's executive team during the tour.

Vodafone Qatar executive team visits telecom network sites

Vodafone Qatar's executive team recently visited a number of the company's telecom network sites in line with its ongoing commitment to the health and safety of its workforce, a statement said yesterday.

Chief human resources officer Khames Mohamed al-Naimi and chief technology officer Ramy Boc-touré toured Vodafone Qatar's external sites, engaging with employees, and business partners to review safety protocols and showcase the company's proactive approach to fostering a safe working environment.

During their visits, the team applauded the effective safety measures already in place and discussed strategies for further safety enhancements, as part of the company's ongoing efforts to promote and enhance health and safety standards across its operations.

The visits also served as an opportunity for the executives to directly witness the practical implementation of safety processes and the effectiveness of safety equipment.

Through employees and business partners' best practices,

the company's dedication to maintaining a safe and healthy workplace has been met with positive feedback from employees, further enhancing its reputation as a leader in employee welfare within the tech sector.

The executive team stated: "These ongoing activities demonstrate our unwavering commitment to ensuring the health and safety of all our employees. Safety is not just a priority but a core value at Vodafone, and we are dedicated to upholding the highest standards across all our sites."

South African minister to deliver GU-Q's 2024 commencement address

South African Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma will deliver the commencement address to Georgetown University in Qatar's (GU-Q) Class of 2024.

Serving as minister in the South African Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, she is a distinguished leader and advocate for global co-operation, development and regional unity.

With her extensive record of governance and steadfast championing of racial and gender justice, Dlamini-Zuma personifies the values of leadership and commitment to service that GU-Q fosters in all of its students.

Her career in public service includes pivotal roles as chairperson of the African Union Commission, and South Africa's Minister of Health, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Minister of Home Affairs.

Her leadership has significantly impacted global health policies, governance reform, women's empowerment initiatives, and social justice, aligning with GU-Q's mission to develop ethical and knowledgeable future leaders.

Dr Safwan Masri, dean of



Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma

GU-Q, said: "Hosting Minister Dlamini-Zuma is more than an honour; it's an extraordinary opportunity for our graduates to encounter and listen to a fearless advocate for justice and equal rights, who is also a seasoned politician and diplomat. Her incredible life journey exemplifies the kind of leadership our students should aspire to: a leadership combining lofty goals with practical efficiency and excellence, and bringing in meaningful changes for its people."

talabat Pro reduces minimum order value

talabat, the region's leading platform for everyday deliveries, announced a reduction in the minimum order value for talabat Pro users in Qatar. Customers can now enjoy the benefits of talabat Pro on qualifying orders worth QR40 or more, a statement said yesterday.

Initially, talabat Pro offered subscribers unlimited free delivery on food orders above QR60, which was lowered to QR50 and has now been further reduced to QR40.

In a press statement, talabat Qatar managing director Francisco Miguel



Lower minimum order value for restaurants
50-QAR
40-QAR



De Sousa said: "We are delighted to make talabat Pro more affordable for our customers in Qatar. By lowering the subscription fee to QR40, we aim to provide a value-driven platform that enriches the overall customer experience on talabat. We believe that this change will not only benefit our loyal customers but also attract new users to explore and take advantage of talabat Pro's offerings." To subscribe to talabat Pro and start enjoying unlimited free delivery, customers can download the talabat app from the iOS App Store, Google Play Store, or Huawei App Gallery.

UDST partners with QNL research repository

University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) has partnered with Qatar National Library (QNL) to be featured on Manara: the research repository for Qatar-based researchers.

UDST-produced research is now available for viewing and downloading in a free and accessible manner, a statement said yesterday.

UDST president Dr Salem Al-Naemi said: "We are pleased to be the first university in Qatar to sign this agreement with the Qatar National Library. This collaboration reflects our belief in having the university's intellectual effort collated, promoted, and preserved in a platform with such high visibility."

Since the initiation of this collaboration, UDST has witnessed remarkable success, with nearly 200 open-access research outputs



published. Within the first three months, the content secured over 7,000 views and over 1,700 downloads.

In addition to local access, the content had a large global appeal, drawing views from many countries such as the US, France, Ireland, and India.

Tan Huism, executive director at QNL, said:

"Our partnership with UDST will allow us to capture, digitally preserve, and provide access to any research outputs created by UDST. We look forward to UDST positively increasing the quality of open access content from Qatar, which will benefit the public, the research, and the educational sectors. We also hope that the initiatives from UDST to set up a research repository on QNL's Manara will encourage other institutions in Qatar to follow suit and to support open access to their research outputs."

QNL launched Manara to capture, curate, preserve, and provide open access to Qatar's research outputs. The platform welcomes local researchers to self-archive their accomplishments and open access work on the platform for posterity.

DFI launches 'The Ajyal Show' podcast

The Doha Film Institute (DFI) has launched 'The Ajyal Show', a bilingual podcast specially curated by Ajyal Film Festival alumni and Institute's interns.

The podcast aims to bridge cultures and connect aspiring creatives, storytellers, and cinema enthusiasts with the insights and experiences of local and regional experts, a statement said yesterday.

The show features discussions that uncover the art of storytelling, focusing on cinema's role in addressing global issues.



Amal al-Muftah

In a press statement, DFI CEO Fatma Hassan Alremaihi said:



Mariam al-Dhubhani

"Young people are the future of our film ecosystem, infusing it



Moza al-Hajri

with fresh ideas and perspectives that drive cultural exchange and

creativity forward. Over a decade of the Ajyal Film Festival and its renowned jury programme have laid the foundation for The Ajyal Show – highlighting the importance of collaborative, hands-on and inclusive initiatives to empower the next generation of original thinkers."

The bi-weekly podcast, moderated by Moza al-Hajri, an Ajyal Juror since 2016, offers new perspectives on key contemporary issues that affect humanity through cinema. The Ajyal Show's inaugural

episode featured award-winning Yemeni-Russian journalist and filmmaker, Mariam al-Dhubhani who accidentally discovered her path to filmmaking through a DFI workshop. Season 1 of The Ajyal Show features a series of inspiring episodes with local and regional guests, including filmmaker Amal al-Muftah, writer and art director Fahad al-Kuwari, producer Jana Wehbe, filmmaker Noor al-Nasr, and filmmaker and animation mentor Fadi Syriani among others.

Shura Speaker calls for safeguarding Gulf identity

HE the Speaker of the Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem underscored the importance of safeguarding the Gulf identity which derives its strength from Arab and Islamic values, pointing out that the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) states have maintained their identity, despite the persistent challenges and renaissance witnessed by the region.

This came in His Excellency's speech delivered before the inaugural panel discussion organised by the Shura Council, in collaboration with the General Secretariat of the GCC under the theme: 'Cultural Diversity and the Challenges of Change: The Role of the Gulf Legislative Councils in Preserving the Gulf Identity'.

HE the Speaker of the Shura Council stressed the importance of strengthening and maintaining the Gulf identity, because it earns more interest on the part of think-tanks and decision makers, thanks to the increasing interest in domestic challenges arising from imbalance of demographics and external influences, global and technological advancements, and external challenges such as global incidents and cutting-edge technologies that affect the Gulf identity.

The establishment of the GCC in 1981 has significantly bolstered the unified identity notion that includes religion, language, history, as well as the shared cultural and social traits among the GCC states, His Excellency pointed out. He reviewed the successes made by the GCC states in shaping the Gulf identity within a broader Arab and Islamic identity.

In addition, HE the Speaker of the Shura Council stressed the importance of continued enhancement of the Gulf identity through education, media, and family, affirming that the legislative councils of the GCC states have had a tremendous role in supporting this identity through advancing constitutional authorities and strengthening the notion of belonging.

HE the Speaker of the Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem called for establishing a permanent supreme committee of the General-Secretariat of GCC states to safeguard the Gulf identity and be further assigned with providing counselling and scrutinising the educational and media content to ensure a robust Gulf identity.

HE the President of Qatar National Library Dr Hamad bin Abdulaziz al-Kuwari tackled the current challenges facing the Gulf identity enhancement, commending the remarkable breakthroughs achieved by the Gulf states in the areas of scientific and economic infrastructure. He noted the overwhelming



challenge of preserving the Gulf, Arab and Islamic identity given this rapid evolution.

HE al-Kuwari shed spotlight on the notion of cultural system as a combination of values that distinguish certain groups from the other, emphasising that identity is a living entity capable of being in a state of flux over time, citing the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, which maintained its Gulf Arab Islamic identity.

His Excellency underscored the importance of the Arabic language as a core element in safeguarding the cultural identity, pointing out that the preservation of the language entails preservation of collective memory and national sentiments. He highlighted that there are massive challenges facing the Arabic language, such as the wide spread of dialects and foreign languages.

He called for the importance of working steadfastly to promote and using the Arabic language in all aspects of life and maintaining the Gulf identity as a foremost priority, emphasising the role undertaken by the Shura Councils and parliaments in this field. The panel discussions tackled the challenges facing the Arab Gulf communities due to the cultural and social changes, with a special emphasis on the importance of promoting the Gulf identity and capitalising on cultural diversity. The objective of this convention is to highlight the shared commonalities in this identity, in addition to exchanging expertise and underscoring the role of legislative councils in this context.

The convention comes at the request of the speakers of the Shura Councils and representatives in the 17th regular meeting of the heads of the Gulf legislative councils held in November 2023, in Doha. The meeting was chaired by Qatar through which a panel discussion was organised to address a topic that pertained to Gulf affairs and highlighted the role of councils. The panel discussion was attended by HE the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Qatar National Archive Abdullah bin Khalifa al-Attiyah, HE the Minister of Culture Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-Thani, several members of the Gulf legislative councils, alongside a host of academics and professionals. (QNA)

Shura's panel discussion focuses on legislative councils' key role in enhancing GCC identity

HE the Shura Council Speaker Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem opened yesterday a panel that focused on the GCC legislative councils' key role played in bolstering the GCC cultural and national identity against global challenges.

The panel was organised by the Shura Council in collaboration with the General Secretariat of the Co-operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, under the theme of cultural diversity and the challenges of change: the role of legislative councils in preserving GCC identity. It brought together an elite group of experts and legislators, and several senior officials and specialists.

The panel was moderated by Ghanem Saad al-Hamidi, a curriculum expert at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

The speakers discussed the ancient history and pan-GCC ties that include pillars of religion, language, and common heritage. They stressed the importance of the GCC identity and the role of legislative councils in supporting it.

The first session of the panel tackled the challenges of change and the GCC society's response to them. During the session, Fahad Ali al-Buainain and Hind Ibrahim al-Sulaiti, from Qatar University's Social and Economic Survey Research Institute, addressed the challenges facing the Gulf society in its response to rapid changes and emphasised the importance of adapting to changes while maintaining the basic values of society.

Al-Buainain presented a research paper that focused on national identity's fundamental position compared to tribal affiliation, indicating that there is an increase in the feeling of national belonging at the expense of tribal affiliation, especially among the older age groups.

Al-Sulaiti highlighted language, religion, local culture including traditions and customs, and national history as the four main components that contribute to the formation of national identity in the GCC countries. It was indicated that culture, which includes shared ideas, standards and practices among people in the same geographical region, is considered crucial to shaping national identity.

Meanwhile, she addressed the challenges facing the GCC cultural identity, including the influence of foreign relations, economic requirements that affect the composition of the population, and the impacts of globalisation and the social media.

In the second session, members of the Shura Council Khaled bin Ghanim al-Ali and Khaled bin Ahmed al-Obaidan addressed how GCC countries are confronting demographic and cultural challenges arising from globalisation and diverse migration, emphasising the preservation of essential characteristics of the GCC identity. The speakers presented their views on culture and heritage as key elements in enhancing the Gulf identity.

During this segment, al-Ali discussed the components and features of the GCC identity, highlighting the impact of Western modernity and social upbringing on national identity. He said that Western modernity separates between intellect and morals, and social upbringing often fails to transmit values between genera-



tions, emphasising the need to reassess social upbringing systems and structures to ensure the transmission of fundamental values that constitute identity, emphasising the importance of heritage, religion and language as foundational pillars in this construction.

He advocated for adopting social upbringing that emphasises values alongside cognitive dimensions, stressing the importance of building a national identity based on values of respect and humanity, contributing to the establishment of a strong and cohesive society that preserves its identity while being open to human commonalities.

Regarding the definition of identity, al-Ali noted that identity is not static but dynamic, interacting and evolving through dialogue and exchange.

During the same session, al-Obaidan highlighted the continuous efforts exerted by GCC countries to strengthen national identity and enhance national belonging. He emphasised historical and cultural links among GCC countries in shaping and preserving the common GCC identity, emphasising the pivotal role of Islamic religion as a fundamental element in shaping GCC identity by reinforcing loyalty, belonging, regulating individual behaviour, and preserving social and moral order. Additionally, he emphasised the role of language in defining cultural identity and preserving authenticity and history, highlighting key elements of the GCC identity including religious and cultural ties, linguistic unity, and family cohesion.

Al-Obaidan pointed out the challenges facing GCC identity amid globalisation and cultural openness, recommending the development of strategies to affirm and protect national values and identity from external influences, particularly in the digital environment and demographic changes. He called for

increased co-operation among GCC countries to strengthen the GCC identity and to preserve social cohesion in the face of global challenges.

Al-Obaidan emphasised the crucial role of GCC legislative councils in supporting these efforts through legislation and national programmes that ensure the sustainability of GCC ethical and cultural values.

In the third session of the seminar, which focused on the role of GCC legislative councils in enhancing GCC identity, faculty member at Qatar University College of Law Maryam Hamad Abu Sharida, and director of session affairs at the Shura Council Ahmed Sultan al-Ghanem discussed the role of legislative councils in supporting GCC identity through evolving legislation that keeps pace with current developments. In this context, Abu Sharida presented a paper addressing the role of GCC legislative councils in enhancing GCC identity, emphasising that GCC unity, manifested in common religion, language, and culture, enhances GCC national and homeland security.

Al-Ghanem presented a research paper that addressed the role of legislative councils in preserving GCC identity, emphasising the importance of understanding and distinguishing the determinants of GCC identity and the challenges it faces in the era of globalisation and social and economic transformations.

At the conclusion of the seminar, a set of practical recommendations were presented aimed at enhancing GCC unity and identity. These recommendations included establishing a permanent committee under the GCC General Secretariat dedicated to preserving GCC identity, as well as continuing the role of legislative councils in proposing legislation that supports the preservation of this identity. (QNA)

Oman participates as guest of honour at DIBF

The Sultanate of Oman announced yesterday the details of its participation as the guest of honour in the 33rd edition of Doha International Book Fair (DIBF) due to kick off tomorrow and run until May 18, 2024 at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre.

Themed "Knowledge builds civilisations", the DIBF will showcase more than 180,000 titles to be exhibited by 515 publishing houses from 42 countries. Oman will be represented by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, Sultan Qaboos University, civil society institutions (including the "Omani Society for Writers and Literati") and "Memory of Oman National Cultural Centre". Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Culture Said Sultan al-Busaidi

said that Oman's participation as a guest of honour at the DIBF affirms the depth of bilateral relations with Qatar and the common cultural bonds.

He added that the event provides an opportunity to enlighten visitors about Oman's diverse cultural activities and accomplishments. The design of Oman pavilion at the DIBF was inspired by Al Alam Palace, with its dazzling architectural components and artistic decorations, he added. The Royal Oman Symphony Orchestra (OCO) will participate in the event with various performances to be staged at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre. Oman's pavilion will include three exhibitions, with the first promoting Oman's tourist, cultural and historical landmarks; the second showcasing six rare Omani manuscripts; and the third a joint photography exhibition with the Qatar Photography Society. (QNA)

US embassy to showcase diverse books at DIBF

The US embassy is participating in the 33rd Doha International Book Fair (DIBF) from May 9 to May 18 at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre. The US booth offers a diverse selection of literature to attendees under the theme 'Read, Learn, Grow Across America,' a statement said yesterday. The US embassy booth features over 3,700 books for purchase, including more than 420 discounted titles. The collection, ranging from children's stories to bestselling novels, explores themes spanning STEM, education, sustainability and business. Additionally, the booth offers free resources and guides about US universities and popular tourism destinations. EducationUSA will provide daily free student advising services and guide visitors through US higher education options, fostering US-Qatar academic exchange. The booth will also showcase works by renowned American writers and publishers, accompanied by bilingual books in Arabic and English to encourage language learning. Located in Hall 1 near the Cultural Lounge and Live Cooking station, the booth offers a glimpse of

America's scenic beauty, featuring imagery from US National Parks in Hawaii, Maine, and Washington. In line with its commitment to sustainability, the US embassy has reused its booth frame from 2023 to reduce waste and environmental impact. The US embassy has participated continuously in the DIBF since 1998, fostering literacy and cultural exchange among readers. "All visitors are welcome to the US embassy booth to explore a diverse selection of books and discover free resources about US destinations and higher education," the statement added.



Qatar Airways Privilege Club launches credit cards in US

Qatar Airways Privilege Club, the loyalty programme of the national airline, has announced its partnership with Cardless, Inc, a San Francisco-based leader in financial technology, by launching the Qatar Airways Privilege Club Credit Cards for its members in the US.

These credit cards, powered by Visa, are now available for members to apply for and mark the debut of Qatar Airways Privilege Club in the US credit card space, a statement said yesterday. Cardholders will be able to collect Avios - the rewards currency of Qatar Airways Privilege Club - on their everyday purchases and enjoy many benefits.

For Qatar Airways Privilege Club Visa Infinite credit card, with an annual fee of \$499, every \$1 spent will earn cardholders five Avios on Qatar Airways spends, three Avios on restaurant spends and one Avios on all other spends.

Cardholders can also benefit from 24x7 concierge assistance, airport benefits, special upgrades at Visa Infinite luxury hotel collection properties, travel coverage, built-in purchase protection and much more.

With only a select few Visa Infinite cards available within the US, Qatar Airways Privilege Club takes the lead as the first international airline loyalty programme to offer a Visa Infinite credit card in the US market.

With an annual fee of \$99, Qatar Airways Privilege Club Visa Signature credit card offers exclusive benefits along with generous rewards. Members will earn four Avios on Qatar Airways spends, two Avios on restaurant spends, and one Avios on all other spends of every \$1 with this credit card.

Qatar Airways chief commercial officer Thierry Antinori, said: "We are proud to be partnering with Cardless to introduce the first Qatar Airways Privilege Club Credit Cards in the US market, which also includes being the first international airline loyalty



programme to offer a Visa Infinite credit card."

Co-founder and president of Cardless, Michael Spelfogel, said: "This collaboration underscores the synergies between our innovative financial solutions and Qatar Airways Privilege Club's commitment to enhancing the premium travel experience."

With the Qatar Airways Privilege Club Visa Infinite Credit Card, cardholders can collect up to 50,000 Avios and 150 Qpoints as a sign-up bonus with minimum spend, and a fast-track to Gold tier with Privilege Club.

With the Qatar Airways Privilege Club Visa Signature Credit Card, members can collect up to 40,000 bonus Avios with minimum spend, and a fast-track to Silver tier with Privilege Club. Cardholders will enjoy enhanced privileges including tier bonus, complimentary lounge access, extra baggage allowance, priority stand-by, priority check-in, priority boarding as well as complimentary 'meet and assist' service from Al Maha Services when travelling through Hamad International Airport in Doha.



Khalid Albaih showcases his work at Mathaf. PICTURES: Shaji Kayamkulam

Art, museums play vital role in addressing complex issues

By **Joey Aguilar**
Staff Reporter

Art and museums play a critical role in addressing complex social and political issues, including contentious situations like the Palestine conflict, according to Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art director Zeina Arida.

Speaking to *Gulf Times* on the sidelines of the 'Khalid Albaih: Shahid' exhibition on Monday, Arida underlined the museum's mission, saying: "Our role as a museum is to give the platform for multiple voices. Our role is to enhance the voices of the artists and their positions and to bring questions to the audience and visitors."

"The youth are so aware and engaged but still I think our position is we need to raise awareness, especially towards the youth," said Arida, as she shared her aspirations for the exhibition. One of the aims, she added, is to prompt visitors, particularly the youth, to engage in self-reflection.

She said that when scrolling through social media, it's crucial to question the sources, the voices being represented, and the broader portrayal of the Arab



Zeina Arida

world. "I think the most important thing today as a museum is to be in relationship to your society. In a way, our role is not to dictate any solutions or answers," she stressed.

The exhibition, on view until August 10 at Mathaf, aims to provoke thoughtful engagement with the ongoing Palestine conflict. It features the poignant work of Sudanese artist and political cartoonist Khalid Albaih.

Shahid, a unique and immersive installation, translates to "witness" in Arabic, and it confronts viewers with the stark realities of the conflict in Gaza through interactive audiovisual elements. Through his artwork,

Albaih encourages viewers to recognise the humanity behind the staggering statistics of lives lost in the conflict.

Highlighting the importance of challenging mainstream narratives, Arida noted that Mathaf's collection is focused on practices from the Arab world, and its mission is to develop knowledge and understanding of these artistic practices and to raise another narrative.

She pointed out the exhibition's significance to modern-day circumstances, saying that remaining pertinent often involves swift action such as the unexpected outbreak of conflict in Gaza.

"We all think about how to make sure that our museums today are relevant to our society and to the contemporary times we are going through. One of the ways of staying relevant is to be able to act quickly," Arida added.

She said Mathaf offers visitors with a chance to engage with Albaih's work, encouraging them to reflect on their role as witnesses to the ongoing tragedies and explore alternative viewpoints on the conflict.

Ultimately, she said, it contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex social and political issues.

IAEA's Grossi seeks deal with Iran on nuclear steps 'soon'

Reuters
Vienna

Iran and the UN nuclear watchdog will continue talks aimed at ending an impasse on many issues between them and should strike a deal on a package of measures "soon", the watchdog's chief Rafael Grossi said yesterday as he returned from an Iran trip.

The International Atomic Energy Agency faces a range of difficulties in Iran, including the fact Tehran only implemented a small fraction of what Grossi thought it committed to in a "Joint Statement" on future co-operation they made in March 2023, and the few concrete steps taken stopped in June of last year.

Speaking to reporters in Isfahan yesterday alongside Iran's nuclear chief Mohamed Eslami, Grossi said they were trying to agree on "tangible measures" Iran could now take under that Joint Statement rather than thrashing out a new agreement.

"I certainly expect to start having some concrete results soon," Grossi told an airport news conference upon his return to Vienna. "I want results and I want them soon. And I think they understand that as well," he said, adding that it "would be good" if an agreement could be reached within a month, in time for the next meeting of the IAEA's 35-nation Board of Governors.

He would not specify the steps being discussed but said they included uranium enrichment and access to facilities.

Hezbollah attacks north Israel with drones

Lebanon's Hezbollah said it attacked northern Israel yesterday including with "explosive-laden drones", a day after an assault claimed by the movement killed two soldiers there, AFP reported from Beirut. Israel and Hezbollah have exchanged regular cross-border fire since Palestinian group Hamas' unprecedented October first week storming of southern Israel sparked war in the Gaza Strip. In recent weeks Hezbollah has stepped up its attacks, which it says are in support of Gazans and its ally Hamas, and Israel's military has struck deeper into Lebanese territory. Hezbollah fighters yesterday launched "explosive-laden drones targeting enemy soldiers and officers", the group said in a statement. At the same time, other drones "targeted one of the Iron Dome (air defence system) platforms", the fighters said, adding in separate statements that they carried out other attacks on northern Israel, including with guided missiles. The Israeli army said in a statement that "two aerial targets were identified crossing from Lebanon into northern Israel, one of which was intercepted".

Police clash with pro-Palestinian protesters in Amsterdam; camp cleared in Germany

Reuters/AFP
Amsterdam

Police clashed with pro-Palestinian protesters as thousands marched in the Dutch capital yesterday, a day after riot police violently broke up an encampment at Amsterdam University.

Police were seen using batons against protesters to prevent them from marching past the nearby Holocaust Monument on their way to Amsterdam city centre.

When protesters arrived at a central Amsterdam University location, protesters barricaded the narrow canal-facing road in front of the university buildings.

Earlier in the day a crowd of several hundred had gathered, chanting slogans against the war in Gaza and denouncing Israel's ongoing military operations.

"Free, Free Palestine!", protesters shouted. "The people united will never be defeated." Student protests over the war and academic ties with Israel have begun to spread across Europe but have remained much smaller in scale than those seen in the US.

Amsterdam police used a bulldozer to knock down barricades early yesterday and detained 169 people in sometimes violent clashes, statements and videos of the protest showed.

Teachers and university employees angered by the police response called for another protest yesterday afternoon.

"Students and staff describe the use of pepper spray, police batons, police dogs and bulldozers to forcefully remove them. People

Qatar's pavilion at Arabian Travel Market reveals diverse tourism experiences

The pavilion of Qatar, represented by Qatar Tourism (QT), has kept its doors open to visitors at the Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2024 in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates.

The pavilion highlights the most prominent events and tourism experiences in Qatar with the participation of 43 partners from the tourism sector. Qatar's participation in the ATM is intended to lend impetus to the process of diversifying the national economy in Qatar during the coming years, in alignment with the Qatar National Vision 2030. It also sheds a spotlight on the tourist attractions in Qatar that combine the inveterate cultural patrimony and modernity.

Several participants in the pavilion underscored the importance of their participation, with Khalid Muftah from QT's calendar department affirming that the pavilion comes to apprise the visitors, partners and tourism experts of the tourism sector's progression in Qatar, along with a wide diversity of shows and events.

Speaking to Qatar News Agency (QNA), Muftah highlighted that the public can learn about Qatar's events calendar either through visiting the website or downloading the "Qatar visit" application on smartphones as the two available options in eight languages.

Muftah pointed out that during the current year, Qatar is poised to hold over 80 events, adding that QT is committed to constantly adjusting and diversifying the Qatar Calendar so as to be adaptive to the aspirations of visitors at home and abroad.

He stated that the application offers the events available during 2024, along with a wide diversity of fields, whether they are recreational, sporting and cultural events, or exhibitions, conferences



and festivals, affirming that QT distributes a monthly calendar to a number of partners, as well as airports, land and seaports.

Executive Officer of the marketing and communications department at Katara Hospitality Sheikh Abdul Rahman bin Abdulaziz al-Thani said the participation of Katara in the pavilion is extremely crucial to promote tourism at home and abroad.

Speaking to QNA, he added that Katara Hospitality strives to promote the tourism sector in Qatar

through its participation, as it has over 50 years of expertise in the field. He affirmed that Katara Hospitality is embarking on possessing and upgrading numerous hotels worldwide.

The ATM will continue until May 9 at Dubai World Trade Centre and offers opportunities for tourism experts in the Middle East to showcase their state-of-the-art products as well as milestones, along with the advancements made in their tourism destinations among others. (QNA)

Qatar chairs Unified GCC Visa Project technical team meeting

The technical team for the Unified GCC Visa Project held its fifth meeting chaired by Qatar at the headquarters of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) General-Secretariat in Riyadh.

Assistant Director of the Border Passports Department Lt Col Hamad bin Abdullah al-Thani represented Qatar at the meeting, the Ministry of Interior said in a statement. Chaired by Assistant Director General of Communications and Information Systems at the Ministry of Interior Lt Col Jassem Khalid al-Hamr, the meeting discussed a range of agenda items related to the stages of the Unified GCC Visa Project. (QNA)

Qatar-Singapore Coasts and Borders Security co-operation discussed

A delegation from the Ministry of the Interior of Singapore visited the General Directorate of Coasts and Borders Security, to discuss ways to enhance joint co-operation and related fields.

The Ministry of Interior said in a statement yesterday that the Singaporean delegation, headed by Sebastian Tan, director of the Department of International Co-operation and Partnerships, was briefed during the visit on the work procedures of the General Directorate of Coasts and Borders Security, and the advanced equipment and mechanisms it possesses. The delegation also met with Assistant Director General of Coast and Border Security Colonel Abdulaziz Ali al-Mohannadi. (QNA)



Participants in a pro-Palestinian protest are evacuated by bus under police surveillance at the campus of the University of Amsterdam (UvA) on Roetersseiland.

were injured because of this excessive violence," a group calling itself Dutch Scholars for Palestine said in a statement.

"We firmly and unequivocally insist upon the rights of students and scholars to engage in protest. We deplore the University of Amsterdam administration's reliance on using violence instead of engaging in the students' justified demands." The university said in a statement that an initially peaceful student protest which began on Monday afternoon had turned hostile, with beatings, throwing of fireworks and the burning of an Israeli flag. The university provided a list of its Israel programmes to meet a request by student groups, but a core of the protesters were not satisfied and refused to leave.

"We deeply regret that things went the way they did. Demonstrating is permitted at the UvA, but without covered faces, barricades or an atmosphere of intimidation," it said. In messages posted overnight on social media X, police said they had to act to stop the event on Monday and

dismantle tents due to safety risks. Protesters had ignored requests by the university and the mayor to leave the campus, police said.

All but four demonstrators were released yesterday morning. The four were being kept on charges of public violence and insulting an officer. One officer suffered hearing damage, a police spokeswoman said, adding that it was still unclear how many other people may have been injured.

"The police's input was necessary to restore order. We see the footage on social media. We understand that those images may appear as intense," police said.

Outgoing Education Minister Robbert Dijkgraaf said universities were places for dialogue and debate and he was sad to see that police had to intervene.

German police cleared a pro-Palestinian protest camp at a courtyard of the Freie Universitaet Berlin, which had called for a stop to Israel's military operation in Gaza, Reuters reported.

Some 100 people set up two dozen tents on the campus on

Tuesday, joining a call by the so-called "Student Coalition Berlin" to occupy German universities.

Students from various Berlin universities joined the protest, carrying Palestinian flags and shouting slogans supporting Palestinians and denouncing Israel and Germany.

PROTESTS SPREAD IN SWITZERLAND

Pro-Palestinian protests yesterday spread to three universities across Switzerland – inspired by similar student demonstrations that began in the US.

For weeks, students around the world have been calling for their universities to cut ties with Israeli institutions over the war in Gaza, AFP reported from Geneva.

Students at the University of Lausanne (UNIL) were the first to mobilise in Switzerland, with several hundred occupying a hall Thursday evening to demand an end to partnerships with Israeli universities.

CLASHES BREAK OUT AT RALLY IN GREECE

Clashes broke out between police and protesters during a pro-Palestinian rally in central Athens yesterday, a day after the Israeli military launched a ground and air operation in part of eastern Rafah in the Gaza Strip, Reuters reported from Athens.

More than 300 people carrying Palestinian flags and banners reading "Hands off Rafah!" rallied outside the parliament building in the Greek capital. "We are here in solidarity and we will respond any time the Palestinians call (for solidarity)," said protester Antonis Davanellos, a 60-year old pensioner.

CRIME

China hospital attack leaves two dead, 21 hurt

Two people were dead and 21 wounded after a man went on a stabbing spree at a hospital in southwest China yesterday, local officials said. "A knife attack occurred at the Chengnan Hospital in Zhenxiang County, which resulted in two deaths and 21 injuries," a statement on the county's official WeChat account said. The wounded were being treated in hospital, they added. Local police said they caught the suspect yesterday afternoon, describing him as a 40-year-old man from a nearby village. Mass violent crime is rare in China, which strictly prohibits citizens from owning firearms, but there has been a spate of stabbings in recent years.

MILITANCY

Two suspected Kashmir rebels killed in clash

Two suspected rebels were killed in Kashmir during a firefight with soldiers, police said yesterday, at a time when campaigning for national elections is underway in the region. Scores of soldiers besieged a residential area in southern Kulgam district, some 70km from Kashmir's biggest city Srinagar, on Monday after armed militants were suspected to be present inside a house. Two bodies of the suspected rebels "were recovered so far" from the site, police said in a statement posted yesterday on social media platform X. Images from the area showed smoke billowing from a house after it caught fire during the skirmish.

LAW AND ORDER

Thai police arrest American fleeing 25-year jail term

Thai police have arrested an American who fled a 25-year jail sentence in the US for kidnapping, sex trafficking and other crimes, officers said yesterday. Selva Delano Mudaliar was sentenced to at least 25 years by a court in the US state of Oregon in March this year, according to a Thai police statement, on 11 counts that also included strangulation and coercion. The 37-year-old fled to Thailand while on parole and lived in the kingdom for more than three months. He was arrested at a condominium in Bangkok after the US Federal Bureau of Investigation asked the Thai authorities for help, and now faces extradition.

PEOPLE

Acid-attack footballer in 'critical but stable' condition

A Malaysian national team footballer who was the victim of an acid attack is in a "critical but stable" condition with fourth-degree burns that will require more surgery, a football official said yesterday. Faisal Halim suffered burns on the neck, shoulder, hands and chest in Petaling Jaya district outside Kuala Lumpur over the weekend. Nicknamed "Mickey", the 26-year-old plays on the right wing for Selangor Football Club and Malaysia. "I am at the hospital. Faisal's condition is a bit critical but stable," Football Association of Selangor deputy president Shahrlil Mokhtar said. Investigations over the motive for the attack continues and two suspects have been arrested.

Modi casts vote as India election reaches half-way mark

Reuters
Ahmedabad/Guwahati

Prime Minister Narendra Modi voted early yesterday as India held the third phase of a massive general election, when seats in his home state Gujarat and 10 other regions will be decided.

The world's most populous nation began voting on April 19 in a seven-phase election in which nearly 1bn people are eligible to vote, with ballots set to be counted on June 4.

Voter turnout, however, has been a concern as the first two phases registered marginally lower numbers compared to 2019 polls and initial figures from the Election Commission showed a fall yesterday as well at 61.45%, compared to around 66% in the same phase five years back.

Modi is seeking a rare, third straight term in a vote which pits his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) against an alliance of more than two dozen opposition parties. Surveys suggest he will win a comfortable majority.

Modi cast his ballot in the Gandhinagar constituency where his number two, Home Minister Amit Shah, is the BJP candidate.

He urged citizens to actively participate in the "festival of democracy", while taking care of their health as summer temperatures continued to rise in many parts of the country. Clad in saffron and white, he was

surrounded by hundreds of supporters and party members, signing autographs and talking to children on the way to the polling station.

Modi's campaign began by showcasing his economic record, welfare measures, national pride and personal popularity.

The BJP relies heavily on his popularity, with his image adorning everything from sacks of rice handed out to the poor to large posters in cities and towns.

But some voters said it was not enough.

"Yes, the government gives us free rice, but what's the point? Look at the cost of potatoes and onions. It was never so high before," said 50-year old Rina Kathar from Baligate in the northeastern state of Assam, which also voted yesterday.

Assam is prone to frequent flooding and M Ahmed, 30, said his basic concerns included bad roads and poor drainage systems in the state capital Guwahati.

Yesterday's polling covers 93 seats in 11 states and territories, with Gujarat and Maharashtra in the west and Karnataka in the south accounting for 50 seats. That would complete voting for 283 of parliament's 543 elected seats.

In the 2019 elections, the BJP won more than 70 of 93 seats up for grabs yesterday, but faces tougher contests this time as the main opposition Congress party has gained strength in Karnataka and a regional partner has split in Maharashtra.

Falling tree kills man in Malaysian capital

A massive tree fell across one of Kuala Lumpur's busiest roads yesterday, killing a man, hurting two others, disrupting monorail services and damaging more than a dozen cars, officials said. Videos and photos on social media showed the tree uprooted and toppled across the Jalan Sultan Ismail road in heavy traffic, about a kilometre from the iconic Petronas Twin Towers. The body of a 47-year-old man was removed from the scene, police and the fire department said, and 17 cars were impacted by the incident.

UK govt suspects China in defence ministry cyberattack

AFP
London

The British government yesterday said it could not rule out state involvement in a mass cyberattack on the personal details of armed forces personnel that some lawmakers blamed on Beijing.

China furiously denied that it was behind the hack on a contractor's payroll system used by the defence ministry that contained the names, banking details and addresses of tens of thousands of serving and veteran British soldiers.

"We do have indications that this was the suspected work of a malign actor and we cannot

rule out state involvement," Defence Secretary Grant Shapps told parliament. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak had earlier said there were indications that a "malign actor has compromised the armed forces payment network" but stopped short of naming China.

MP and former minister Tobias Ellwood said it had the hallmarks of a Chinese operation.

"Targeting the names of the payroll system and service personnel's bank details - this does point to China because it can be as part of a plan, a strategy to see who might be coerced," the ex-soldier and former chairman of a parliamentary defence committee, told BBC radio.

But during his update to parliamentarians on the data breach, Shapps would not be drawn on

whether China was responsible. "This incident is further proof that the UK is facing rising and evolving threats," he said. Shapps said up to 272,000 serving personnel might have been affected, including some recently retired veterans.

He added that initial investigations had found "no evidence that any data has been removed," and said the government had taken "immediate action" to protect those targeted, including taking the system offline. "I want to apologise to the men and women who are affected by this. It should not have happened," he told the House of Commons. Cabinet Minister Mel Stride told Sky News television, which first reported the breach, the government was not currently pointing the finger at Beijing.

Indian court extends Kejriwal's pre-trial detention

An Indian city court yesterday extended the pre-trial detention of opposition leader and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal until May 20, legal news website Live Law reported, weeks before the capital votes in national elections. The enforcement directorate (ED), India's financial crime-fighting agency, arrested Kejriwal - a staunch critic of Prime Minister Narendra Modi - on March 21 in connection with corruption allegations relating to Delhi's liquor policy, charges he and his party have denied. He has been in prison since April 1, along with two other senior leaders of his Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) who have also been arrested in the same case, hurting his party's election campaign. In a separate hearing yesterday, the Supreme Court considered giving temporary bail to Kejriwal to allow him to campaign in the national elections which began on April 19 and conclude on June 1. The hearing is expected to continue tomorrow.

Chennai heat stroke ward

Nurses provide medical care to a patient at a special ward for heat stroke patients at a government hospital in Chennai, India, yesterday.

Harry in UK but will not meet King Charles

AFP
London

Prince Harry arrived in the UK yesterday for events marking the anniversary of his Invictus Games but will not meet his father King Charles III, who is undergoing cancer treatment, according to his spokesman. Harry, also known as the Duke of Sussex, was last in the UK in February to visit his father, who had just been diagnosed with cancer. It was expected that the pair would meet at some point during his latest trip.

But a spokesman for the prince, who quit royal frontline duties in January 2020 and now lives in the US with wife Meghan, said there will be no meeting.

"In response to the many inquiries and continued speculation on whether or not the duke

will meet with his father while in the UK this week, it unfortunately will not be possible due to his full programme," said the spokesman.

"The duke of course is understanding of his father's diary of commitments and various other priorities and hopes to see him soon." From London, Harry, a former British army captain who served two tours of duty in Afghanistan, is due to join Meghan on a visit to Nigeria.

Harry's relationship with his father has been strained by his revelations and criticisms of royal life aired in a television interview, a Netflix documentary and his autobiography "Spare".

The 39-year-old prince was filmed leaving his car as he attended a London event to mark the 10th anniversary of the Invictus Games he launched to support wounded service personnel and veterans.

Military took steps to warn Australia in jet incident: China

Reuters
Beijing/Sydney

China yesterday said its military took steps to warn and alert an Australian aircraft after Australia blamed a Chinese fighter jet for endangering one of its military helicopters during an "unsafe" confrontation over the Yellow Sea.

The incident could create a new rift between the nations trying to rebuild ties following a 2020 low, when Canberra called for an independent investigation into the origins of Covid-19, and Beijing responded with trade barriers.

Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles said the Chinese air force J-10 jet dropped flares above and several hundred metres ahead of an Australian MH60R Seahawk helicopter on a routine flight on Saturday.

No one was hurt in the incident, which happened during an operation to enforce sanctions against North Korea.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said it was "unacceptable" for Australian defence personnel to be put at risk in international airspace.

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson yesterday said the Australian aircraft deliberately

flew within close range of China's airspace in a "provocative move" that endangered maritime air security.

"The Australian military aircraft flew near China's airspace in a threatening way," the spokesperson, Lin Jian, told a regular news briefing.

"The Chinese military took necessary measures at the scene to warn and alert the Australian side," he said, adding that the situation was handled in a manner consistent with China's law and regulations, and was professional and safe.

"China has lodged serious protests with the Australian side over

its risky moves," Lin said. "We urge the Australian side to immediately stop the provocations and hype to prevent misunderstanding and miscalculation."

China has also been accused of unsafe behaviour in the skies by other countries, including Canada and the US.

Australia has also previously charged China with "unsafe and unprofessional" actions at sea.

In Sydney, Albanese told broadcaster Nine's Today Show the Australian Defence Force personnel were "in international waters, international airspace," as they worked to ensure that the UN sanctions imposed on North Korea

were enforced. "They shouldn't have been at any risk," he said, adding that the Australian public expected an explanation from China about the incident, and Australia had made "very strong representations at every level to China".

Chinese Premier Li Qiang is expected to visit Australia next month, he said, adding, "We will make our position clear as well in discussions."

The helicopter, flying from destroyer HMAS Hobart, dodged the flares. The confrontation put the aircraft and those on board at risk, although no one was hurt, Australia's defence department said

in a separate statement. The incident is the second in six months to mar what has otherwise been a growing rapprochement between the two countries after years of strained relations and trade disputes.

In November, Australia said a Chinese naval vessel injured some of its divers in Japanese waters using an underwater sonar. China denied it had used its sonar; however Australia rejected the explanation.

In 2022, Australia protested after a Chinese navy vessel pointed a laser at an Australian military aircraft close to Australia's northern coast.



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GULF TIMES

Hunting for signs of intervention amid enduring yen weakness

The yen has been one of the worst performers against the dollar this year among major currencies, falling about 10%.

After several failed efforts by Japanese officials to talk the yen higher, the government appears to have moved more decisively both on April 29 and May 1 to prop up the currency.

The first likely interventions since 2022, Bloomberg estimates that policymakers have spent some ¥9tn last week – or nearly \$60bn at current prices – to bolster the currency.

Japan's new policy rate is by far the lowest in the developed world, at a range of between 0% and 0.1%. Federal Reserve officials have kept the US benchmark federal funds rate in a range of 5.25-5.5%.

That's a major gap favouring investments in the US and therefore the dollar.

The gap is likely to stay intact longer than previously expected because the US economy's performance has been stronger than anticipated, and inflation has proved sticky.

As a result, expectations for rate cuts by the Fed have been pushed back.

While the Fed delays rate cuts, Bank of Japan (BoJ) Governor Kazuo Ueda said he's likely to raise interest rates again if the underlying price trend improves.

He also said Japan's overall policy settings will remain accommodative, meaning he's unlikely to raise rates fast or by a lot.

Japan's foreign currency reserves were worth about \$1.15tn at the end of March, climbing by \$4.6bn from the previous month

and food more expensive, hitting consumers. The nation's largest umbrella group of unions announced the largest wage hikes in three decades for the current fiscal year.

The first suspected currency intervention likely took place on May 29, after the yen hit 160 against the dollar for the first time since 1990. A sharp rebound in the yen followed later in the day, driving speculation that Japan had stepped back into markets to support its currency.

The second suspected intervention took place two days later, at the end of the US trading day, following the conclusion of the Fed's two-day meeting and in thin market liquidity.

The Ministry of Finance has refrained from confirming interventions, but Bloomberg's analysis of BoJ accounts suggests interventions took place.

Looking ahead, investors and economists are split over whether the BoJ is finished with raising interest rates this year or will make another move. Ueda has said if inflation runs hotter than expected, another rate hike would be on the table.

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen acknowledged sharp moves in the value of the yen this week, even as she declined to say whether Japan had intervened to support the currency.

Japan's foreign currency reserves were worth about \$1.15tn at the end of March, climbing by \$4.6bn from the previous month, according to the latest data from the country's Ministry of Finance.

About \$155bn was parked with the Bank for International Settlements and other foreign central banks, down slightly from \$155.7bn at the end of February.

While intervention is a clear way to tell speculators you won't allow the currency to go into free fall, it's only going to be a temporary fix unless economic fundamentals driving the trend are also addressed.

In addition, foreign reserves are generally there to protect the economy in the event of a major financial shock or unexpected event, not to artificially prop up the currency.

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Recounting the lasting legacy of Abenomics

By Koichi Hamada
Tokyo

After the 1985 Plaza Accord pushed the yen's exchange rate sharply upward, Japan's economy suffered a severe slowdown that proved mightily difficult to reverse. In fact, the only Japanese prime minister to oversee a period of consistent growth and high employment in the past three decades was Abe Shinzo, during his second term, which began in 2012.

Abe's economic programme (which I helped the prime minister develop), was quickly dubbed Abenomics. Assisted by the Bank of Japan (BoJ)'s monetary policy under then-governor Haruhiko Kuroda, the policy saw employment rise more than under any other Japanese government in the twenty-first century, creating nearly 5mn jobs between 2013 and 2019.

At the same time, about 3mn new female workers joined the labour force during this period. To provide his economic policies with a secure base, Abe sought to strengthen national security by promoting the idea of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific."

Those critical economic and diplomatic achievements marked the tenure of Japan's longest-serving prime minister, who resigned because of ill health in 2020 and was assassinated while campaigning for his Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in 2022. Younger Japanese who benefited from job creation under Abe's watch mourned his untimely death on the streets of Tokyo.

Last year, Abe's memoir, based on a collection of interviews about his storied career, was an instant bestseller. I had to join a waiting list to buy it.

But, almost two years after his assassination, there has been a dramatic shift in public attitudes toward Abe: many now view him unfavourably. Media have uncovered evidence of controversial ties between LDP politicians and the Unification Church (Abe's assassin was motivated by revenge against the religious group, to which Abe's grandfather Nobusuke Kishi was attached). Moreover, some leaders from Abe's faction in the LDP have reportedly failed to declare political donations and are now embroiled in a major scandal.

Journalists scoff at my personal reflections on Abe and rarely want an objective account of his economic successes. Instead, I receive requests to write about the "failure" or the "dark side" of Abenomics. As a former close adviser to Abe, I am tempted to defend him against such criticism. But after picking up his memoir again, and seeing his forward-looking face, I was reminded of his genuine devotion to the people of Japan and his desire to implement policies that would guide the nation well into the future. Therefore, it is more useful to draw attention to two important features of Abe's policy agenda that extend to the future than it is to dwell on his critics.

First, Abenomics was particularly effective in the first half of Abe's second term. Kuroda's "bazooka" programme of vast monetary

easing weakened the yen. But when the world began to face secular stagnation around 2016, the BoJ's easy-money policy became relatively ineffective. There was a need to abandon the consumption-tax hike from 8% to 10% in 2019 and deploy more government spending. Not long after, Abe began to realise that the Ministry of Finance's attitude, obsessed by the balanced budget, was wrong. He compared Modern Monetary Theory (MMT) to fugu, the fatally poisonous pufferfish from his hometown: one can safely enjoy this delicacy only if it is prepared by a skilled chef.

I was also slow to appreciate the delicacy of MMT, which has at its heart Abba Lerner's functional finance theory from 1943. As long as government debt is held by its nationals – as it is in Japan – the budget balance is essentially a matter of wealth distribution between the government and its citizens, and thus of secondary importance to the macroeconomy. Moreover, a sovereign country can monetise government debt. In the current environment, Lerner's insight is significantly more important than MMT's "poison," the possibility of soaring inflation.

Second, Abenomics helped Japan emerge from a two-decade-long recession by expanding the workforce, with a notable jump in the number of female workers. Most of the increase came from non-regular and part-time employment. Given that a higher proportion of women work in these types of jobs, Abe's policies seem to have helped improve gender equality.

But female workers tend to have lower wages and less favourable conditions. In fact, the tax code still helps to sustain wage discrepancies. For example, if the annual income of the lower earner in a married couple is below approximately ¥1.03mon (\$6,700), that income is not taxed. This weakens married women's incentive to work outside of the home, and, more importantly, it strengthens employers' incentive not to pay higher wages to married women, who tend to earn less than their husbands.

I suspect that this barrier to women's employment gains may reflect the persistence of norms dictating that women should stay at home and raise children – male chauvinist beliefs that pervade LDP's nationalist factions. So, while Abenomics significantly boosted women's workforce participation, it was unable to narrow the gender wage gap. As a result, Japan continues to have a poor record on gender equality, especially in terms of female leadership.

Despite the emerging revisionist view of Abenomics – and of Abe's policies and premiership more generally – that is taking hold in Japan, we must remember the important reforms that were implemented over the course of Abe's tenure. These policy decisions are certain to have a lasting and positive impact on Japan.

– Project Syndicate

• Koichi Hamada, Professor Emeritus at Yale University, was a special adviser to former Japanese prime minister Abe Shinzo.



LEGACY: Policy decisions from the era of slain former Japanese prime minister Abe Shinzo (centre) are certain to have a lasting and positive impact on Japan, according to the author. (Reuters)

Oklahoma tornadoes kill at least one person, injure five

A swarm of tornadoes touched down overnight in Oklahoma, according to local media reports, killing at least one person and injuring at least five as they flattened homes and ripped down trees in the northeast corner of the state.

As the morning sun rose over the area, fire crews were surveying the destruction and rescuing residents in Barnsdall and Bartlesville, two rural towns just north of Tulsa ravaged by the twisters, according to local news.

Some 40 homes were damaged or destroyed and a natural gas leak was reported in Barnsdall, according to the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management.

One person died in the community of 1,000, according to KOCO News.

Five others were injured in Bartlesville, a town of 30,000, the ABC affiliate in Oklahoma City reported.

Video footage aired on local media and social media showed destroyed houses, downed powerlines and trees and debris strewn across roadways throughout the area.

Some 16,000 homes and businesses were without power in Oklahoma, according to Power-outage.us

Storm spotters reported 17 tornadoes touched down in the Plains region overnight, including eight sightings in Missouri, according to the National Weather Service (NWS), which has yet to confirm whether the damage or casualties were caused by tornadoes.

The dangerous weather was expected to remain this week as some 2mn people in the region were under a tornado watch, the NWS said. - Reuters

TikTok challenges potential US ban in federal court

Reuters/AFP
Washington

TikTok and its Chinese parent company ByteDance have filed a lawsuit in US federal court, seeking to block a law signed by President Joe Biden that would force the divestiture of the short video app used by 170mn Americans or ban it.

The companies filed their lawsuit in the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, arguing that the law violates the US Constitution on a number of grounds, including running afoul of First Amendment free speech protections.

The law, signed by Biden on April 24, gives ByteDance until January 19 to sell TikTok or face a ban.

"For the first time in history, Congress has enacted a law that subjects a single, named speech platform to a permanent, nationwide ban," the companies said in the lawsuit yesterday.

The lawsuit said the divestiture "is simply not possible: not commercially, not technologically, not legally. There is no question: the Act (law) will force a shutdown of TikTok by January 19, 2025, silencing the 170mn Americans who use the platform to communicate in ways that cannot be replicated elsewhere".

The White House has said it wants to see Chinese-based ownership ended on national security grounds but not a ban on TikTok.

The White House declined to comment on the lawsuit.

The US Justice Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The lawsuit is the latest move by TikTok to keep ahead of efforts to shut it down in the United States as companies such as Snap and Meta look to capitalise on TikTok's political uncertainty to take away advertising dollars from their rival.

Driven by worries among US lawmakers

that China could access data on Americans or spy on them with the app, the measure was passed overwhelmingly in Congress just weeks after being introduced.

TikTok has denied that it has or ever would share US user data, accusing American lawmakers in the lawsuit of advancing "speculative" concerns.

The law prohibits app stores from offering TikTok and bars Internet hosting services from supporting TikTok unless ByteDance divests TikTok by January 19.

According to the suit, 58% of ByteDance is owned by global institutional investors including BlackRock, General Atlantic and Susquehanna International Group, 21% owned by the company's Chinese founder and 21% owned by employees - including about 7,000 Americans.

TikTok has spent \$2bn to implement measures to protect the data of US users and made additional commitments in a 90-page draft National Security Agreement developed through negotiations with

the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), according to the lawsuit.

That pact included TikTok agreeing to a "shut-down option" that would give the United States government the authority to suspend TikTok in the United States if it violates some obligations, according to the suit.

TikTok first found itself in the crosshairs of former president Donald Trump's administration, which tried unsuccessfully to ban it.

That effort got bogged down in the courts when a federal judge temporarily blocked Trump's attempt, saying that the reasons for banning the app were likely overstated and that free speech rights were in jeopardy.

The new effort signed by Biden was designed to overcome the same legal headaches and some experts believe the US Supreme Court could be open to allowing national security considerations to outweigh free speech protection.

Brazil floods death toll rises to 90

Reuters
Brasilia

Rescuers rushed to evacuate people stranded by devastating floods across the southern Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul yesterday, with 90 reported dead and desperate survivors seeking food and basic supplies.

On the outskirts of Eldorado do Sul, 17km (10.5 miles) from the state capital of Porto Alegre, many people who left their homes were sleeping on the roadside and told Reuters that they were going hungry.

Entire families were leaving on foot, carrying belongings in backpacks and shopping carts.

"We've been without food for three days and we've only just got this blanket. I'm with people I don't even know, I don't know where my family is," said a young man who gave his name as Ricardo Junior.

The flooding has hampered rescue ef-

orts, with dozens of people still waiting to be evacuated by boat or helicopter from stricken homes.

Small boats crisscrossed the flooded town searching for survivors.

The state's Civil Defence agency said the death toll has risen to 90 with another four deaths being investigated, while 131 people are still unaccounted for and 155,000 are homeless.

Heavy rains that began last week have caused rivers to flood, inundating whole towns and destroying roads and bridges.

In Porto Alegre, a city of 1.3mn inhabitants on the Guaiba river, downtown streets were under water.

The floods have impacted water and electricity services, with more than 1.4mn affected overall, according to Brazil's Civil Defence.

President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said on a government television programme that the extent of the damage will not be known until the waters subside.

Drought-hit Barcelona to ease water restrictions

Spain's Catalonia region said yesterday that it will ease restrictions on water use for Barcelona and its surrounding area after recent rainfall allowed it to lift a drought emergency.

Catalonia declared a drought emergency in February after water levels at reservoirs in the Mediterranean region fell below 16% of full capacity following nearly three years of below-average rainfall.

The measure led to tighter water use restrictions for some 6mn people living in a wide area including Spain's second-city Barcelona, especially for crop irrigation, livestock farming and industry.

However, recent rains in the northwestern region have boosted reserves to nearly 24%. This increase in water reserves "allows us to reduce the restrictions put in place over the last three months", Catalan government spokeswoman Patricia Plaja told a Barcelona news conference.

"The drought is not over, that is the reality. We are still facing a serious drought," she added. - AFP

Pakistan considers raising retirement age ahead of IMF visit

Reuters
Islamabad

Pakistan is considering raising its retirement age to reduce burgeoning pension payments ahead of the annual budget and International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission visit, the country's finance minister said yesterday.

An IMF mission is likely to visit the South Asian country of some 240mn people within the next 10 days to discuss a new bailout programme, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb told a news conference.

Last month Pakistan completed a short-term \$3bn programme, which helped stave off sovereign default, but the government of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has stressed the need for a new longer-term programme.

"Steps must be taken to bring pension costs under control," the finance minister said, adding that pension payments were a "big liability".

The retirement age in Pakistan is 60. "Age is now just a number," Aurangzeb added. "Sixty is the new 40."

The law minister, Azam Nazeer Tarar, has revealed that a committee had been formed to propose pension reform recommendations.

The finance minister stressed the need to reduce non development expenditure.

The unfunded liability nature of the pensions and the growth in pension expenditure is increasingly a challenge for the government as it prepares its budget.

Pakistan budgeted 801bn rupees (\$2.88bn) for superannuation allowances and pensions for the fiscal year 2023-24 as a current expenditure, up 31% from the 609bn rupees (\$2.19bn) budgeted for the last fiscal year.

Pakistan's financial year runs from July to June and its budget for fiscal year 2025, the first for Sharif's new government, must be presented before June 30.

"A mission is expected to visit Pakistan in May to discuss the FY25 budget, policies, and reforms under a potential new programme for the welfare of all Pakistanis," the IMF said on Sunday.

The IMF and finance minister did not specify the dates of the visit, nor the size or duration of the programme.

The finance minister added that Islamabad will also hold talks with the IMF over climate finance.

French police seize over 1mn ecstasy pills worth €10mn

French police have seized more than 1mn ecstasy tablets worth around €10mn (\$10.7mn) from two vehicles in southeastern France, police said yesterday.

Four people travelling in the vehicles were detained last week in the Drome department in southeast France and charged with drug possession and distribution, among other offences, said a statement.

A handgun was also found during the searches.

The haul - weighing more than 540kg - represents two-thirds of the drug typically seized in France in a year, according to the interior ministry. - AFP

'Russian-led plot to kill Zelensky' thwarted

AFP/Reuters
Kyiv

Ukraine said yesterday that it had unravellled a Russian plot to assassinate senior Ukrainian political and military figures, including President Volodymyr Zelensky.

Two Ukrainian security officials were arrested for their links to the group, which had aimed to carry out high-profile killings ahead of Russian President Vladimir Putin's inauguration yesterday.

"The terrorist attack, which was supposed to be a gift to Putin for his inauguration, was in fact a failure of the Russian secret service," Vasyl Maliuk, head of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), said in a statement.

Kyiv says that Zelensky has been targeted by Russia on multiple earlier occasions, including at the beginning of the Russian invasion in February 2022.

The SBU said it had exposed a network of agents set up by Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) tasked with identifying individuals close to Zelensky's security detail who could take the Ukrainian leader hostage and kill him.

"The network, whose activities were supervised by the FSB from Moscow, included two colonels of the State Department of Protection who were leaking classified information to Russia," the SBU said.

Ukraine's State Department of Protection is in charge protecting the president and other senior officials and their families.

A source in Ukrainian law enforcement told AFP that the suspects were detained "a few days ago".

"They were really highly placed men. One of them was a head of department," the source said.

The SBU published photos of masked operatives in camouflage uniform arresting several suspects at night.

In a video posted on the SBU's website, a man with his face blurred said his task was to "test the mood" among the presidential office's security guards, and select someone ready to detain the president, possibly as he went to give his nightly broadcast.

The SBU said Russia also planned to eliminate Maliuk, as well as the head of the Defence Intelligence of Ukraine Kyrylo Budanov and other officials.

Budanov was due to be assassinated before Orthodox Easter, which fell last weekend, the SBU said.

The service's spokesman Artem Dekhtyarenko said the assassin had been promised a reward of up to \$80,000.

It published video footage purportedly of an FSB handler telling an agent to surveil a house linked to a target, apparently Budanov, and text when he arrived.

"You'll most likely hear a loud blast," the man says, telling the agent to then use a drone to carry out a secondary strike.

The SBU published what it said were phone messages between a FSB handler and a colonel in the Ukrainian State Department of Protection, who it said personally brought drones, rounds and anti-personnel mines to Kyiv.

It also gave names of three men it said were FSB handlers working with Ukrainian moles.

Those detained are suspected of treason and preparing a "terrorist act", punishable by life in prison.

There was no immediate comment from Moscow.

Zelensky told *The Sun* in November that he had survived at least five or six assassination attempts.

Russian leader starts his new 6-year term

Reuters/AFP
Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said that it is up to the West to choose between confrontation and co-operation as he was sworn in for a new six-year term at a Kremlin ceremony that was boycotted by the United States and many of its allies.

More than two years into the war in Ukraine, Putin said yesterday that he wanted to "bow" before Russia's soldiers there and declared in his inauguration speech that his landslide re-election in March was proof the country was united and on the right track.

"You, citizens of Russia, have confirmed the correctness of the country's course. This is of great importance right now, when we are faced with serious challenges," he told dignitaries in a gilded Kremlin hall where a trumpet fanfare sounded to greet his arrival. "I see in this a deep understanding of our common historical goals, a determination to adamantly defend our choice, our values, freedom and the national interests of Russia."

"We are a united and great nation, and together we will overcome all obstacles, realise everything we have planned, and together, we will win," the Russian leader said after being sworn in to office.

At 71, Putin dominates the domestic political landscape.

Leading opposition figures are in prison or exile, and his best known critic, Alexei Navalny, died suddenly in an Arctic penal colony in February.

Yulia Navalnaya, the late dissident's wife, urged supporters in a video yesterday to keep up the struggle against Putin.

"With each of his terms, everything only gets worse, and it's frightening to imagine what else will happen while Putin remains in power," she said.

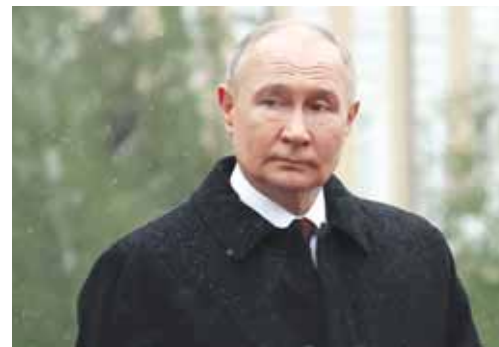
On the international stage, Putin is locked in a confrontation with Western countries he accuses of using Ukraine as a vehicle to try to defeat and dismember Russia.

Putin told Russia's political elite after being sworn in that he is not rejecting dialogue with the West, including on nuclear weapons.

"The choice is theirs: do they intend to continue trying to restrain the development of Russia, continue the policy of aggression, incessant pressure on our country for years, or look for a path to co-operation and peace?" he said.

With Russia's troops advancing gradually in eastern Ukraine, the top US intelligence official said last week that Putin appeared to see domestic and international developments trending in his favour and that the conflict was unlikely to end anytime soon.

It remains unclear how far the Russian president will seek to press the war and on what terms he might discuss ending it - decisions that will depend in part on whether Joe Biden or Donald Trump wins



the US presidential election in November.

Ukraine says peace can only come with a full withdrawal of Russia's troops, who control nearly 20% of its territory.

Putin, in power as president or prime minister since 1999, will surpass Soviet leader Josef Stalin and become Russia's longest-serving ruler since 18th century Empress Catherine the Great if he completes a new six-year term.

He would then be eligible to seek re-election again.

He won victory by a record margin in a tightly controlled election from which two anti-war candidates were barred on technical grounds.

The opposition called it a sham.

Ukraine said the swearing-in ceremony sought to create "the illusion of legality for the nearly lifelong stay in power of a person who has turned the Russian Federation into an aggressor state and the ruling regime into a dictatorship".

Sergei Chemezov, a Putin ally, told Reuters before the ceremony that Putin brought stability, something which even his critics should welcome.

"For Russia, this is the continuation of our path, this is stability - you can ask any citizen on the street," he said.

Russia's relations with the United States and its allies are at their lowest point since the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, when the world came to the brink of nuclear war.

The West has provided Ukraine with artillery, tanks and long-range missiles, but North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) troops have not joined the conflict directly, something that both Putin and Biden have warned could lead to World War III.

Underscoring the rise in nuclear tensions, Russia said on Monday that it would practice the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons as part of a military exercise, after what it said were threats from France, Britain and the United States.

In line with the constitution, the government resigned at the start of the new presidential term.

Putin ordered it to remain in office while he appoints a new one which is expected to include many of the same faces.

Slovakia records 1,100 bomb threats in one day

Slovak schools and institutions, including banks, received over 1,100 bomb threats yesterday, prompting evacuations across the country, the police said, announcing that they had launched a terror probe.

"The act is being investigated as a particularly serious crime of terrorist attack," said Rastislav Polakovic, the deputy chief of police.

"E-mails started arriving at schools yesterday from five or six in the morning," Polakovic said, adding that almost 1,000 of the bomb threats were directed at schools and more than 100 of them were received by banks.

"The police are working at full speed, checking security at schools and working to identify the perpetrator," the police wrote on their official Facebook page. - AFP

Key witness testifies at Trump hush money trial

An adult entertainment actress described her 2006 encounter with Donald Trump in unflattering terms at his criminal trial.

She offered details on the witness stand yesterday about her encounter with Trump, 77, and the hush-money deal she reached to stay quiet about it ahead of the 2016 election when he won the White House.

Trump has pleaded not guilty to charges

of falsifying business records to cover up a \$130,000 hush money payment to her.

Trump's lawyers called for a mistrial, saying that much of the testimony had nothing to do with the fraud charges that the ex-president faces.

The judge denied the request, but added that "I agree there were some things that were better left unsaid". - Reuters/AFP



Her Highness Sheikhha Moza bint Nasser presenting a graduate with a QF Excellence Award yesterday at the convocation ceremony. **PICTURE:** Aisha al-Musallam



Her Highness Sheikhha Moza bint Nasser presenting a graduate with a QF Excellence Award yesterday. **PICTURE:** AR al-Baker

Sheikha Moza attends QF 2024 convocation

Qatar Foundation (QF) Chairperson Her Highness Sheikhha Moza bint Nasser attended the annual, collective celebration of graduates from the QF's education ecosystem – commemorating 953 “future change-makers as they step from one phase of their journey into the next”.

The convocation ceremony was also attended by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani and QF Vice-Chairperson and Chief

Executive Officer HE Sheikhha Hind bint Hamad al-Thani, together with ministers, diplomats, university presidents, deans and faculty members, and families of the Class of 2024 graduates.

Students of 77 nationalities – 40% of whom are Qatari, with 61% of this year's graduates being female – who are graduating from the QF's Hamad Bin Khalifa University and seven international partner universities took the spotlight, walking through the “Door to the Future”, a convocation tradition symbolising how their years of learning, exploration, and discovery have prepared them for what now lies ahead.

During the ceremony, Her Highness Sheikhha Moza honoured 16 graduates with QF Excellence Awards in recognition of both their academic success and their leadership, innovation, and creative qualities that equip them to make vital contributions to society and empower others.

HE Abdulaziz bin Nasser bin Mubarak al-Khalifa, president of the Civil Service and Government Development Bureau, said: “On this occasion, I extend my warmest congratulations to all the 2024

Snapshots from the ceremony yesterday.



graduates of Qatar Foundation's universities, who represent our future generations, and their universities for their efforts in providing these graduates with opportunities and developing their skills, reflecting the support and vision of Qatar's higher education leadership.”

“We look forward to seeing the valuable contributions these graduates will make to the future-ready workforce of our nation, in line with Qatar's third National Development Strategy 2024-2030,” he said. “I call on them to invest in

their professional careers the knowledge they have acquired and to advance the wheel of progress and innovation, and I wish them a prosperous and successful future.”

In his keynote speech, Kuwaiti entrepreneur and technologist Ahmad Marafi, co-founder and chief executive of CODED – a Middle East coding academy – told the QF's Class of 2024: “Our journey was never easy; when we felt we had reached the summit, the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic meant we faced a greater challenge and we found ourselves at a crossroads – all the roads before us were dark, and it was difficult to take a confident step along an unknown path.”

“Today, it is your turn to create your own success story, and to make your mark on the future – a future that will not be drawn by anyone but you,” he said. “Each of your experiences differs, but more than 10,000 QF graduates

are sharing the journey with you, and they will have a role along your journey.”

The ceremony featured music created for the 2024 convocation by Ahmad al-Zmaili, Mohamed Bashar and Dana Salah, with its themes emphasising the power of youth and social responsibility, and the importance of continuing to stand in solidarity with the people of Gaza and Palestine, and a convocation film encapsulating the graduates' journey during their years at the QF.

The Class of 2024 expands the QF's global network of alumni to more than 10,000.

Specialising in fields ranging from medicine, engineering, art and design, communication, and international affairs to Islamic studies, law and public policy, computing, humanities and social sciences, and business, they have also benefited from opportunities for citizenship, service to soci-

ety, and cross-cultural interaction while students at the QF.

“At Qatar Foundation, our commitment to excellence goes beyond academic achievement,” said Francisco Marmolejo, president of Higher Education and education adviser at the QF. “We believe in cultivating a holistic educational experience that not only equips students with the latest knowledge and skills, but also instils in them a strong sense of values, integrity, and social responsibility.”

“Through our partnership with top-tier universities hosted at Education City, we offer unparalleled opportunities for intellectual growth, global perspectives, and local engagement,” he added. “Our aim is to empower students to not only succeed academically, but also to thrive as compassionate, empathetic, and actively involved members of society, ready to tackle the challenges of tomorrow with confidence and integrity.”

QF Excellence Award-winning graduates share their journey at Education City

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

Students from the graduating class of 2024 across the universities in Qatar Foundation (QF)'s Education City have highlighted how their journey has been a wonderful experience to build strong foundation for their future.

Gulf Times spoke to some of the Excellence Award winners this year.

Dr Samah Gamar, director of Academic Affairs at QF Higher Education, said that the QF is embarking on a new phase to create a lot more cohesion and opportunities for students across Education City universities.

“The QF Excellence Awards is a great honour for the students,” she said.

“This year, we have 16 recipients. We had close to 300 applicant's nominations for this award,” Dr Gamar said. “The criteria for the award required academic achievement, interdisciplinary research, civic engagement and civic duty, as well as a demonstration of professional and life skills.”



Dr Samah Gamar



Kaltham al-Fakhroo



Naheema al-Mashtouba



Yahya Mohamed El Kathib



Aisha Basheer

“Our focus is on creating increased opportunities for students in academics, extracurricular activities and to ensure that where there are exceptional practices in one institution, those practices are scaled up and magnified and facilitated for students in other institutions,” she added.

Kaltham al-Fakhroo, a graphic design graduate from VCUarts Qatar and a winner of Excellence Award, noted that she was one of the students who started the programme at the peak of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

“It was extremely difficult as we started with online classes, something that we

never expected,” she said. “However, we managed to adapt to the situation quickly and got along. It was an incredible experience.”

“The university groomed me to be a better student, better person and an able designer,” al-Fakhroo added. “I learned leadership skills, and in Education City you get a lot of opportunities to show your skills and talents in your field as well as outside your field.”

She is planning to go into the design industry in Qatar, and might also consider the museums sector.

Fellow Excellence Award winner Na-

heema al-Mashtouba, who completed her masters from VCUarts Qatar in design, hopes to become a professor.

“I graduated in graphic design...then I wanted to do my masters because it was aligned with my desire to learn and achieve,” she said. “I love this place and I plan to come back as a professor and teach at VCUarts Qatar.”

Yahya Mohamed El Kathib from Egypt, who completed his undergraduate programme in Biological Sciences from Carnegie Mellon in Qatar, is elated to win an Excellence Award.

“I plan to become a dentist and want

to pursue my studies in the US,” he said. “My ultimate plan is to return to Qatar and open a dental care centre.”

“Education City helps students, nurturing them into leaders and making them face challenges well,” El Kathib said. “It also allows them more opportunities, helps them connect with other universities, and get to know more programmes.”

Aisha Basheer from Pakistan, who completed her Juris Doctor programme from Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), said that it was an amazing journey to be part of the Education City.

“I did my undergraduate degree in International Relations in Pakistan,” the Excellence Award winner said. “I realised that one of the best tools to make an impact in the world is to know the law, and pursuing a law degree at the HBKU was one of the best decisions I had made. Education City is a melting pot of some many universities and cultures.”

Basheer has been admitted into Harvard Law College to do her masters, and hopes to return and help develop the region in the fields of technology and healthcare law.

HEC Paris in Qatar celebrates graduation of future leaders

HEC Paris in Qatar celebrated the achievements of its graduating classes from the Executive MBA (EMBA) and Specialised Master's in Strategic Business Unit Management (SBUM) programmes during the convocation ceremony organised by Qatar Foundation (QF) for partner universities at the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC).

The ceremony honoured 77 graduates, more than half (59%) of whom are Qatari, and 56% of whom are women.

This diversity underscores HEC Paris in Qatar's contribution to building national talent, and bridging the workplace gender gap, aligning with the goals of the Qatar National Vision 2030 and fostering innovation through inclusivity.

The convocation ceremony was attended by HEC Paris in Qatar dean Dr Pablo Martin de Holan and members of the business school's leadership team and faculty.

“Our graduates are prepared to embrace new challenges, driving positive and enduring change in their organisations and communities,” he said. “Their diverse

ideas enriched the learning environment at HEC Paris in Qatar, fostering unexpected growth opportunities for each one of them.”

“To excel as leaders, they've committed to personal growth, and we congratulate them on their dedication and hard work. Learning is a lifelong journey,” Dr de Holan said.

EMBA graduate Maha al-Henzab said the diversity of co-participants had elevated the learning journey.

“Studying alongside a diverse group of peers from differing nationalities, cultures, backgrounds, and industries has broadened my perspectives immensely,” she said. “This exposure to varied viewpoints has been invaluable, equipping me with a more comprehensive understanding of challenges and solutions, which will greatly influence my approach to problem-solving in both business and life.”

“The HEC Paris experience has instilled in me a lifelong commitment to continuous learning – a vital approach to staying ahead of the rapidly evolving challenges



HEC Paris in Qatar graduates at the QF convocation ceremony.

we face in today's business world,” said SBUM graduate Ali Ahmad al-Mawlawi. “I am determined to apply the strategic problem-solving skills and ethical principles gained during the program to make a positive impact in my field and community.”

Dr de Holan congratulated the students on their personal growth and encouraged

them to continue applying the principles of learning and innovation acquired at HEC Paris in their future professional and personal endeavours.

All graduates have been invited to the June graduation ceremony at HEC Paris's main campus in the French capital, where they will join participants from all HEC Paris graduating classes.

To further highlight their accomplishments at the convocation, Executive MBA alumni Ghanim Shaheen al-Sulaiti and Nayef Mehsin Alyafei were honoured with the QF Excellence Award.

Presented by QF Chairperson Her Highness Sheikhha Moza bint Nasser, the award celebrates academic excellence and holistic development.