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Prior approval needed for domestic workers' departure: Shura

Domestic workers should submit a request to their employer at least five working days in advance of their intended date of departure through the 'Metrash' application, according to a motion of desire adopted by the Shura Council. The Council yesterday decided to submit the motion of desire to the government. They are not permitted to leave without obtaining prior approval, and the workers can appeal to the relevant authorities in case their request is not approved, the Council observed. **Page 2**

Qatar Airways is 'Airline of the Year'

Qatar Airways has been awarded the 'Airline of the Year' title by Skytrax, returning to the top for an unprecedented eighth time. This distinction highlights the airline's unwavering commitment to excellence. **Page 3**

2 Israeli strikes on aid supplies kill 11 in Gaza

Two Israeli air strikes targeting aid supplies killed at least 11 Palestinians in Gaza yesterday, medics said, as Israeli tanks pushed deeper into Rafah in the south and fought their way back into areas in the north they had already subdued months ago. One strike at a food distribution centre in Gaza City, near the Shati historic refugee camp, killed three people. Another, near Bani Suhaila town in the southern Gaza Strip, killed at least eight, including guards who accompany aid trucks, the medics said. Overnight, an Israeli air strike at a medical clinic in Gaza City killed the director of Gaza's Ambulance and Emergency Department, the enclave's health ministry said. The health ministry said the killing of Hani al-Jaafarawi brought the number of medical staff killed by Israeli fire since Oct 7 to 500. More than eight months into the fighting, international mediation backed by the US has so far failed to bring a ceasefire agreement. Yesterday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he remained committed to a proposed ceasefire and hostage deal, announced by US President Joe Biden in May. **Page 5**

Amir, Sheikha Jawaher attend luncheon banquet

● **Agreements signed would further enhance relations between the two nations, especially in the fields of gas, investment and economy: Amir**

QNA
The Hague

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, and Her Highness Consort of the Amir Sheikha Jawaher bint Hamad bin Suhaim al-Thani, attended an official luncheon banquet hosted by King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands and Queen Maxima in Their Highnesses' honour at Noordeinde

Palace in The Hague yesterday. Before the luncheon, His Highness the Amir delivered a speech expressing his deep gratitude and appreciation to the king for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to him, Her Highness Sheikha Jawaher, and the accompanying delegation. His Highness the Amir also appreciated the heartfelt sentiments of friendship and goodwill conveyed by His Majesty's speech, reaffirming his commitment to strengthening the



ties that bind the two countries for the benefit of their peoples.

Regarding the bilateral relations, His Highness the Amir noted that the agreements signed would further enhance the relations between the two nations, especially in the fields of gas, investment, and economy.

In closing, His Highness the Amir extended his best wishes for contin-

ued health, happiness, and success to Their Majesties and prosperity to the friendly Dutch people.

At the beginning of the luncheon, King Willem-Alexander delivered a speech welcoming His Highness the Amir, Her Highness Sheikha Jawaher and the accompanying delegation, expressing the Netherlands' warm welcome of the

visit and his personal delight at it.

Upon their arrival, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and Her Highness Sheikha Jawaher bint Hamad bin Suhaim al-Thani were accorded an official reception ceremony. Leading the welcoming party were King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima. **To Page 12**

Qatar-Dutch ties set to scale new heights

● **Amir, the Netherlands PM hold official talks**

QNA
The Hague

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani held a session of official talks with Prime Minister of the friendly Kingdom of the Netherlands Mark Rutte, at the Binnenhof, the Prime Minister's Office in The Hague, yesterday.

At the outset of the session, the Dutch Prime Minister welcomed His Highness the Amir and the accompanying delegation, marking the Amir's first official visit to the Netherlands, a testament to the deep relations between the two countries.

Prime Minister Rutte expressed his eagerness to work with His Highness the Amir to enhance mutual co-operation and elevate the bilateral relations to new heights. He also praised the sig-

nificant role played by His Highness the Amir and Qatar in mediating for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

In response, His Highness the Amir expressed his profound gratitude to the Dutch prime minister for the warm reception and generous hospitality.

His Highness the Amir emphasised the importance of the visit in light of the exceptional relations between the two nations, hoping that its outcomes would further cement strategic co-operation across various fields, benefiting both countries and their friendly peoples.

His Highness the Amir reaffirmed Qatar's steadfast stance on the Palestinian cause and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, particularly their right to establish an independent state on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, as part of a

two-state solution, and the continuation of diplomatic mediation efforts to halt the ongoing conflict in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territories.

During the session, both sides discussed aspects of co-operation and ways to enhance and develop them, as well as key regional and international issues of mutual concern, particularly the developments in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territories.

The session was attended by HE the Chief of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman al-Thani; HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi; HE the Minister of Commerce and Industry Sheikh Mohamed bin Hamad bin Qassim al-Thani; and HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater along with



members of the official delegation accompanying His Highness the Amir.

On the Dutch side, the session was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Climate and Energy Rob Jetten; Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Social Affairs and Employment Karien van Gennip; and Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Co-operation Liesje Schreinemacher, along with a number of senior officials.

His Highness the Amir and the Dutch prime minister witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding on economic, commercial, and technical co-operation, as well as a memorandum of understanding in the field of defence.

Prior to the official meeting, His Highness the Amir and the Dutch prime minister held a bilateral meeting, during which they discussed various topics of mutual interest. **Page 12**

Amir meets presidents of Dutch Senate, House of Representatives



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani met with President of the Senate Jan Anthonie Bruijn, and President of the House of Representatives Martin Bosma at the headquarters of the Dutch Parliament in The Hague, yesterday. During the meeting, they discussed relations between the two countries and ways to strengthen them in wide-ranging fields, in addition to a range of topics of shared interest. Members of the official delegation accompanying His Highness the Amir attended the meeting, alongside several members of the Dutch Parliament. **(QNA)**

Talks will enhance ties, says Amir

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, affirmed that his constructive discussions with King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands and Prime Minister Mark Rutte will enhance the distinguished co-operation relations between the two countries in various fields. His Highness the Amir said, in a post on his official account on the social media platform 'X', that he held constructive talks in The Hague with King Willem-Alexander and Prime Minister Mark Rutte, stressing that the outcomes of these talks will strengthen the distinguished co-operation relations in various fields and will elevate the strategic partnership between the two countries to new heights of collaboration and co-ordination through the memorandums of understanding signed today (Monday), achieving the common interests of both friendly nations. **(QNA)**

Amir's visit a key milestone: Rutte

Prime Minister of the Kingdom of the Netherlands Mark Rutte voiced his welcome to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, stressing that the Amir's visit is an important step toward supporting relations between Qatar and the Netherlands. In a post on his official X account, the prime minister said: "It was a pleasure to welcome HH the Amir to The Hague. His visit was an important milestone, as relations between our countries continue to improve. We discussed ways to further strengthen our ties, for example in the fields of sustainable energy, agriculture, and defence," pointing to the signing of two memorandums of understanding on economic, commercial, and technical co-operation, and the field of defence. "I also thanked His Highness again for his important work as a mediator in the conflict between Israel and Hamas, and for the part he played in securing the release of a Dutch hostage. I would like to thank HH the Amir for coming to the Netherlands," he added. **(QNA)**



Qatar committed to goals of Asian Co-operation Dialogue

Qatar participated yesterday in the 19th ministerial meeting of the Asian Co-operation Dialogue, held in Tehran, Iran. HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi headed Qatar's delegation at the meeting. In his speech during the meeting, HE al-Muraikhi emphasised Qatar's commitment to the goals and values of the Asian Co-operation Dialogue, saying that the dialogue constitutes the State's most important principle for establishing international peace and security and one of the pillars of its foreign policy. He reiterated Qatar's firm stance on the justice of the Palestinian cause and the legitimate rights of the fraternal Palestinian people, especially their right



to self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. HE al-Muraikhi affirmed that Qatar stresses the importance of adhering to the Doha Agreement to bring peace to Afghanistan, which was announced in 2020 with Qatar's

mediation, and which set the road map to reach a political solution that guarantees peace, stability, and prosperity for the fraternal Afghan people. Concluding his speech, he welcomed the participating delegations in the upcoming 3rd Asia Co-operation Dialogue Summit, set to convene in Doha on October 2-3. (QNA)

PM, Cameron discuss Gaza situation



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met with UK Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs David Cameron in London yesterday. The meeting discussed the two countries' co-operation relations and ways to support and develop them, especially in investments. The two sides also discussed the gravity of the situation in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories; the latest developments in the joint mediation efforts aimed at stopping the war in the Strip; and ensuring the continued flow of humanitarian aid to Gaza without obstacles, in addition to the latest developments in Afghanistan and Ukraine and a host of topics of mutual interest. (QNA)

Al-Muraikhi in Tehran meetings



HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi met separately yesterday with Uzbekistan's Deputy Foreign Minister Bakhromjon Aloyev, Bangladeshi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Mohamed Shahriar Alam and Myanmar's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Than Swe on the sidelines of the 19th ministerial meeting of the Asian Co-operation Dialogue, held in Tehran, Iran. The meetings discussed Qatar's co-operation relations with the three countries and ways to support and strengthen them. (QNA)

Shura Council endorses draft law on job localisation in private sector

The Shura Council held its weekly meeting yesterday, under the chairpersonship of its Speaker HE Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem. The council took note of the report of the Internal and External Affairs Committee regarding the public discussion request submitted by several of the Council members pertaining to the procedures for the departure of domestic workers from the country.

HE the Speaker highlighted the decision of referring the aforementioned discussion request to the committee for further examination, noting that the council had previously discussed the topic of reorganising domestic workers recruitment offices and submitted it to the Services and Public Facilities Committee, which discussed it further and submitted its report to the council.

HE al-Ghanem said that due to the nexus between the two topics, the council decided to refer the committee's opinion regarding domestic workers recruitment agencies to the Internal and External Affairs Committee for further perusal, simultaneously with the examination of

the topic of workers' departure.

After thoroughly discussing the committee's report and sharing perspectives on the topic of the domestic workers' departure measures, the Council decided to submit a motion of desire to the esteemed government. The motion of desire included the Council's viewpoints and an array of measures that would compel domestic workers to submit leave or final departure through the 'Met-rash' application to the employer within a minimum of five working days, to obtain the necessary approval for their request, as they are not permitted to leave without obtaining prior approval, and domestic workers are entitled to appeal to the relevant authorities in case the mentioned request is not approved.

The proposal included a call for the necessity of co-ordination among the state competent authorities regarding the registration of escape cases for domestic workers during the validity of their employment contract with the competent authority, whereby transferring their sponsorship to other employers is prohibited.



The Shura Council in session.

As to the other matter concerning the reorganisation and monitoring of domestic worker recruitment agencies, the Council decided to submit a motion of desire to the esteemed government, underscoring the necessity of amending domestic worker contracts to ensure their responsibility in case of escape and payment of their travel expenses, without obligating the employer to pay those expenses after reporting the escape, because the worker's escape constitutes a clear violation of the

contractual relationship between the two sides.

The proposal stipulated that those workers, upon being apprehended or surrendering themselves to the competent authorities, must bear the cost of their return ticket. Alternatively, the individual or company that harboured and employed them illegally would be responsible for their deportation expenses instead of the original employers. Also, the motion of desire called for the establishment of an insurance sys-

tem to address the financial implications of domestic workers' escape cases.

Additionally, the motion of desire emphasised the importance of increasing penalties against runaway domestic workers and those who provide them shelter and alternative job opportunities, whether individuals or companies. It called for tightening supervision over places that could offer employment to this category, whether in private jobs, hourly work, live-in arrangements, hotels, or restaurants.

During the session, Council endorsed the draft law on job localisation in the private sector after reviewing the report from the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee accordingly. The Council members discussed the provisions of the draft law. Additionally, the council approved a draft law amending certain provisions of Law No 24 of 2015, regulating tenders and auctions, following a review of the committee's report.

The Council endorsed a draft law amending certain provisions of Law No 25 of 2015 on civil defence after discussing the report of the Internal and External Affairs Com-

mittee accordingly. Afterwards, the Council reviewed the report of the Information and Cultural Affairs Committee regarding the government's statement on the motion of desire submitted by the council concerning the phenomenon of Qatari teachers refraining from the teaching profession and took the appropriate decision accordingly.

The Council also reviewed the esteemed government's statement regarding the motion of desire submitted by the Council concerning the utilisation of retirees in the labour market and decided to refer it to the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee for further perusal and submission of findings.

Additionally, the Council approved the request to extend the work of the Information and Cultural Affairs Committee to examine the request for public discussion on regulating the production and dissemination of media content on digital platforms. Upon the conclusion of the session, the Council discussed an array of reports on the participation of its delegations in a number of international parliamentary events. (QNA)

Qatar reaffirms commitment to upholding rights of women



Qatar has reiterated its unwavering stance in support of enhancing the employment of all rights for women and girls, grounded in the principles of equality, justice, and fairness.

This affirmation was made in a statement delivered by Fatima al-Mannai, Second Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, during the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, as part of the 56th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

Qatar has placed significant

emphasis on protecting women and girls from all forms of violence, al-Mannai highlighted noting that Qatar has worked through a societal and institutional framework, based on religious teachings and cultural values, to uphold the dignity of women and elevate their status and role in society.

She expressed Qatar's strong condemnation of all acts of violence and discrimination against women and girls, regardless of the perpetrators, locations, or identities of the victims. Al-Mannai also voiced concern over the ongoing prev-

alence of violence and exploitation against women and girls, including those facilitated by modern technology and artificial intelligence.

She emphasised the importance of providing equal access to quality education for women and girls, as well as fair and safe employment opportunities. Al-Mannai stressed the need to address the root causes that lead to the vulnerability of women and girls, and to prevent their involvement in activities where their rights and dignity are not respected. (QNA)

GCC states affirm importance of protecting right to education

The Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries have reaffirmed their deep belief in the importance of protecting and promoting the right to education, which they consider a crucial element for progress in teaching, scientific research, and academia at various levels and frameworks.

This statement was delivered by Qatar's Permanent Representative to the UN Office in Geneva HE Henda bin Abdulrahman al-Muftah, on behalf of the GCC, in her capacity as chairperson of the Gulf Group, during the "Interactive Dialogue on the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education," as part of the 56th session of the Human Rights Council.

The GCC countries highlighted their agreement with the Special Rapporteur's report on the importance of safeguarding the right to education against contemporary challenges and threats posed by the digitisation of education, particularly in the field of artificial intelligence.

They pointed out that they have implemented various supportive measures for scientific research, such as providing financial, techni-

cal, and technological incentives, as well as continuous support and development in this field. These measures have enabled academic and research institutions to achieve advanced positions in terms of the quality of scientific research and the level of teaching.

The GCC also emphasised the need to address the risks of harmful use of artificial intelligence, which poses a real threat to scientific research.

In light of the dire situation in Gaza and the deprivation of Palestinian students from their right to education, the GCC countries condemned the systematic and ongoing targeting of educational institutions by the occupying power, noting approximately 625,000 children have been without education for more than eight months due to the war, with nearly 90% of schools and universities destroyed.

The GCC countries called on the international community to take action to end this brutal war completely and to provide all possible means to allow Palestinian students to continue their educational journey, which is closely linked to human rights. (QNA)

MoFA organises regional rights workshop

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched yesterday its second regional training programme, organised by its Human Rights Department in co-operation with the UN Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region.

The four-day programme will address the topic of interaction with international human rights mechanisms, with the participation of several diplomats and relevant officials from Qatar and the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries, as well as representatives of the council's General Secretariat.

The programme aims to enhance knowledge and interaction with UN human rights mechanisms and international instruments. (QNA)

QNL's Heritage Library, a treasure trove

The Heritage Library at Qatar National Library (QNL) stands out as an essential destination for first-time visitors as well as seasoned history enthusiasts. "This treasure trove is meticulously curated to showcase and preserve the rich tapestry of Qatar and the broader region's history," a statement explained yesterday.

There are eight unique collections that the Heritage Library safeguards, each offering a window into the past and an insight into the complex history that has shaped the modern Middle East. The QNL Archives preserve vital historical and cultural documents, including centuries-old original documents, letters, telegrams, certificates, invoices, and multimedia archives that capture the unique culture and heritage of Qatar and the Arab world.

A vast collection of books in European languages includes works from the end of the 15th century to the early 20th century, featuring

early European translations of the Qur'an and Arab-Islamic scientific literature.

Showcasing rare examples of early Arabic printed books, the section concerned includes works from the Medici Oriental Press in Italy, Oxford University Press, and other publishers from Europe and the Arab world. QNL holds more than 20 historical globes dating from the 18th to the mid-20th century, including a terrestrial globe made for Britain's King George III and other rare pieces that reference Qatari cities.

With a focus on Qatar, the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula, there is a collection of early photographs that document significant architectural, social and historical moments up to the 1980s. More than 2,400 manuscripts, primarily Qur'anic and other religious texts, are the highlights of QNL's collection, along with manuscripts on the Arabic language, sciences and early Christian-Arab and non-Arabic



texts. Featuring more than 1,200 sheet maps and numerous atlases, a collection focuses on Arabia and the Gulf region, enriched by maps of historically important sites and contributions from renowned cartographers. Maps, manuscripts and books from the Heritage Library can be requested for viewing in the Reading Room. Dating

from the 18th and 19th centuries, a collection includes navigational tools, chronometers, telescopes, astrolabes and even 19th century medicine chests, showcasing the equipment used by historical travellers and explorers. Each item and collection in the Heritage Library not only preserves the rich history and culture of the region but also



serves as a bridge connecting the past to the present, inviting visitors to explore and learn about the significant contributions of Qatar and the broader Arab and Islamic world to human knowledge.

Visitors have the added advantage of enjoying this enriching experience completely free of charge. For those interested in

gaining deeper insights and a more structured exploration, QNL offers guided tours of the Heritage Library. These tours are led by experts who provide valuable context and detailed explanations of the items and their significance in regional history. A guided tour can be booked through QNL's website, the statement added.

Indonesian parliament delegation meets community members in Qatar

The Indonesian embassy in Qatar held a community gathering to welcome members of Indonesia's Parliament or People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) on June 22. The event at the chancery, aimed to socialise the four pillars of Indonesia's nationhood: Pancasila (state's ideology), Constitution, Unitary State of Indonesia Principle, and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (unity in diversity), a statement said yesterday.

Indonesian ambassador Ridwan Hassan welcomed the attendees and panel speakers, consisting of MPR members and the youth, saying: "The gathering with our community is very important since it will boost our patriotism to our beloved country".

Dr Al-Muzzamil Yusuf, a representative of MPR, delivered remarks and insights into the importance of the four pillars of Indonesian nationalism in hopes to promote a prosperous future for Indonesia. He stressed the significance for Indonesian youth to hold the values of Indonesian patriotism and nationalism to mobilise the future generation.

Dr al-Muzzamil, along with



Indonesian Parliament members and embassy officials led by ambassador Ridwan Hassan meet with Indonesian community in Qatar.

another member of MPR, Mercy Christy Barends, reminded the youth of Indonesia to never forget the values of their country even if they live or study abroad. Attendees were given a chance to ask questions to the panel speakers. Former head of Permiqa, Ali Musthofa, talked about permissions for processing energy resources in Indonesia. This led to an interaction about recent issues, developments and

progresses in the Indonesian industry for energies.

Student representatives Mikayla Said and Najma Hilal from the Indonesian youth organisation called 'Anak Qatar', inquired about how the youth can be more informed and aware of Indonesian values such as the four Pillars of Nationalism, in order to grow and be effective members of the future Indonesian society, the statement added.



Qatar Airways Group CEO, engineer Badr Mohamed al-Meer, receives the 'Airline of the Year' title from Skytrax.

Qatar Airways is Skytrax 'Airline of the Year' for record eighth time

Qatar Airways has been awarded the 'Airline of the Year' title by Skytrax, returning to the top for an unprecedented eighth time, a statement said yesterday. The 5-star carrier was also recognised with three additional awards: 'World's Best Business Class', 'World's Best Business Class Airline Lounge', and 'Best Airline in the Middle East'.

Recently, Qatar Airways' home and hub, Hamad International Airport (HIA), was named 'World's Best Airport' in 2024 by Skytrax for the third time. HIA also received the award for 'Best Airport in the Middle East' for the tenth time, and Qatar Duty Free received 'World's Best Airport Shopping' for the second consecutive year. This is the first time that an airline, an airport, and the airport's retail have been crowned



as 'World's Best' in all three Skytrax categories.

This year is the eighth time since 2011 that Qatar Airways has been awarded Airline of the Year. The Skytrax World Airline Awards, widely regarded as 'the Oscars of the aviation industry',

represent the pinnacle of excellence in aviation. Commenting on this achievement, Qatar Airways Group CEO engineer Badr Mohamed al-Meer, said: "This is a proud moment for Qatar Airways. I am honoured to share this award with my dedicated team. This award is a testimony to our relentless commitment to providing unparalleled service and innovation. We look forward to continuing to serve our customers with the highest level of excellence."

Skytrax CEO Edward Plaisted remarked: "Qatar Airways' impressive achievement of winning the Airline of the Year title for the eighth time, alongside three additional top accolades, is a true testament to the airline's high standards and dedication. Qatar Airways was and will continue to be customers' favourite airline."

LuLu Hypermarket unveils Half Pay Back promotion

LuLu Hypermarket Qatar will launch today its popular 'Half Pay Back' promotion. Running until July 6, the promotion offers 'remarkable deals' on a vast array of fashion items, including ready-made garments, sarees, churidars, footwear, and ladies' bags, a statement said.

During the promotional period, shoppers who spend QR100 will instantly receive a QR50 free shopping voucher. Renowned brands such as Louis Philippe, Allen Solly, Peter England, Lee, Wrangler, Crocs, Doc & Mark, Sketchers, Reebok, Arrow, Eten, Cortigiani, De Backers, John Louise, Killer, Sunnex, Twills, Oxemberg, Sin, Tom Smith, Ruff, Marco Donatelli, Van Heusen, and many more are included in the promotion.

Throughout the campaign, LuLu Hypermarkets will present a wide spectrum of products across various categories at attractive prices. In addition to the 'Half Pay Back' promotion, customers can benefit from the ongoing QR10/15/20/30 promotion, which offers essentials such as fresh foods, groceries, health and beauty products, selected household items, accessories, and more. This promotion is valid until July 7.

Customers also have the chance to participate in



the 'Shop and Win' promotion, which offers the opportunity to win a QR1mn cash prize/ LuLu gift vouchers, and 1mn Happiness loyalty points. The grand draw will take place on August 5 at the LuLu Hypermarket on D-Ring Road, the statement added.

Qatar entices stopover passengers

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

Visit Qatar is enticing travellers to make the most of their layovers in the country with a summer campaign highlighting diverse attractions. Through captivating social media posts and a new video series, Visit Qatar invites stopover passengers to discover the country's unique blend of modern architecture, cultural treasures, and warm hospitality.

Among the highlighted destinations include Souq Waqif, a bustling marketplace offering a sensory feast with traditional crafts, antiques, and an array of culinary delights; Old Doha Port's Mina District, a colourful historical area filled with traditional architecture and charm; and The Pearl Island, an upscale waterfront destination boasting luxurious residences, waterfront restaurants, and shopping opportunities.

Another video highlights the beauty and the various offerings of Old Souq Al Wakra, curated for those who want to spend a day trip. The Visit Qatar video also features the Katara – the Cultural Village, a cultural hub showcasing art, music, and traditional Qatari heritage; the world-class National Museum of Qatar, showcasing the country's rich history and culture; and the Museum of Islamic Art, a stunning



A Visit Qatar video showcases Qatar's iconic architecture and cultural offerings.

architectural masterpiece housing a significant collection.

A video also showcases Doha Beach Club at West Bay, one of Doha's iconic beach destinations offering a range of outdoor and other water sports and activities, as well as the various water parks in the country. Visit Qatar's latest and recently launched tourism initiative, 'Your Summer Starts Here', features Bahraini influencer and filmmaker Omar Farooq and Qatari

athlete Mutaz Barshim experiencing Qatar's curated summer offerings. Viewers are taken on a journey showcasing the country's best, from world-class shopping malls to pristine beaches and five-star dining experiences.

A partnership between Visit Qatar and Qatar Airways offers stopover flight packages in Doha, designed to maximise the stopover experience. These packages include 24-hour check-in facilities and customisable add-on options like airport assistance, transfers, and curated tours.

The campaign also highlights Qatar's vibrant culinary scene, featuring popular restaurants and traditional dishes such as the iconic Um Ali dessert served at Sheraton Grand Doha Resort and Convention Hotel. Even at Hamad International Airport, Visit Qatar noted that travellers could enjoy a seamless and relaxing stopover experience. The campaign features the airport's diverse retail and dining options, ensuring that even a brief transit is filled with enjoyable activities: "Who said transits have to be boring? Take a break from the hustle and bustle of travel to indulge in some retail therapy and delicious dining options."

According to Visit Qatar, such tourism offerings during this period allow travellers to explore the country's hidden gems and create lasting memories.



The campaign features the famous Um Ali dessert.





Kahramaa launches survey to gauge customer sentiment, obtain feedback

To gauge the quality of services, the Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation (Kahramaa) has announced the launch of a comprehensive customer satisfaction survey for 2024.

The findings of the annual, broad-based survey, to be held until October, would allow Kahramaa to stay abreast with prevalent customer sentiments and seek feedback in its pursuit to enhance and improve the customer experience.

Kahramaa has collaborated with Nielsen Consultancy, which will conduct the survey on behalf of the corporation.

The survey shall cover all customer segments: residential, commercial, corporate, and bulk/industrial customers.

The assessment also seeks to garner insight from the licensed electrical consultants and contractors, who represent customers in the building permit and service connection processes, to obtain a measure of Kahramaa's efficiency in these critical areas.

Engineer Yousef al-Jaidah, manager of Kahramaa's Planning and Quality Department, underscored the significance of the customer satisfaction survey as a cornerstone in guiding the corporation's strategies and projects.

He reaffirmed Kahramaa's commitment to continuously improve its services, providing a seamless, top-quality experience for all customers in line with Qatar's dynamic development and regional/global leadership in public services.

"Throughout the creation of this survey, we strived to establish a robust assessment system capable of measuring satisfaction levels in relation to all key services offered by Kahramaa, including our customer service centres, call centre, online platforms, mobile app, and other avenues of service delivery," al-Jaidah said.

"Our aim is to acquire a holistic understanding of our success in meeting customer expectations and delivering services of the highest standard," he added.

Philippine ambassador speaks on importance of safe, secure remittance

Philippine ambassador Lil-libeth V Pono (*pictured*) has highlighted the critical need for safe, secure, reliable, and cost-efficient remittance processes at a roundtable discussion on remittances, migration, and development at the UN House in Lusail.

The event, organised by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the embassy of Haiti in Qatar, marked the commemoration of the International Day of Family Remittances (IDFR).

Pono underlined the significant impact of remittances on individual beneficiaries and the destination countries' overall economies.

She stressed the importance of financial literacy to ensure that remittances reach their intended recipients and contribute to long-term financial security and growth.

The IDFR, a key mechanism of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, recognises the crucial economic role of remittances and acknowledges the sacrifices often made by migrant workers and their families.

The United Nations emphasises that the IDFR "highlights the economic impact of remittances on households, communities, and nations, and recognises the sacrifice, separation and generosity often involved".



Qatar and Kiribati sign civil aviation accord



Qatar has signed an air services agreement with Kiribati, following bilateral discussions held yesterday between the civil aviation authorities of the two countries. Qatar's delegation was led by acting General Civil Aviation Authority president Mohamed bin Faleh al-Hajri, while the Kiribati delegation was headed by Deputy Minister of Information, Communication, and Transport Metikitike Mouti. The discussions aimed to explore ways to enhance co-operation in air transport and address various topics of mutual interest in civil aviation. - QNA

Qatar Charity, Islamic Relief ink pact to launch joint initiatives in Pakistan

In a move that reflects their commitment to improving response to climate change and building resilience in the most vulnerable communities, Qatar Charity (QC) and Islamic Relief have signed a co-operation agreement to launch joint initiatives in Pakistan.

The agreement signed between Qatar Charity's office in Pakistan and Islamic Relief encompasses enhancing capabilities to adapt to climate change and implementing joint programmes in the field of disaster mitigation.

The director of the QC office in Pakistan, Amin Abdulrahman, said in a statement that climate change is a global challenge that requires an immediate response.

He said that the QC has adopted joint initiatives with Islamic Relief to confront issues of poverty, provide humanitarian aid, and promote human rights and social justice in Pakistan.

The director of the Islamic Relief Office in Pakistan, Asif Shirazi, said that the agreement with the QC will enhance

Pakistan's ability to adapt to climate challenges and enhance disaster preparedness.

Qatar Charity has been taking effort to help reduce the effects and repercussions of disasters and humanitarian crises in Pakistan.

During the recent floods that afflicted Pakistan, the QC was present on the ground, providing urgent relief.

It is also working to implement water and sanitation projects in Afghan refugee areas. - QNA



Officials at the ceremony honouring the School Wellness Programme participants.

Parents urged to protect kids from summer heat, heat-related issues

With schools closed and children at home for the long summer break, the Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) has urged parents and caregivers to ensure that children are not exposed to excessive heat and humidity, to protect them from heat-related illnesses that are more common during the summer months.

An expert has urged parents to exercise caution and refrain from exposing children to high temperature or humidity if they do outdoor activities with them.

The director of Hamad Trauma Centre's Hamad Injury Protection Programme (HIPP), Dr Rafael Consunji, said: "Children are at an increased risk of developing heat-related illness if exposed to high temperatures, because they don't adjust to changes in environmental conditions as quickly as most healthy adults do."

"Therefore, it is very important for parents or caregivers to ensure children's outdoor play time is when temperature and humidity are low, or they can let children play in air-conditioned or shaded area," he said.

Dr Consunji said parents need to be vigilant and monitor their children while taking them outdoors, explaining that while the hot weather can be a danger for everyone, for children the dangers are magnified.

He added that a child's temperature can rise five times faster than that of an adult's, especially on hot days.

Common signs and symptoms of heat stress and heat-related illnesses include:

- An elevated body temperature
- Cool/clammy skin
- Irritability
- Increased thirst/sweating
- Headache, and
- Feeling faint, dizzy or weak.

If unrecognised or neglected, these signs and symptoms can lead to more severe heat exhaustion and stroke.

The Hamad Medical Corporation has issued advisories urging to parents and caregivers to follow heat prevention precautions such as ensuring the children wear lightweight, light-coloured and loose-fitting clothing, using a timer to limit their time under direct heat to 30 minutes or less, and drink cold fluids every 15 minutes while outside. - QNA

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within 15 days from the publication of this notice.

Participants of School Wellness Programme honoured at event

The Preventive Health Department under the Wellness Section of the Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) held the closing and award ceremony to recognise schools that participated in the wellness programme for the academic year 2023-2024.

Implemented for the second year in collaboration with the School Health Section under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE), the wellness programme was aimed at enhancing students' quality of life physically, mentally and socially.

This covered raising awareness about healthy eating habits, general exercise recommendations, improved sleeping patterns and effective stress management for achieving wellness or well-being as well as creating a healthy academic environment for students.

Honoured on the occasion were wellness centres located at health centres in Al Khor, Al Ruwais, Umm Slal, Leabaib, Rawdat Al Khail, Muaither, and Al Wajba for their efforts in promoting wellness programmes in schools, physicians and fitness coaches, school nurses and co-ordinators, and student winners of drawing and essay competitions that have been conducted.

The closing ceremony at Al Sadd Health Centre featured keynote addresses by programme manager and Wellness for Community Interventions head Dr Abdulhameed al-Khenji, Wellness for Clinical Interventions head Dr Hissa al-Muraikhi, and Wellness Community Intervention co-ordinator Dr Eiman Abu Elshwarib.

The initiative covered 15 government schools from the primary, secondary and higher secondary categories.



Youth centres to hold diverse summer activities

A number of youth centres under the Ministry of Sports and Youth have launched their summer programmes featuring a variety of sports and creative activities throughout holidays.

Speaking to local Arabic daily *Arrayah*, managers of a number of youth centres explained that these

activities suit various age categories of young people, with a focus on enhancing their creative capabilities.

Hamad al-Muhammadi, manager of Al Thakhira Youth Centre, said its summer programme, from July 1 to September 1 will include various activities and events including esports tournaments. In co-operation

with Qatar Sports For All Federation, training will be organised for the centre's members in different sport events.

The external activities include a visit to Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum, and a kayaking trip. The centre will also organise two training courses on the etiquette of Ma-

jilis (lounge gatherings), and the Qatari Arda (folk dance).

Al-Muhammadi pointed out that the centre gives special focus to engage people with special needs in its programmes and to co-operate with the entities concerned in this regard. The centre will also organise a number of lectures on cyber

security and the safe use of the Internet. Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, manager of Barzan Youth Centre, said a variety of programmes for boys and girls will be held from July 1-August 10, including workshops, camps, trips and training courses. These include around 70% entertainment, 15%

values and ethics and 15% focus on acquiring skills. There will be a special focus on football, swimming, taekwondo, and some religious lectures as well. The centre will also have some programmes to engage those with special needs to enhance their skills and capabilities in various fields.

Doha College installs eco-friendly seating

Doha College has installed innovative seating inspired by the popular British TV series *The Wombles* and donated by Environmental Street Furniture (ESF) in collaboration with the British Embassy Doha.

This partnership brings innovative, eco-friendly furniture to the British International School's Al Wajba campus, emphasising the importance of sustainability and environmental stewardship in education, a statement said yesterday.

Since 2014, Doha College has been a pioneer in environmental education in Qatar, being the first school in the country to adopt the Eco-School Programme. The school's commitment to sustainability was recognised in 2016 with the prestigious Green Flag status by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), the world's largest organisation of its kind.

The Green Flag status was renewed in 2017 and 2018 under the new national operator, Qatar Green Building Council (QGBC). That same year, the Primary School secured its own Green Flag status. Both of Doha College's Primary and Secondary schools have upheld this recognition through a series of



eco-friendly initiatives. Alan Lowry, CEO of Environmental Street Furniture, said: "Among this collection included our Wellington Solar Bench and our Al-Derney Planter Bench, two innovative seating options promoting the importance of sustainability through solar technology and recycling post-consumer waste into useful products to be reused and enjoyed."

The Wombles, a British television series created in 1973, is known for its characters' environmental activism. These characters, created by Elisabeth Beresford, are renowned for

their efforts in collecting and repurposing rubbish to help the planet. Originally introduced in children's novels, they gained widespread popularity through a BBC television series and music by Mike Batt. Their motto, 'Make Good Use of Bad Rubbish', is a testament to their commitment to sustainability.

The Wellington Solar Bench, features advanced solar technology and amenities, including Wi-Fi capability and multiple smartphone charging options. It is a versatile addition to Doha College's Al Attiyah Adventure Playpark, the statement added.

Medics aim to screen thousands of Gaza children for malnutrition

Reuters
Deir al-Balah

Medics in Gaza said yesterday they were working to step up screening of young children for severe malnutrition amid fears that hunger is spreading as people flee to new areas.

Aid group International Medical Corps (IMC) and partners are planning to reach more than 200,000 children under five-years-old as part of a "Find and Treat" campaign over coming months, one of its doctors, Munawwar Said, told Reuters by phone.

"With the displacement, communities are settling in new locations that do not have access to clean water, or there is not adequate access to food," he said. "We fear there are more cases being missed." Over the weekend, families were already coming into an IMC clinic in the central city of Deir al-Balah, opened after the agency said it had to shut down two centres in the southern city of Rafah due to insecurity.

Five-year-old Jana Ayad had weighed just 9 kilograms when she arrived, suffering from diarrhoea and vomiting, Nutrition Officer Raghdah Ibrahim Qeshta told Reuters as she carefully held the child.

"My daughter was dying in front of me," said Nasma Ayad as she sat next to the bed. "I didn't know what to do." Jana had started putting on some weight after treatment, medics said, but she was still painfully thin with her ribs showing as



Jana Ayad, a malnourished Palestinian girl, lies on a bed as her mother sits next to her at the International Medical Corps field hospital, amid the Israel-Hamas conflict, in Deir al-Balah in the southern Gaza Strip.

she lay listlessly in her bunny pyjamas.

Staff can gauge nutrition levels by measuring the circumference of children's arms. During a Reuters cameraman's short visit at least two of the measurements were in the yellow band, indicating a risk of malnutrition. IMC data so far shows the most vulnerable are babies and infants up to two-years-old.

A group of UN-led aid agencies estimates that around 7% of Gazan children may be acutely malnourished, compared with 0.8% before the Israel-Hamas conflict began in the first week of October.

Until now the worst of severe hunger has been in the

north, with a UN-backed report warning of imminent famine in March. But aid workers worry it could spread to central and southern areas due to the upheaval around Rafah that has displaced more than 1mn people and constrained supply flows through southern corridors. More than 37,600 Palestinians have been killed during Israel's military offensive in Gaza, according to Gaza's health ministry.

Israel began the operation after Hamas-led fighters stormed Israel in the first week of October. It says it has expanded efforts to facilitate aid flows into Gaza and blames international aid agencies for distribution problems inside the enclave.

GCC underlines commitment to uphold right to health

The Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries have reaffirmed their steadfast commitment to ensuring the right to health for all individuals within their territories, based on principles of non-discrimination and the provision of health services that meet the diverse needs of their communities.

This statement was delivered by Qatar's Permanent Representative to the UN Office in Geneva HE Hend bint Abdulrahman al-Muftah, on behalf of the GCC, in her capacity as chairperson of the Gulf Group, during the "Interactive Dialogue on the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health," held as part of the 56th session of the Human Rights Council. The GCC countries emphasised that their approach to dealing with drug abuse and harm reduction stems from their duty to protect public health, social stability, and the well-being of their



citizens. They highlighted that the development and implementation of laws are based on the cultural, social and legal contexts of each country, exercising their sovereign rights. The statement stressed that any discussions in this regard must align primarily with national

priorities and legislative frameworks.

The GCC also expressed their eagerness to continue dialogue and co-operation to enhance efforts aimed at achieving the highest possible standard of health. (QNA)

Singapore FM meets Qatar's envoy

Singapore's Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan met with Qatar's ambassador Saoud bin Jassim al-Jufairi. The meeting discussed bilateral relations. (QNA)



UNRWA chief urges pushback against efforts to disband Palestinian agency

Reuters
Geneva

The head of the United Nations Palestinian refugee agency (UNRWA) yesterday called on partners to fight back against efforts by Israel to have the organisation disbanded as it provides humanitarian assistance to Gaza and across the region.

"Israel has long been critical of the agency's mandate. But it now seeks to end UNRWA's operations, dismissing the agency's status as a United Nations entity supported by an overwhelming majority of member states," UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini said at a meeting of the agency's advisory commission in Geneva.

"If we do not push back, other UN entities and international organisations will be next, further undermining our multilateral system."

Lazzarini said the agency was being subjected to a "concerted effort" to dismantle it, including through legislative initiatives threatening to evict the agency from its compound and labelling UNRWA as a 'terrorist' or-

ganisation. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has for years called for UNRWA to be dismantled, accusing it of anti-Israeli incitement. Last month, Israel's parliament, the Knesset, passed the preliminary reading of a bill aimed at designating UNRWA as a 'terrorist' organisation.

The Israeli diplomatic mission in Geneva dismissed Lazzarini's statement yesterday.

Lazzarini also said the agency, which has provided essential aid to Gazans throughout Israel's eight-month offensive, was "staggering under the weight of relentless attacks".

"In Gaza, the agency has paid a terrible price: 193 UNRWA personnel have been killed," he said. "More than 180 installations have been damaged or destroyed, killing at least 500 people seeking United Nations protection...Our premises have been used for military purposes by Israel."

Several countries halted their funding to UNRWA following accusations by Israel that some of the agency's staff were involved in the October first week Hamas storming of Israel that triggered the Gaza war.

Ship off Yemen coast reports 'explosion nearby'

Reuters
Dubai

A merchant vessel in the Arabian Sea reported an explosion in close proximity to it yesterday, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UK-MTO) said.

UKMTO said the crew was reported safe and the vessel was proceeding to its next port of call.

The Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Joint Maritime Information Center (JMIC) later identified the vessel as Liberian-flagged container MSC Sarah V, saying it was attacked by a missile while navigating the Arabian Sea but was not hit. The ship was sailing 246 nautical miles southeast of Yemen's Nishtun. The ship reported a missile landing in the water approximately 50 metres off the starboard side of the ship, JMIC said.

"The vessel was likely attacked due to perceived Israeli association," JMIC's note added.

Yemen's Houthi group has been launching drone and missile strikes in shipping lanes since November, saying that it acts in solidarity with Palestinians in Israel's war in Gaza. In dozens of attacks, the Houthis have sunk two vessels, seized another and killed at least three seafarers.

Risk of all-out Middle East war grows daily: German minister

Reuters
Dubai

Germany is extremely concerned about rising violence on Israel's border with Lebanon and the growing risk of a full-blown regional conflict, Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said on a visit to the region yesterday.

Speaking at a security conference, Baerbock also warned Israel, that it could "lose itself" in the war against Hamas and that

rising anger at the plight of civilians in Gaza undermined Israel's security.

Fears are growing that a war that has already killed tens of thousands in Gaza could spill into neighbouring countries.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu signalled on Sunday that Israel could move more troops to the north, where fighting against the Hezbollah militia has escalated on the border with Lebanon. Hezbollah began trading fire with Israel on October 8, a day after its Palestinian ally



German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock.

Hamas, which administers Gaza, stormed southern Israel. Tens of

thousands have fled both sides of the border.

"We are extremely concerned about the increase in violence at the northern border. I will pay a visit to Beirut tomorrow again exactly for this reason," Baerbock said, according to prepared remarks.

"Together with our partners, we are working hard on finding solutions that can prevent more suffering. The risk of an unintended escalation and of all-out war is growing by the day." As in other Western countries, the war

in Gaza has stirred popular opposition as the Palestinian death toll - now over 37,600 - has mounted, and Chancellor Olaf Scholz's government has sharpened its rhetoric about Israel's conduct.

Baerbock highlighted the humanitarian situation in Gaza, saying at least 17,000 children there were orphaned or separated from their parents. She flagged reports of human rights violations including the torture of detainees, and extremist settlers driving Palestinians from their

homes in the West Bank. Images from Gaza have sparked disbelief, sadness and anger, she warned.

Israel's campaign in Gaza was triggered when Hamas-led fighters stormed southern Israel in the first week of October.

The Israeli military has said it is investigating allegations of mistreatment of detainees. A number of countries, including the United States, have imposed sanctions on violent Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank and urged Israel to do more to stop the violence.

Tensions mount ahead of SA coalition govt formation

AFP
Johannesburg

South Africa's weakened African National Congress (ANC) denounced yesterday "outrageous demands" for cabinet positions by its coalition partners in documents leaked to the press amid negotiations to form a government.

President Cyril Ramaphosa, 71, who has been re-elected for a second full term, will lead what his ANC calls a government of national unity after losing its outright majority in the May 29 general election.

The storied ANC of the late Nelson Mandela has governed South Africa since the advent of democracy in 1994 but only scored 40% of the vote last month. The ANC "notes with concern that some parties have been making outlandish and outrageous demands for specific cabinet positions in the media," the party said in a statement.

Ramaphosa faces having to balance demands for key ministerial posts from his party and its new allies, as well as mediating diverging views to agree a common policy agenda

In recent days, local media have reported tensions in negotiations between the ANC and the largest opposition party, the Democratic Alliance (DA), which won 87 parliamentary seats compared to the ANC's 159.

Ramaphosa faces having to balance demands for key ministerial posts from his party and its new allies, as well as mediating diverging views to agree a common policy agenda on the economy and other pressing matters.

But almost a month after the vote, no official communication has been made on the number of portfolios that will go to the new parties in government.

The head of state is expected to announce an "inclusive" cabinet in the coming days.

The national unity government has 10 parties in total, including the DA, the Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party and other smaller groups.

A document, apparently from the DA and showing its letterhead outlining a list of preferred cabinet positions, has circulated on social media, stirring debate among South Africans.

"It is... reasonable and fair that the DA should have representation across all cabinet clusters. To speed matters along, we set out here our preferred portfolios," the document reads.

The list includes the energy, transport, justice, home affairs and foreign ministries, among others.

"Negotiating through leaking demands to the media is an act of bad faith and this practice will not help the cause of any party," the ANC said.

Iran election campaign rally

Supporters attend an election campaign rally by Iranian presidential candidate and conservative former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili in the capital Tehran, yesterday, ahead of the upcoming Iranian presidential election.



DISTRESS Floods, landslides kill 24 in Ivory Coast

Floods and landslides killed at least 24 people in 10 days in Abidjan, Ivory Coast's largest city, authorities said yesterday after an unusually intense start to the rainy season. AFP reported from Abidjan.

Rain around four times heavier than normal fell on the West African nation's economic capital over several days in that period, causing spectacular rises in water levels and landslides. The National Office for Civil Protection (ONPC) reported 24 deaths after "torrential rains from Thursday 13 to Saturday 22 June", warning of the risk of collapsed buildings. Two more people were missing after being "swept away by the waters", the ONPC statement added. It updated a toll given by the fire service on June 15, which said that eight people had died after the exceptionally heavy downpours. About a quarter of the precipitation expected over the entire three-month rainy season from May to July fell in 24 hours, the national meteorological service Sodexam said.

In the commune of Yopougon, Sodexam recorded 214 millimetres of rain in a day. The normal level is 50 millimetres (two inches). Torrential rains followed by devastating floods are a regular occurrence in Abidjan, home to nearly 6mn people.

UNREST South Sudan attack sparked by cattle raid kills 17

A revenge attack triggered by a cattle raid earlier this month has killed at least 17 people in northern South Sudan and forced oil workers to evacuate from the Toma South oil field, a local official said yesterday. Reuters reported from Nairobi. Cattle raiding linked to competition for scarce resources is one of the main triggers of conflict between ethnic groups in South Sudan, which is awash with weapons after decades of war. The fighting began on Saturday in a Khat Elnar village in the Ruweng Administrative Area.





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Zulal Wellness Resort launches Genomic Testing

The region's pioneering holistic wellness destination taps into the science of DNA testing for a highly personalised approach to wellbeing

Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som, the first and largest full immersion wellness resort in the Middle East, introduces genomic wellness. Further strengthening its commitment to sustainable health, this new service ensures even higher levels of personalisation from the resort's wellness retreats and lifestyle programmes to holistically address the challenges of modern living.

As the first wellness resort in the world to blend the holistic wisdom of Traditional Arabic Islamic Medicine (TAIM) and the health expertise established by Thai wellness brand Chiva-Som International, Zulal Wellness Resort is dedicated to providing guests with tailored wellness programmes designed to meet their unique health and wellness goals.

The addition of genomic testing provides guests with unprecedented insights into their unique genetic code, enabling a deeper understanding of how lifestyle, environmental and nutritional factors can impact their short and long-term health.

Zulal Wellness Resort offers two genomic tests, a Vital and a Longevity option:

The Vital genomic test helps guests explore the depth of their nutrigenetic profile – which is to say, how genes determine the effects nutrients have on the body and health. This can be key in supporting their journey to achieve fitness objectives, athletic performance goals, or to simply feel more energised and focused. The report reveals in-depth insights into an individual's health, while providing risk assessments of specific diseases.

It is important to note that the report does not test for the risk of chronic conditions but instead assists in identifying possible leading factors; for example, some conditions, such as diabetes, can serve as a precursor or risk factor for other chronic diseases, such as heart disease and strokes. By understanding a guest's

genetic predispositions, Zulal Wellness Resort's expert consultants can further tailor diet and exercise routines for effective weight control and optimal nutrition, as well as identify proactive dietary and lifestyle steps to reduce potential risk of health concerns in the future.

In addition to nutrient and lifestyle genomic testing services, the Longevity package offers chronic disease risk assessment. Early intervention and prevention are key to maintaining optimal health, and genetic variants that are associated with an increased risk for common chronic conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and cancer can be identified by analysing DNA.

As well as all the inclusions in the Vital package, Longevity includes reports on susceptibility to specific chronic diseases and inheritable conditions, as well as drug metabolism to guide potential treatment choices. The test's identification of sensitivities to allergens and pollutants in a client's environment aids the creation of a healthier living environment for the long-term.

Through a non-invasive testing method, guests provide a saliva swab before or during their stay, which is then processed in a specialist laboratory with the results returned within six weeks, revealing valuable insights into the health and wellness requirements of each guest.

Upon receiving the report, Zulal Wellness Resort's health advisors engage in thorough consultations with each guest to create a personalised retreat tailored to their unique findings. This genomic experience comprises result interpretation and personalised fitness regimen recommendations, with insights into associated benefits and treatments. With this valuable information, Zulal Wellness Resort's experts collaborate with in-house nutritionists to design an optimal diet for guests, taking into account specific individual nutrigenomic details, food sensitivities and intolerances from the genomic report.

For more information or reservations, email Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som at reservations@zulal.com, call +974 4477 6500 or visit www.zulal.com

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CRIME

Three injured as man attacks school bus in China

A man holding what appeared to be a knife attacked a bus used by a Japanese school in Suzhou, China, yesterday, seriously wounding a Chinese woman and injuring a Japanese woman and her child, an official at the Japanese consulate in Shanghai said. The Chinese woman, who was aboard the bus, is in critical condition, while the injuries sustained by the Japanese woman and her preschooler child, who were waiting for the bus at a stop, are not life-threatening, the official said. Asked whether strained ties between Japan and China could be behind his action, the official declined to comment.

CLAIM

China coastguard ‘drives away’ Japanese boats from islands

China’s coastguard yesterday said it took “necessary control measures” against and “drove away” four Japanese fishing vessels and several patrol boats which entered the “territorial waters” of Diaoyu Islands between June 20-24. The waters around the islands are disputed and claimed by both China and Japan, which calls them the Senkaku Islands. The two sides have faced off in the waters, deploying patrol boats and urging the other to leave the area. “We urge Japan to immediately cease all illegal activities in the area and ensure similar incidents do not recur,” a spokesperson from China’s coastguard said in a statement.

PROPOSAL

Taiwan president seeks to overturn controversial reform

Taiwan’s President Lai Ching-te yesterday signed into law a controversial reform expanding parliament’s powers, but vowed to seek a ruling from the island’s top court to try to overturn it. Proponents of the expansion say it is needed to curb corruption, but critics fear the laws could weaken Taiwan’s democracy against the influence of China - which claims the island as part of its territory. Taiwan’s president is part of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which advocates for the island’s sovereignty. But it lost the parliamentary majority in January elections, spelling trouble for his administration.

VERDICT

Australia’s ‘bicycle bandit’ gets 35-year jail sentence

An Australian bank robber known as the “bicycle bandit” got a 35-year jail sentence yesterday - though he reportedly has advanced cancer and is seeking an imminent voluntary assisted death. Kym Allen Parsons, 73, admitted to a string of aggravated robbery charges, documents from the South Australian Supreme Court in Adelaide showed. Parsons earned his moniker for fleeing some of his hold-ups on a bicycle. Justice Sandi McDonald yesterday ordered him to serve 35 years, with a minimum period of 28 years before being eligible for parole, court papers showed. He carried out the robberies over a decade until 2014.

South Korea battery plant blaze kills 22 workers

Reuters
Hwaseong, South Korea

A lithium battery factory in South Korea was set on fire after multiple batteries exploded yesterday, killing 22 workers, most of them Chinese nationals, fire officials said.

The fire and a series of explosions ripped through the factory run by primary battery manufacturer Aricell in Hwaseong, an industrial cluster southwest of the capital Seoul. The victims likely succumbed to extremely toxic gas within seconds of the blaze getting out of control, the officials said. It was unclear what caused the explosions and the fire was largely extinguished in about six hours.

Eighteen Chinese workers, two South Koreans and one Laotian were among the dead. The nationality of the other deceased worker was yet to be confirmed, Kim Jin-young, an official at the Hwaseong fire service, told reporters, citing information from company officials.

The blaze was first reported at 10.31am (0131 GMT) yesterday after a series of battery cells exploded inside a warehouse of 35,000 batteries, Kim said.

A journalist saw firefighters moving up to six bodies out of the factory. Due to the intensity of the blaze, rescuers were finding

it difficult to identify the dead, Kim said.

Two people were being treated for major burns, officials at the scene said.

Live TV footage showed firefighters spraying the damaged steel and concrete building. Parts of the upper level had collapsed, and large chunks of the building looked like they had been blown out into the street by explosions.

Aerial footage showed massive white smoke clouds billowing from the structure and explosions rolling through the building.

Gyeonggi province fire official Cho Sun-ho said most of the foreign workers killed were temporary hires, likely unfamiliar with the structure of the building. Smoke and the fire blaze spread within 15 seconds and the victims likely succumbed after taking one or two breaths, he said. Kim Jae-ho, fire and disaster prevention professor at Daejeon University, said the fire had probably spread too quickly for workers to escape. “Battery materials such as nickel are easily flammable,” he said. “So often, there is not enough time to respond, compared to a fire caused by other materials.”

South Korea’s President Yoon Suk-yeol visited the scene of the accident. Interior Minister Lee Sang-min called on local authorities to take steps to prevent any hazardous chemicals from contaminating the surrounding area.

Four dead as heavy rains pummel China



A car is stranded on a flooded street following heavy rains in Changsha, in central China’s Hunan province, yesterday. Mountain floods in central China have killed four people and left one other missing, state media reported yesterday, with torrential downpours expected to continue across much of the country in the coming days.

Beijing using ‘illegal force’ to disrupt resupply mission: Manila

Reuters
Manila

The Philippines’ defence chief yesterday said China used “aggressive and illegal force” to disrupt a resupply mission in the South China Sea. He added last week’s maritime incident, which injured a sailor, was neither a misunderstanding nor an accident.

“We are not downplaying the incident,” Defence Secretary Gilberto Teodoro told a media briefing after the chairman of the Philippine maritime council said on Friday that last week’s maritime clash was probably a misunderstanding or an accident.

A Philippine sailor suffered serious injury

after what its military described as “intentional-high speed ramming” by the Chinese Coast Guard, aiming to disrupt a resupply mission for troops stationed on the Second Thomas Shoal on June 17.

Chinese Coast Guard personnel carrying knives and spears looted firearms and “deliberately punctured” Philippine boats involved in the mission, the Philippine military said.

China’s foreign ministry has disputed the Philippines’ account, with a spokesperson saying last Thursday that the necessary measures taken by the coast guard were lawful and professional. “We see the latest incident in Ayungin not as a misunderstanding or an accident. It is a deliberate act of the Chinese officialdom to prevent us from completing our mission,”

Teodoro said, using the local name for the Second Thomas Shoal.

“It was an aggressive and illegal use of force. We, however, continue to find peaceful solutions to this issue,” Teodoro said.

Teodoro said the Philippines will continue to resupply its troops stationed on a rusting warship grounded on Second Thomas Shoal, but it will not publicise schedules of missions, which he said do not require permission or consent from anyone.

In response to Teodoro’s remarks, the Chinese foreign ministry said yesterday the Philippines “should stop its infringement and provocation” and “work with China to safeguard peace and stability in the South China Sea”.

Cyberattacker hits Indonesia data centre, demands \$8mn ransom

A cyberattack on Indonesia’s national data centre compromised hundreds of government offices and caused long delays at the capital’s main airport, with the hacker demanding an \$8mn ransom, officials said yesterday. Long queues formed at immigration gates at Jakarta’s Soekarno-Hatta International Airport last week after systems went down in the attack, carried out using software developed by Russian ransomware outfit LockBit, an official from the communications ministry said. The attack “affected 210 institutions at the national and local levels,” senior official Samuel Abrijani Pangerapan said, adding a dark web hacker had demanded a \$8mn ransom. He added that immigration services were returning to normal yesterday morning and work was being done to restore other affected services. Authorities are still investigating the ransomware, known as Brain Cipher, which made government data inaccessible due to encryption, he said.

Japan feels the heat



Pedestrians walk down a street during heatwave conditions in Tokyo, Japan, yesterday.

N Korea sending more trash balloons: Seoul

AFP
Seoul

North Korea is sending more balloons likely to be carrying trash into the South, Seoul’s military said, continuing a tit-for-tat balloon war between the two Koreas.

Seoul’s joint chiefs of staff said that the North “is launching (suspected) trash balloons aimed at the South once again,” adding that the balloons were currently floating across the border.

“Citizens are advised to be cautious of falling debris. If you find any fallen balloons do not touch them and report them to the nearest military unit or police station,” it added.

Pyeongyang has already sent more than a thousand balloons carrying trash southward, as what it calls retaliation for balloons

carrying anti-regime propaganda floated into the North by activists south of the border.

An activist in the South confirmed on Friday that he had launched more balloons, with Pyongyang vowing to respond.

Seoul city authorities issued an alert to residents saying: “a trash balloon from North Korea has been confirmed to have entered Seoul’s airspace.”

Legally, South Korea cannot sanction activists sending balloons across the border due to a 2023 court ruling that bans it as an unjustifiable infringement on free speech.

Activist Park Sang-hak, who defected from North Korea and has been sending anti-regime leaflets north for years, said he floated 20 balloons laden with propaganda as well as flash drives with K-pop and television dramas across the border on Thursday last week.

Philippine rights activist cleared of last drugs charge

AFP
Manila

Philippine human rights campaigner Leila de Lima was cleared of all criminal charges yesterday, ending years of legal battles for one of the most vocal critics of former president Rodrigo Duterte and his deadly drug war.

The former senator and justice minister had spent a decade investigating “death squad” killings allegedly orchestrated by Duterte until she was arrested in 2017 and spent more than six years in prison.

“I am now completely free and vindicated. It’s very liberating,” an emotional de Lima told reporters as she emerged from the southern Manila courtroom.

The 64-year-old vowed that Duterte will not go scot-free for the drug war killings as well as her imprisonment.

“This is my message to the former president, Mr Duterte: Now it’s your turn to answer for your sins against the people.”

De Lima had been freed on bail in November last year, having earlier been cleared of the two other drugs charges.

The last case concerned allegations she took money from inmates inside the country’s largest prison to allow them to sell drugs while she was justice minister from 2010-2015. “The prosecution was not able to prove the guilt of all the accused beyond reasonable doubt,” regional trial court judge Gener Gito wrote in his verdict acquitting de Lima and four other defendants of illegal drug trading.

De Lima was a sitting senator when she was arrested in 2017 and spent more than six years in jail while on trial for three drug trafficking charges.

She described the cases as pay-back for her efforts to investigate Duterte’s drug war, first as head of the government’s independent human rights body, then as justice minister and during her term as a senator.

She had maintained that the charges, which carried a maximum penalty of life in prison, were fabricated to silence her from criticising Duterte’s narcotics crackdown that left thousands dead.

Multiple witnesses, including prison gang bosses, died or recanted their testimonies during the lengthy trials.

Also dismissed yesterday was a second charge alleging de Lima had persuaded a former employee to ignore a 2016 summons issued by the House of Representatives for a hearing on the trade of illegal drugs in Philippine prisons.

The ruling said de Lima had been denied her “right to a speedy trial” as guaranteed in the Philippine constitution, having spent 2,321 days in jail while on trial in a case where the maximum penalty if convicted is 180 days in prison.

That case was the only other remaining criminal proceeding against her, her lawyers said.

Before her arrest, de Lima spent a decade investigating Duterte’s drug war during his time as mayor of the southern city of Davao and early in his 2016-2022 presidency.

Thousands of drug suspects were killed by police and unknown gunmen in a campaign that became the centrepiece of Duterte’s 2016-2022 rule, a crackdown that critics described as state-sponsored extrajudicial killings and is now a subject of an investigation by the International Criminal Court.

De Lima said yesterday she will continue to help the tribunal in its probe.

Princess Anne in hospital with head injury

Reuters
London

Princess Anne, King Charles' younger sister, is in hospital after suffering a head injury on Sunday, Buckingham Palace said, adding the royal was expected to make a full recovery from the in-

cident which was believed to have involved a horse.
The palace said yesterday the 73-year-old, the only daughter of the late Queen Elizabeth, had suffered minor injuries and a concussion following the incident, and was now recovering at Southmead Hospital in Bristol, west England.
"She is recovering well, is in a

comfortable condition and is being kept in hospital as a precautionary measure for further observation," a Buckingham Palace spokesperson said.
The princess had been walking in the grounds of Gatcombe Park estate where her home is located when she suffered minor injuries to her head, a royal source said.

The source said there were horses in the vicinity and her medical team said the head injuries were consistent with impact from a horse's head or legs. The princess is expected to return home this week, but her upcoming engagements have been postponed and Anne will not fly to Canada as planned at the end of the week, the source said.

However, the official state visit of Japanese Emperor Naruhito and his wife, hosted by King Charles, will go ahead as planned.
Anne's hospitalisation is the latest health setback suffered by the British royals this year.
The king returned to public engagements in April as he undergoes treatment for cancer, while Kate,

the Princess of Wales and wife of heir Prince William, is having preventative chemotherapy. She was only well enough to make her first public appearance of the year earlier this month.
Polls repeatedly show Anne is one of the most popular members of the royal family, and is also credited with being the hardest working.

Modi calls for 'consensus' as parliament opens after polls

AFP
New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi appealed to an emboldened opposition for "consensus" yesterday, as parliament opened following an election setback that forced him into a coalition government for the first time in a decade.
Expected in the first session, which will run until July 3, is a preview of Modi's plans for his third term and the likely formal appointment of Rahul Gandhi as leader of the opposition - a post vacant since 2014.
Modi's first two terms in office followed landslide wins for his right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), allowing his government to drive laws through parliament with only cursory debate.
But now analysts expect the 73-year-old Modi to moderate his Hindu-nationalist agenda to assuage his coalition partners, focusing more on infrastructure, social welfare and economic reforms.

"To run the country, a consensus is of utmost importance", Modi said in a speech shortly before entering parliament, calling on the opposition to play a constructive role.
"People expect their representatives to debate and discuss issues which are important to the country... they don't expect disturbances or hindrances in the parliamentary proceedings," he said.
"People want substance, not slogans." Modi led lawmakers in taking the oath - as his cheering support-

ers thumped their desks in support, and opposition members waved the constitution in protest.
He said he was "proud to serve" India.
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Kiren Rijiju yesterday called for a "peaceful and productive" session, but Indian media said they expected lively debate with a far stronger opposition.
"All set to spar," one headline in the *Hindustan Times* read yesterday.
"Resurgent opposition set to push government," said the *Indian Express* front page.
Rahul Gandhi, 54, defied analyst expectations to help his Congress Party nearly double its parliamentary numbers, its best result since Modi was swept to power a decade ago. Parliamentary regulations require the opposition leader to come from a party that commands at least 10% of the lawmakers in the 543-seat lower house. The post has been vacant for 10 years because two dismal election results for Congress - once India's dominant party - left it short of that threshold.
Newly-elected lawmakers will take their oaths over the first two days. Many will be watching if two lawmakers elected from behind bars, bitter opponents of Modi, will be allowed to join. One is the Sikh separatist Amritpal Singh, a fire-brand preacher arrested last year after a month-long police manhunt in Punjab state. The other is Sheikh Abdul Rashid, a former state legislator in Kashmir. It is unclear if either will be granted bail to attend the ceremony in person.



People rush to climb a water tanker as it arrives to deliver drinking water during the ongoing water crisis in New Delhi, India, yesterday.

Minister goes on hunger strike demanding more water for Delhi

Reuters
New Delhi

Delhi city minister has started an indefinite hunger strike to demand more drinking water for India's capital, where taps in some of its poorest neighbourhoods are running nearly dry in the middle of searing heat.
"There are 2.8mn people in the city who are aching for just a drop of water," Delhi Water Minister Atishi said yesterday, the fourth day of her fast. Millions of Indians face water shortages every summer when water demand rises in farms, offices and homes against a limited supply, but a prolonged heatwave this year has worsened the shortfall, including in Delhi and the southern tech hub of Bengaluru.

Delhi relies on the Yamuna River that runs through the capital for most of its water needs but the river slows down during dry summer months, causing shortages that lead to protests and calls for better water conservation.
Atishi blamed the neighbouring farming state of Haryana for guzzling up a large share of river water. Haryana's government responded that it was Delhi's mismanagement that was causing water shortages. Experts said a federal-level review of decades-old water sharing pacts was needed to accommodate population growth. Delhi, a city of 20mn people, is one of the world's most densely populated capitals, where upscale neighbourhoods and manicured lawns are just a few miles away from unplanned working-class areas and slums.
But, in contrast to growing unplanned development over the years, the city's water al-

location from rivers has remained unchanged since 1994, said Depinder Kapur, the director of water programme at think tank Centre for Science and Environment.
"What was true 10-15 years ago is not true anymore. So, there is a situation of crisis and it's a distribution issue," he said.
The Delhi government is working on plans to improve the groundwater table by reviving lakes and storing water overflow from the Yamuna during the seasonal monsoon rains, but officials say the summer shortfall is difficult to tackle by these measures alone.
"Water crisis in Delhi is a year-long crisis because extreme temperatures are not going anywhere," said environmentalist Vimlendu Jha. "Delhi needs a comprehensive water management plan in which Yamuna can't be the only major source of water."

Maoists kill two security forces in Chhattisgarh

Indian Maoist insurgents killed two members of the security forces by blowing up a ration truck with a roadside bomb, police said yesterday, the latest clash in a decades-long conflict. The attack took place in the central state of Chhattisgarh on Sunday. "The Maoists triggered a heavy land mine blast targeting a truck loaded with rations", Sukma district police chief Kiran G Chavan said. "Two security personnel lost their lives." The guerrillas say they are fighting for the rural poor. India has deployed tens of thousands of security personnel to battle the Maoist rebels. Rebel operations have shrunk considerably over the past decade. The country has also pumped millions of dollars into infrastructure development in remote areas and claims to have confined the insurgency to 45 districts in 2023, down from 96 in 2010.

UK rivers in poor ecological health



A man watches as his dog swims in the River Thames in Richmond, west London, yesterday. Three-quarters of UK rivers were found to be in poor ecological health by citizen scientists who took samples from waterways across the UK. Thousands of people measured their local water quality between June 7 and 10, collecting 1,300 datasets as part of the Great UK WaterBlitz campaign - with the picture around London and the Thames river basin described as particularly dire.

Convicted UK nurse denies harming babies

Reuters
London

Former nurse Lucy Letby, convicted last year of murdering seven babies and trying to kill six others, told a court yesterday she had never harmed or intended to harm a child in her care.
Letby, 34, was found guilty last August of the multiple murders while she was working as a nurse in the neonatal unit of the Countess of Chester Hospital in Chester, northern England, between June 2015 and June 2016.
The former nurse is on trial at Manchester Crown Court charged with one count of attempted murder of a further baby girl, known as Child K, in February 2016. The original jury had been unable to reach a verdict on the allegation.

Giving evidence yesterday, Letby was asked by her defence lawyer Ben Myers if she had attempted to kill Child K.
"No," she replied, further denying she had intended to do the baby any harm.
Asked if she accepted she had ever intended harming any baby in her care given her convictions, Letby firmly replied: "No, I don't."
Child K was born prematurely at 25 weeks and was connected to a ventilator and other machines monitoring her heart rate and oxygen levels.
Shortly after the birth, while other staff were absent, the prosecution say senior doctor Ravi Jayaram entered the room where she was being looked after to find the baby's breathing tube dislodged, alarms which should have sounded had become disabled, and Letby standing there "doing nothing".

UK premier assures action on poll date scandal

Reuters
Edinburgh

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak yesterday said he would act on any findings of wrongdoing from an internal investigation into a damaging betting scandal that could punish him further at a July 4 election he is expected to lose.
His Conservative Party trails the opposition Labour Party by around 20 points in UK polls and Sunak's campaign has failed to take off amid a series of mis-steps, including his decision to leave D-Day commemorations early.

The campaign has been further damaged by revelations that several party officials and candidates are being investigated for allegedly betting on the date of the election before it was announced.
Sunak has said he was "incredibly angry" to hear of the allegations, which are being investigated by the Gambling Commission, and told reporters he was not aware of any other candidates being investigated.
"We have been in parallel conducting our own internal inquiries, and will of course act on any relevant findings or information," Sunak told broadcasters after a campaign event in Edinburgh.
Labour leader Keir Starmer crit-

icised Sunak's handling of events, saying it showed weakness.
"Sunak needs to show some leadership," he told reporters. "If these were my candidates...they'd be gone."
In Scotland, Labour hope to capitalise on the struggles of both the Conservatives and the pro-independence Scottish National Party (SNP), who are on their third leader in little over a year.
The SNP have dominated the Westminster parliament's Scottish seats since 2015, garnering support of pro-independence voters in the wake of a 2014 referendum where Scots voted to remain part of the United Kingdom by 55% to 45%.

But a police probe into the SNP's finances, Nicola Sturgeon's sudden resignation as leader last year and the implosion of her successor Humza Yousaf's administration in the devolved Scottish government this year have put that dominance in question.
Labour has also regained momentum in its former Scottish heartlands and polls show it level with or even ahead of the SNP for the first time in a decade.
The SNP manifesto says that if it wins a majority of Scottish seats, it will begin negotiations on independence, though both Sunak and Starmer have ruled out such talks.
At the launch of the Scottish

Conservative manifesto, Sunak aimed his speech almost entirely at the SNP and their attempts to pursue a second independence vote.
The Conservatives are trying to hang on to their six Scottish seats, where the SNP are their main rivals.
"The fourth of July is Scotland's chance... to put independence on the backburner for a generation," Sunak said.
"But that can only happen if the SNP are routed. If they do not just lose some seats, but the SNP lose big."
He also criticised the SNP and Labour's approach to the energy sector, saying the Conservatives

were the only way to protect North Sea oil.
The Conservatives lag behind in third place in Scotland, and could be on course for a historic defeat across the UK as a whole. Research by Ipsos Scotland found Sunak has a net negative approval rating of -64 points.
"We see Westminster politicians take campaign trips north of the border to dismiss the very idea that Scotland can have real, genuine influence at Westminster," SNP leader John Swinney said in a speech yesterday.
"Scotland's voice is still ignored and our democratic choices are still disrespected."

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GULF TIMES

Who profits from the soaring prices of cocoa ?

Though cocoa prices on the financial markets have soared, the rise is benefiting cocoa growers, bean processors, speculators and chocolatiers in unequal measure. In March, prices rocketed to more than \$10,000 a tonne in New York after a poor harvest in West Africa due to a combination of bad weather conditions and disease devastating ageing plantations. They have since fallen back from the peak, yet are still three times higher than last year.

In Ivory Coast and Ghana, the world's largest cocoa producers, prices are set by the authorities in October on the basis of the previous months. But by that point the harvests "have already been largely pre-sold", said Tancrede Voituriez of the French agricultural research and cooperation organisation CIRAD. This reduces the impact of cocoa price fluctuations — whether upwards and downwards.

As a result, small -scale producers, who generally earn barely enough to live on, did not immediately benefit from the surge.

That said, the authorities raised the price of the intermediate crop in April by 50% to between \$2,300 and \$2,500 per tonne — a modest rise compared to what the farmers could charge on the international exchanges. In countries with less regulated systems, such as Cameroon, Nigeria, Ecuador and Brazil, growers managed to pocket more from the trend. There, farmers have been allowed to sell their beans to buyers willing to approach the prices paid on the financial markets.

The fear is that there will be an excess of cocoa in three to five years' time causing prices to tumble back to earth

America's Cargill, Singapore's Olam - generally negotiate a large part of their supplies in advance. But some contracts have not been honoured, forcing them to scour for urgently needed cocoa at high cost and in some cases to slow down production. Barry Callebaut reported in early April that it had drawn more than usual from its cash reserves to finance bean purchases, but had enough cocoa on hand to meet demand. Other smaller intermediaries may find it difficult to advance the funds needed to adapt to the higher prices.

Yet there is one group of middlemen who would have been delighted at the price rises.

"The smugglers would have done very nicely there," Steve Wateridge of commodity firm Tropical Research Services told AFP.

He said black marketeers could have taken advantage of the system in Ivory Coast and Ghana by buying cocoa at slightly above the fixed prices and selling the beans on the open market in Togo, Guinea, Liberia or Sierra Leone.

Cocoa prices have risen because supply has fallen short of demand for the third year running, according to the International Cocoa Organisation. Investment funds that sensed the changing wind bet on higher prices, pocketing a profit in the process. But from January onwards, prices became very erratic, even beyond the liking of funds with a taste for speculation. Many investors withdrew from the market altogether: the number of traded contracts fell from 334,000 in mid-January to 146,000 in April, according to Saxo Bank's Ole Hansen.

"You can't blame the speculators for artificially inflating the prices," Wateridge added. On the other hand, trading houses and chocolate makers tend to guard against price reversals by betting against the financial markets, in this case on falling prices.

After the markets proved right and prices soared, several had to bank more funds to cover their potential losses.

Others short on cash have had to abandon their bets, which technically obliges them to buy back contracts on the market.

This, in turn, automatically pushes up the price of cocoa even further. Given the time lag between the cocoa harvest and the production of a finished bar, the cost of chocolate on the supermarket shelves should not in theory have soared for industry giants Mars, Mondelez, Nestle, Hershey's and Ferrero.

"We are largely covered as part of our forward contracting for the remainder of the year," Nestle's chief executive Ulf Schneider confirmed in April. But as time goes on, rising raw cocoa prices will eventually hit their bottom line. — AFP

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Real cause for optimism to shape a better world

By Emmanuel Macron, José Manuel Barroso and Mohamed Cheikh El Ghazouani Paris

Multilateralism, we are told, is in retreat. But we cannot let retrenchment and fragmentation take over. From climate change and biodiversity collapse to the conflicts, geopolitical tension, and turbulence afflicting today's world, we know that overcoming global challenges requires renewed and strengthened forms of global co-operation.

Fortunately, there is real cause for optimism that new and innovative partnerships can shape a better world. And perhaps, nowhere is multilateralism's track record better, and the potential rewards so great, as when we work together to improve global health outcomes.

Over the past several decades, multilateralism, solidarity, and partnership have driven stunning victories against infectious diseases, transforming the lives of some of the world's most marginalised communities. Global child mortality, for example, has halved since 2000, and one of the primary reasons has been immunisation.

Few endeavours promise as much for humanity over the coming years as immunisation. Scientific breakthroughs have led to new and more effective vaccines, including the world's first malaria vaccine, which is currently being rolled out in several African countries. And innovation is playing a key role in enabling more countries than ever before to produce and access vaccines.

On June 20, a month before the world unites for the next



Emmanuel Macron

Olympic Games, leaders from national governments, civil society, and the private sector came together in Paris for "Protecting Our Future: The Global Forum for Vaccine Sovereignty and Innovation". Co-hosted by France on behalf of Team Europe (which includes the European Union, EU member states, the European Investment Bank, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development), the African Union (AU), and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the meeting embodied the spirit of solidarity underlying these achievements.

While half of Africa is currently suffering from a new outbreak of cholera, which has become endemic in the region as a direct consequence of climate change, this is yet another demonstration, after Covid-19, of the need for a more predictable and accessible supply of vaccines for the developing world.

The Forum marked the beginning of a new era for immunisation and equity as Gavi sets out its plan to protect more children against more diseases than ever before. Now in its 25th year, Gavi has already vaccinated more than a billion children in lower-income countries — one-eighth of humanity.



José Manuel Barroso

Along the way, it has contributed to the prevention of millions of deaths, unlocked hundreds of billions of dollars in economic benefits, and helped prevent and respond to outbreaks of new and re-emerging diseases.

In the future, we expect that vaccines will play an even larger role in keeping us all safe (a vaccine against colon cancer is now being tested in the United Kingdom) and helping countries to develop. Vaccines play an important role in reducing the risk of antibiotic resistance, and when it comes to helping countries adapt to climate change, they provide protection against outbreaks of waterborne diseases such as cholera and mosquito-borne diseases such as malaria and yellow fever, all of which can be triggered by floods, droughts, and rising temperatures.

Vaccine sovereignty means helping countries take ownership of their own national strategies, as well as giving them the means to access the vaccines they need, especially in times of crisis and global supply-chain disruptions, such as the one we experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic. A unique strength of Gavi's model is that it is sustainable by design, pooling demand to secure affordable prices while asking



Mohamed Cheikh El Ghazouani

countries to contribute more toward covering the cost as their national incomes rise.

To date, 19 countries' economies have grown to the point that they have transitioned out of Gavi support and now pay the full costs of their national vaccine programmes. Over the next five years, Gavi-supported countries will make their largest-ever investment in immunisation, paying over 40% of the costs of their routine vaccines.

Vaccine sovereignty also means having access to a secure vaccine supply. The pandemic highlighted the inherent injustice and inefficiency of concentrating vaccine production in a few countries, which was reflected in long delays in access for countries and continents that were locked out of the manufacturing ecosystem.

The African Vaccine Manufacturing Accelerator (AVMA), a \$1bn financing mechanism that will also be launched in Paris, is designed to rebalance that ecosystem by catalysing the emergence of robust vaccine manufacturing capacity in Africa, which currently produces only 2% of the vaccines it uses. AVMA will emphasise funding for vaccines that are currently in short supply, such as vaccines against cholera and Ebola. This is consistent with the AU's Agenda 2063, which states that a healthy, prosperous population in Africa can be achieved through research, development, and innovation. And it is good for the world, because no one is safe until everyone is safe.

In a world that often seems divided, the Protecting Our Future Forum is a chance to celebrate the unparalleled global impact of immunisation and, more broadly, the untapped potential of global solidarity and partnership. We will be there alongside heads of state from around the world to show our unwavering support for Gavi's ambitious programme and its efforts to raise the funds it needs to deliver a healthier, more prosperous future by making this the most protected generation in history. — Project Syndicate

- Emmanuel Macron is President of France.
- José Manuel Barroso, a former president of the European Commission and prime minister of Portugal, is Chair of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.
- Mohamed Cheikh El Ghazouani is President of Mauritania and Chairperson of the African Union.



Over the past several decades, multilateralism, solidarity, and partnership have driven stunning victories against infectious diseases, transforming the lives of some of the world's most marginalised communities.

RN talks tough on Russia but draws red lines

Reuters
Paris

France's far-right leader Jordan Bardella yesterday sought to reassure European allies over his commitment to Ukraine and readiness to stand up to Russia if he became prime minister, but made clear where his government's support for Kyiv would stop.

Bardella's National Rally (RN) party, which opponents accuse of being too soft on Russia, looks set to win the most votes in snap parliamentary elections coming up on June 30 and July 7 and could form France's next government.

That has raised concerns in Kyiv and other European capitals that France's support for Ukraine — steadfast under President Emmanuel Macron — could weaken given conflicting signals National Rally has been sending since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022.

In recent months, Macron's

government has sent long-range missiles that can reach Russian territory, promised warplanes and called for European countries to send military personnel to Ukraine to train its troops.

"I do not intend to call into question the commitments made by France on the international scene and harm our credibility at a time of war at Europe's door," Bardella said.

But unlike Macron, who has been ambiguous on how far Paris could go in its commitment to Ukraine, Bardella said there was a line his government would not cross.

"While I'm in favour of continuing to support Ukraine with logistics and defence equipment, my red line remains long-range missiles or any military equipment that could lead to escalation, by which I mean anything that could directly hit Russian cities," he said. Sending French troops to Ukraine would also be off limits, he said. While Macron would re-



Jordan Bardella, President of the French far-right Rassemblement National (RN) party, during a press conference to present policy priorities as part of the campaign for the upcoming French parliamentary elections, in Paris, yesterday. (Reuters)

main in charge of defence and foreign policy even with RN in power, he would need parliament's backing to finance any aid to Ukraine in the next budget due in autumn. RN could also block or delay any future weapons transfers because

they need approval from the prime minister and the relevant ministers.

As part of its 10-year security guarantee pact with Ukraine agreed in March, Paris said it would provide up to 3bn (\$3.2bn)

in military aid to Ukraine in 2024, but that pact was not ratified by parliament.

Separately, speaking alongside his German and Polish counterparts in Paris, Defence Minister Sebastien Lecornu said the RN had repeatedly changed its stance on Ukraine to the point of contradicting itself and what Bardella said about defensive assistance could be open to interpretation.

"It needs clarity. If the RN is changing its opinion on Ukraine, then do it now," said Lecornu.

He said delivering long-range missiles or howitzers was the least France could do for Ukraine to protect its own security in the face of the danger Russia presented.

Bardella last week backtracked on a promise to leave Nato's integrated military command saying it was unthinkable while Europe was at war.

His party's stance towards Russia is under scrutiny because its likely candidate at the next presidential election and former far-

right leader, Marine Le Pen, has in the past expressed her admiration of President Vladimir Putin.

Moscow has long courted leaders on Europe's political far-right and is keen to exploit any signs of division in Europe that could weaken support for Ukraine.

Macron, whose centrist party was trounced by the RN in European elections two weeks ago, accuses the party of reliance on Moscow, which makes it incapable of defending France's interests.

Bardella, however, yesterday acknowledged Russia was a threat.

"I see Russia as a multi-dimensional threat both for France and Europe," Bardella said. "Russia is challenging French interests today. It has been doing so for months, for years in our historical sphere of influence in Africa, in the Black Sea and in our overseas territories," he said.

"I will be extremely vigilant to any attempted interference by Russia but also by any other states or powers in the world."

Dagestan attack toll hits 20 as Russia launches terror probe

AFP
Moscow

The Kremlin yesterday dismissed fears Russia's historically restive North Caucasus region faces a wave of violence after a series of co-ordinated weekend attacks on churches, synagogues and police killed at least 20 in the southern Dagestan region.

The attacks on Sunday came just three months after Islamic State (IS) group fighters killed more than 140 in a Moscow concert hall, the deadliest attack on Russia for almost 20 years, raising fresh questions about Russia's security apparatus.

Moscow said yesterday it had concluded an "anti-terrorist operation" and killed five of the assailants behind the attacks in the cities of Makhachkala and Derbent.

The incidents had echoes of the kind of insurgent violence that struck the North Caucasus during the 1990s and 2000s, but the Kremlin yesterday dismissed fears of a renewed wave of attacks.

Russia has been a target in recent years for IS, which opposes Moscow's military support for Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad and claims to have set-up a "franchise" in Russia's North Caucasus.

At least 20 people were killed and another 26 injured in the attacks, Dagestan's regional health ministry said yesterday.

Fifteen of those killed were law enforcement officers, according to Russia's federal Investigative Committee.

"Of those 26, some are more serious so the first figure of 20 (killed) could still change," a spokesperson for Dagestan's regional health ministry told AFP.

"In the course of suppressing the criminal actions, five people involved in committing the crime were liquidated," the Investigative Committee said.

It was unclear how many had taken part in the attacks, and investigators said they were still working to "identify other persons involved."

The attackers had targeted two Orthodox churches, two synagogues and a police checkpoint in the regional capital Makhachkala and Derbent, a historic city on the coast of the Caspian Sea.

The Russian Orthodox Church said its archpriest Nikolai Kotelnikov was "brutally killed" in his church in Derbent.

In the 1990s and 2000s, separatist and militant groups waged guerrilla-style campaigns against



Dagestan region governor Sergei Melikov yesterday consoles a mourner during a visit to the Orthodox church, which was attacked by gunmen a day before, in Derbent. (AFP)

Russian authorities in the mountainous North Caucasus following the break-up of the Soviet Union.

Asked whether Moscow feared a possible return of such violence, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: "No. Now there is a different Russia. Society is consolidated and such terrorist manifestations are not supported by society in Russia or in Dagestan."

Moscow fought two wars for control of the neighbouring Chechnya region, with President Vladimir Putin touted his success in quashing the insurgency at the start of his presidency.

Russia's Investigative Committee said it had launched criminal probes over "acts of terror", while Dagestan Governor Sergei Melikov called the attacks an attempt to "destabilise" his region.

"We know who is behind these terrorist attacks and what objective they are pursuing," he added, without providing specific details but making references to the conflict in Ukraine.

"We must understand that war comes to our homes too. We felt it but today we face it," he said, adding that authorities were hunting for "sleeper cells" that had trained the attackers with assistance from abroad.

He said later yesterday the perpetrators were from Dagestan, Russian state news agencies reported.

After the deadly attack on Moscow's Crocus City Hall in March, Putin initially said Kyiv had a hand in planning that assault.

This was despite no evidence and an IS affiliate claiming responsibility on multiple occasions.

Patriarch Kirill, head of the Russian Orthodox Church and a fervent supporter of the Kremlin, said the "enemy" was seeking to destroy "inter-religious peace" in Russia, without naming who he believed was responsible.

Melikov visited a church and synagogue in Derbent yesterday.

He posted videos showing a pool of blood in the church and the charred interior of the synagogue, completely burned out after assailants threw Molotov cocktails at the building.

Russia vows to hit back at US for Crimea strike

Ambassador summoned in Moscow and told US had 'become party to the conflict'

Reuters
Moscow

The Kremlin yesterday squarely blamed the United States for an attack on Crimea with US-supplied ATACMS missiles that killed at least four people and injured 151, and Moscow formally warned the US ambassador that retaliation would follow.

The war in Ukraine has deepened a crisis in relations between Russia and the West, and Russian officials have said the conflict is entering the most dangerous escalation to date.

But directly blaming the United States for an attack on Crimea — which Russia unilaterally annexed in 2014 although most of the world considers it part of Ukraine — is a step further.

"You should ask my colleagues in Europe, and above all in Washington, the press secretaries, why their governments are killing Russian children," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

At least two children were killed in the attack on Sevastopol on Sunday, according to Russian officials. People were shown running from a beach near Sevastopol and some of the injured being carried off on sun loungers. Kyiv did not comment on the attack.

Russia said the United States had supplied the weapons, while the US military had aimed them and provided data.

Russia's Foreign Ministry summoned US ambassador Lynne Tracy and told her Washington was "waging a hybrid war against Russia and has actually become a party to the conflict". "Retaliatory



US ambassador Lynne Tracy

measures will definitely follow," it said.

Tracy said Washington regretted any loss to civilian life, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller told reporters, adding that Washington provides weapons to Ukraine so it can defend its sovereign territory, including Crimea.

Pentagon spokesperson Major Charlie Dietz said that "Ukraine makes its own targeting decisions and conducts its own military operations."

President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly warned of the risk of a much broader war involving the world's biggest nuclear powers, though he has said Russia does not want a conflict with the US-led Nato alliance.

US President Joe Biden has ruled out sending US troops to fight in Ukraine and said shortly after the 2022 full-scale Russian invasion that a direct confrontation between Nato and Russia would mean World War Three.

Putin presents the Ukraine war as part of a wider struggle with the US, which he says ignored Moscow's interests after the Soviet Union's 1991 break-up, then plotted to split Russia apart and seize its natural resources.

Leaders of the West and Ukraine have cast the war as an imperial-style land-grab. The West denies wanting to destroy Russia, which in turn denies intending to invade any Nato member state.

After the United States allowed Ukraine to direct some US weapons into Russia, the Kremlin sent signals that it viewed this as a serious escalation.

Putin has ordered drills to practise deployment of tactical nuclear weapons, suggested Russia could station conventional missiles within striking distance of the United States and its allies, and sealed a mutual defence pact with North Korea.

Washington still prohibits Kyiv from striking recognised Russian territory with ATACMS, which have a range of up to 186 miles, and other long-range US weapons.

Putin said on Thursday that Russia might supply weapons to North Korea in what he suggested would be a like-for-like response to the Western arming of Ukraine.

Asked what the Russian answer would be to the attack in Crimea, Peskov recalled Putin's words on June 6 about wider placement of conventional weapons.

"Of course, the involvement of the United States in the fighting, as a result of which peaceful Russians are dying, cannot but have consequences," Peskov said.

"Which ones exactly — time will tell."

Pirates of the Caribbean actor killed in Hawaii shark attack

A Hawaiian surfer who also acted on TV and in movies including Johnny Depp's *Pirates of the Caribbean* has died in a shark attack, authorities said.

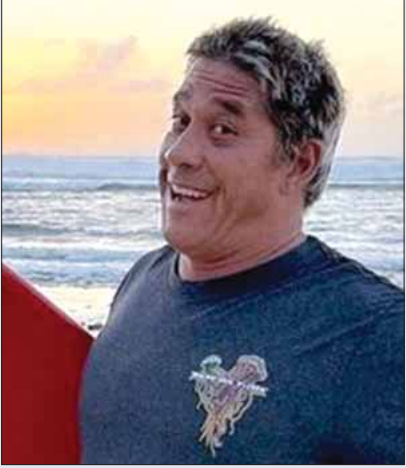
Tamayo Perry, 49, died on Sunday at Malaekahana Beach on Oahu, moments after the encounter.

Perry played a buccaneer in the fourth instalment of the popular swashbuckling franchise, *Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides*.

He also appeared in the re-boot of *Hawaii Five-O* and in cult TV series *Lost*, which was largely filmed on the US archipelago, as well as in the 2002 surf movie *Blue Crush*.

In addition to his big and small screen appearances, Perry was a lifeguard and professional surfer who was well known in the local community.

Honolulu acting Ocean Safety chief Kurt Lager said as a lifeguard, Perry was "loved by all" on Oahu's north shore.



TRAGEDY: Tamayo Perry

"Tamayo's personality was infectious, and as much as people loved him, he loved everyone else more," he said.

Honolulu Mayor Rick Blangiardi told a press conference on Sunday that Perry's death was "tragic."

"Tamayo was a legendary waterman and highly respected. (He) grew up right over here, and just a great member of our ocean safety team."

Texas woman accused of bid to drown 3-year-old Palestinian-American girl

A Texas woman has been accused of the attempted drowning of a 3-year-old Palestinian-American Muslim girl, and police yesterday said the incident was motivated by bias and the suspect made racially motivated statements.

The incident occurred in May but gained media attention yesterday after the Council on American Islamic Relations offered support to the victims and issued a press statement identifying them by religion and ancestry.

"The Euless Police Department believes the crime was committed because of bias or prejudice and that is part of the case as it has been filed with the Tarrant County District Attorney's office," police said in a statement

yesterday. The district attorney's office said it was reviewing the case.

According to a police report, the incident occurred at an apartment complex swimming pool in the Dallas-Fort Worth suburb of Euless, when the suspect argued with the mother of the 3-year-old girl, who was also at the pool with her 6-year-old son, and asked where they were from. The suspect, identified by police as 42-year-old Elizabeth Wolf, tried to drown the 3-year-old and attempted to grab the 6-year-old boy, the police report said.

The mother was able to pull her daughter from the water, police said, and local medics responded to the scene and the children were medically cleared.

The suspect was arrested and charged with

attempted capital murder.

Human rights advocates have reported a rise in Islamophobia, anti-Palestinian bias and antisemitism in the US since the latest eruption of conflict in the Middle East.

President Joe Biden said yesterday he was "deeply disturbed" by reports of the incident.

Other US incidents amid the Gaza war include the fatal October stabbing of a 6-year-old boy in Illinois whom police said was targeted because he was Palestinian-American and the February stabbing of a Palestinian-American man in Texas that police said met the definition of a hate crime. The November shooting of three students of Palestinian descent in Vermont was also treated as a suspected hate-motivated crime.

EU accuses Apple of breaking the bloc's digital rules

Apple risks billions of euros in fines after the European Union yesterday accused the iPhone maker of violating the bloc's landmark digital rules by hindering competition on its App Store.

The European Commission informed Apple in a "preliminary view" that the "App Store rules... prevent app developers from

freely steering consumers to alternative channels for offers and content".

The finding opens a new front in the increasingly bitter fight between the US tech giant and Brussels over the EU's new Digital Markets Act (DMA), and may force changes to the way the App Store operates in the bloc.

On Friday, Apple said it would

delay rolling out recently announced AI features in Europe because of "regulatory uncertainties" linked to the DMA.

The sweeping law seeks to rein in the world's biggest tech firms, including Apple, by forcing them to open up to competition in the 27-country EU.

But for Apple, the new rules are a significant challenge to its

walled garden and it has openly accused the DMA of creating greater privacy and security risks for users.

This is the first time the commission has levelled a formal accusation against a tech firm under the new rules, after opening the first DMA probes into Apple, Google and Meta in March.



Amir leaves the Netherlands



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani left Amsterdam yesterday following an official visit to the Netherlands. The Amir and the accompanying delegation were seen off at the International Amsterdam Airport Schiphol by Adjutant General and Head of the Military House of the King, Rear Admiral Ludger Brummelaar, Qatar's ambassador to the Netherlands Dr Mutlaq bin Majid al-Qahtani, and Dutch ambassador to Qatar Ferdinand Lahnstein, alongside a host of high-ranking officials in the Dutch government and members of the Qatar's embassy.



Amir, Sheikha Jawaher attend official banquet

From Page 1

The ceremony included the playing of the Qatari and Dutch national anthems, followed by His Highness the Amir inspecting the royal guard of honour.

The luncheon and reception were attended by HE the Chief of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi, HE the Minister of Commerce and Industry Sheikh Mohamed bin Hamad bin Qassim al-Thani, and HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater, along with members of the accompanying official delegation.

From the Dutch side, the attendees included Prime Minister Mark Rutte, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Climate and Energy Rob Jetten, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Social Affairs and Employment Karlen van Gennip, and Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Co-operation Liesje Schreinemacher, along with several senior officials.



Amir's visit to Netherlands significant and timely, says Dutch official

The Director of the Middle East and North Africa Department at the Dutch Foreign Ministry, Marc Gerritsen, said that the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to the Netherlands is significant and timely, adding that both countries enjoy a real partnership in several sectors, including trade, energy, and tourism. Speaking to Qatar News Agency (QNA), Gerritsen said that the visit underscores the special ties between the two countries and comes at a critical period when both Europe and the Middle East are undergoing geopolitical turbulence, highlighting the importance of

enhancing bilateral relations and working closely. Gerritsen said that Qatar plays a crucial role, particularly on dossiers such as those related to the Gaza Strip, along with Qatar's significant role in the past few years with regards to Afghanistan and counter-terrorism efforts, which are topics of concern for the Netherlands, adding that as such, there are various topics to be discussed by His Highness the Amir and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte. On bilateral political co-operation, he said that Qatar and the Netherlands both seek to establish bridges of communication and are

both doing everything possible to enhance international co-operation and promote peace, which they do through strengthening their bilateral relations and political co-operation. Gerritsen noted the Dutch prime minister's visit to Doha in 2023, during which he and the Amir held an excellent exchange of views on all levels, adding that both sides are in constant communication. On the development of Qatari-Dutch ties, he said that both countries work closely on the political and commercial levels, adding that there is room for more joint work on investment, student exchange, and humanitarian aid, among others. (QNA)

The Hague mayor highlights co-operation with Qatari cities in sustainable development



Mayor of The Hague, Jan van Zanen (pictured), has underlined that both Qatari cities and The Hague benefit from closer co-operation to global challenges in the field of sustainable development. In a statement to the Qatar News Agency (QNA), he said that local governments need co-operation to find innovative solutions towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals, for example, via international networks such as the world's biggest organisation of local governments – the United

Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). "In my capacity as the executive president of the UCLG, I invite Qatari cities to join the UCLG and its World Council that takes place in The Hague this October," Van Zanen said. He added that being the mayor of The Hague – the International City of Peace and Justice – is a big responsibility, as it is a host city to many international courts, tribunals and other organisations. Van Zanen noted the emphasis on providing a healthy, safe, welcoming and favourable working environment for some 500

organisations and 20,000 people working on peace and justice daily. This ecosystem of peace and justice, he said, is a strong economic driver in the city. Moreover, it has significant value and impact as we connect global challenges to local solutions and vice versa, the mayor added. He noted that The Hague is largest city in the Netherlands facing the North Sea, and the greenest city in Europe. It stands for space, green and a high-quality selection of art and culture, most notably the Mauritshuis which hosts Vermeer's Girl

with the Pearl Earring, the Kunstmuseum Den Haag, Museum Voorlinden, Escher in the Palace, and the Prison Gate Museum. Known worldwide as the city of Peace and Justice, Van Zanen said, The Hague is the city where talented people are working on innovations towards building a better, safer and more just world. He noted that the city has the best value for companies in the fields of new energy, finance, legal and policy, technology, impact economy and cybersecurity industries. – QNA