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The National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) is set to organise the third national forum on protecting children's rights in the secure digital environment and exploring challenges, as well as prospects of children's empowerment and protection during the period Sept 10-11, 2024. The forum is held in partnership with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology and National Cyber Security Agency with the participation of Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Representative of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (Unicef) and Head of Programs, Partnerships, and Operations in Qatar. **Page 2**

44840000 | www.qiib.com.qa



Focus on traffic safety as students return to schools

QNA

Doha

Experts and officials from the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC)'s Trauma Center and General Directorate of Traffic have called on all road users to essentially maintain focus on roads while driving and adhere to traffic safety. The call came to mark the beginning of the academic year during which roads witness surging

number of vehicle, buses and pedestrians. Director of the Non-Communicable Diseases Prevention Department at MoPH Sheikh Dr Mohamed bin Hamad al-Thani emphasised the importance of making traffic safety one of the daily top priorities, especially during the academic season.

Alongside the focus to protect the community, primarily children, it is highly significant for all community members to be part of factors that provide a safer start to the new academic year through strin-

gent adherence to safety measures while driving, said Sheikh Dr Mohamed al-Thani. For his part, Traffic Media Officer at the General Directorate of Traffic Lt Abdulmohsin al-Asmar al-Ruwaili stated that the General Directorate of Traffic has prepared a plan to maintain surveillance on traffic during the academic year as part of its commitment to bolstering traffic safety statewide. Al-Ruwaili highlighted that the plan aims to facilitate the smooth traffic and prevent gridlock on main roads, school perimeter

and roads that lead to those areas through intensifying traffic patrols and deployment of traffic personnel, particularly in road intersections and around the schools where there is traffic congestion.

He said these measures will help ensure safety for students and all road users, urging them to comply with the traffic laws and instructions. For her part, Assistant Director of HMC's Injury Prevention Program, Dr Aisha Obeid, stressed that preventing road traffic accident-related trauma must

be primarily a foremost priority for parents, school managers and all vehicle drivers in Qatar. She underscored the importance of making sure that kids remain in the back seat for as long as possible, with parents and bus drivers being essentially cautious while driving to be a role model for others through adherence to buckle up seatbelt and drive within the allowed speed limits, in addition to never using mobile phones while driving and complying with traffic rules to ensure students' safety.

Official

Amir congratulates Malaysian king, Kyrgyz president and Trinidad and Tobago president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent cables of congratulations to King of Malaysia Sultan Ibrahim Iskandar on his country's Independence Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a similar cable of congratulations to Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim. **(QNA)**

■ His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Deputy Amir sent cables of congratulations to Kyrgyzstan's President Sadyr Japarov on his country's Independence Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs also sent a similar cable of congratulations to Prime Minister Akylbek Zhaparov. **(QNA)**

■ His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Deputy Amir sent cables of congratulations to President of Trinidad and Tobago Christine Carla Kangaloo on her country's Independence Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs also sent a cable of congratulations to Prime Minister Keith Rowley, on his country's Independence Day. **(QNA)**

NHRC to hold forum on protecting children's rights in digital space

The National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) is set to hold the third national forum on protecting children's rights in the secure digital environment and exploring challenges, as well as prospects of children's empowerment and protection on Sept 10-11.

The forum is held in partnership with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology and National Cyber Security Agency with the participation of Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Representative of the UN International Children's Emergency Fund (Unicef) and Head of Programmes, Partnerships, and Operations in Qatar.

The event aims to offer perspectives to enhance public legislation and policies, along with the relevant administrative measures and practices related to protecting and empowering children in digital space based on human rights approach.

To mark this event, HE the Chairperson of NHRC Maryam bint Abdullah al-Attiyah said the topic of protecting children's rights in digital space earns an utmost significance owing to the opportunities it offers to advance children's capabilities in a multitude of fields, in addition to considering the risks and challenges entangled with digital space.

Through this forum NHRC is determined to build a platform for national dialogue between ministries, public institutions, civil society, parents, and children on developments and challenges facing children's rights in digital environment, in addition to reviewing public legislation and measures, as well as relevant administrative measures and practices related to protecting and empowering children in digital space, HE al-Attiyah underlined.

She added that the forum intends to explore best practices in the state and at regional and global levels, in addition to bol-



HE Maryam bint Abdullah al-Attiyah

stering the measures related to children's protection in digital space, in terms of Islamic values and national identity and raising awareness of the significance of enabling children's accessibility to digital world and protecting them from potential risks.

She pointed out that the UN gave foremost priority to children's rights through developing relevant protection criteria, noting that after the Convention

on the Rights of the Child (CRC) came into force in 1990, two optional protocols had been adopted in 2000, the first one was on protecting children from sale and exploitation, and the second one on prohibiting their engagement in armed conflict. The two protocols entered into force in 2002, she said.

HE al-Attiyah highlighted that in 2011, the third optional protocol on individual communications, attached to CRC entered into force.

Pertaining to the national context, HE the Chairperson of NHRC affirmed that Qatar has offered a vital space to empower and protect children's rights, in terms of the constitution and law, and accordingly adopted an array of legislation relevant to protecting children's rights, including Law No 14 of 2014, combating cyber-crimes and protecting children from exploitation.

She underlined that the Qatar National Vision 2030 aims to

ensure protection for children's rights through offering a secure and healthy environment for children to ensure they receive high quality education and healthcare, as well as other rights and services. She highlighted that in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI), the vision included numerous objectives on empowering children in digital space.

HE the Chairperson of NHRC said that the forum is expected to come up with a plethora of recommendations and perspectives to a variety of national entities operating in the area of protecting children's rights in digital space, in addition to dedicating a section at NHRC specialised in AI and digital rights based on the forum's perspectives.

In addition, the forum constitutes a chance to highlight Qatar's efforts in protecting children's rights through nurturing the engagement of Qatar in the upcoming discussion before UPR and CRC. **(QNA)**

Labour ministry conducts introductory seminar to promote family awareness



The Ministry of Labour, in collaboration with Wifaq Centre, conducted an introductory seminar titled 'Towards an Integrated Society' to raise awareness about family among workers and communities and offer them support and guidance. Representatives of Wifaq Centre introduced the key services provided by the centre, including family, psychological and legal consultations, in addition to presenting some important awareness topics that will be tailored for workers. The seminar aims to provide workers with the necessary knowledge and skills to enhance family life and tackle issues they might encounter within their families in Qatar or overseas. **(QNA)**



Doha to host meeting of the committee of heads, directors of tax depts in GCC

QNA

Doha

Qatar, represented by the General Tax Authority (GTA), will host the 13th meeting of the Committee of Heads and Directors of Tax Departments in the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries in Doha, tomorrow (Monday).

The meeting brings together high-level GCC representatives, including the heads and directors of tax departments and authorities of GCC Member States, led by HE the President of GTA Khalifa bin Jassim al-Kuwari, and with the participation of Assistant Secretary-General for Economic and Development Affairs at the GCC Secretariat General Khalid bin Ali al-Sunaidi.

The meeting aims to enhance co-operation and integration among GCC tax departments and authorities, focusing on improving the efficiency of tax systems across the member States. It will also highlight best practices, address tax evasion, and promote a more fair and transparent tax system in the Gulf region. By hosting this meeting, Qatar reaffirms its commitment to advancing GCC co-operation across all critical sectors, with a particular focus on taxation, which is essential for supporting both national and regional economic stability and growth.

MoPH gearing up to launch 3rd National Health Strategy

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) said that the 2nd National Health Strategy 2018-2022 has successfully accomplished over 90% of its outcomes and played a crucial role in the ongoing sustainable development and improvement of healthcare in Qatar, aiming to enhance the health of the Qatari community.

The announcement comes as the MoPH is gearing up to launch the 3rd National Health Strategy 2024-2030. Director of the Strategic Planning, Performance and Innovation Department at the Ministry of Public Health, Huda al-Khtheeri, said: "The strategy has successfully accomplished over 90% of its outcomes across 54 projects, focusing on prevention, wellness, improving access to care, and delivering services in a more integrated manner."

"These accomplishments were achieved despite the strategy's implementation period coinciding with the global health challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic, during which Qatar successfully managed the crisis and maintained one of the lowest mortality rates globally. Furthermore, throughout the strategy's implementation, significant attention was given to ensuring the successful hosting of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, which



was recognised as the healthiest tournament ever, thanks to the tremendous efforts of all partners involved," she added.

Through the National Health Strategy 2018-2022, the Ministry of Public Health prioritised the improvement and development of services for seven population groups most in need of care, achieving significant milestones in this area, including a 5% reduction in the prevalence of dental caries among children and a 10% increase in the rate of exclusive breastfeeding for infants during the first six months of life.

Additionally, the percentage of patients receiving mental health services in primary and community care settings increased by about 17%, and the incidence of

emergency department visits due to falls among individuals aged 60 years and older decreased from 2.4% in 2018 to 1.9% in 2021.

The strategy also led to a 25% increase in the number of organisations with access to occupational health and wellness programmes in the workplace. Furthermore, improvements were made in mid-wifery services for women, as well as services aimed at empowering patients with multiple chronic conditions.

In the field of health system priorities, as a result of joint efforts across all sectors, Qatar became the first country in the world to have all its municipalities awarded the title of "Healthy City" by the World Health Organisation. Additionally, Qatar University received

the title of "Healthy University" and Qatar Foundation's Education City achieved the title of "Healthy Education City" from the World Health Organisation.

The Ministry of Public Health has also achieved an increase in its International Health Regulations (IHR) indicators score, rising from 35% in 2018 to 97% in 2022. The goal of the IHR is to prevent disease outbreaks. Qatar has made significant progress in the Universal Health Coverage index, increasing its score from 72 in 2017 to 76 in 2021. Additionally, the National Framework for Health Education was developed and launched to ensure consistent messaging across all programmes and campaigns in the coming years.

Through the vision of the Second National Health Strategy 2018-2022, "Our Health, Our Future", the strategy focused on providing timely care, delivered by the right person, in the most appropriate setting. This approach has laid the strong foundations for the next phase of development and improvement through the forthcoming Third National Health Strategy 2024-2030, which is set to be launched soon as part of Qatar's Third National Development Strategy 2024-2030 and Qatar National Vision 2030. **(QNA)**

Regional ministerial meetings on civil service, labour to kick off today

The GCC ministerial meetings on civil service, labour, and social affairs/social development kick off in Doha today. The four-day meetings will be chaired by Qatar and attended by ministers, undersecretaries, and heads of civil service, administrative development, labour, and social affairs/development.

The discussions will cover topics related to civil service, labour, and social affairs/development in GCC countries, as well as efforts to strengthen co-operation within the GCC. The agenda will cover various meetings such as the 10th meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Labour, the 10th meeting of Ministers of Social Affairs and Development, the 20th meeting of the Committee of Ministers and Heads of Civil Service Agencies in the GCC, the 10th meeting of the Committee of Undersecretaries of the Ministry of Labour, the 10th meeting of the Committee of Undersecretaries of Ministries of Social Affairs and Development, and the 27th meeting of the Committee of Undersecretaries of Civil Service and Administrative Development bodies in the GCC.

On the sidelines of the meetings, a ceremony will be held to recognise distinguished figures across the GCC, specifically honouring a prominent figure in the labour sector from Qatar for their dedication to supporting the Ministry of Labour's initiatives. This includes fostering a safe work environment, bridging perspectives between the International Labour Organisation and labour institutions worldwide, and advancing labour laws, reforms, wage protection, justice, and social welfare for workers in Qatar, solidifying the country's leading role in workers' rights regionally and globally.

Competencies in the civil service sector will also be honoured, such as the negotiation team to unify the purchase of licenses for human resources systems in the GCC countries, outstanding companies in job nationalisation, small and distinguished entrepreneurs, pioneering projects in the field of social work, and a prominent figure in the field of social work. **(QNA)**

Assets Group Partners with Hilton for expansion to New Country in the Caribbean and Latin America with Dual Brand Signing in Guyana

Hilton Georgetown and DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Georgetown Mark Assets Group Debut in the Country

Hilton (NYSE: HLT) announced the signing of the dual brand Hilton Georgetown and DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Georgetown, as the company's first hotels in Guyana. Owned by an affiliate of Assets Group and managed by Hilton, the properties' combined 411 keys will form part of an oceanfront, mixed-use business and entertainment complex in the country's capital. With this strategic signing, Hilton continues its rapid expansion in the Caribbean and Latin America (CALA) region, where it currently has more than 225 open hotels welcoming guests.

"We believe in investing in Guyana, a country poised for significant growth and a promising future in tourism and hospitality," said Moutaz Al Khayyat, Chairman of Assets Group. "Our choice to debut in this emerging market reflects our commitment to investing in high-potential destinations and our confidence in Guyana's trajectory. These properties are meticulously designed to offer a diversity of high-end experiences."

"We are thrilled to further our partnership with Assets Group, broadening our combined portfolio from the Middle East and Asia to the Caribbean and Latin America with our planned debut in Guyana," said Juan Corvinos, senior vice president, development, architecture, design and construction, Caribbean and Latin America region, Hilton. "Guyana is an important regional business hub and a promising tourism destination, and we are excited to join forces with Assets Group once again to celebrate this impressive project and significant milestone in Hilton's continued rapid expansion."

Centrally located in the heart of downtown Georgetown where the Demerara River meets the Atlantic Ocean, Hilton Georgetown and DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Georgetown will offer easy access to nearby embassies, businesses, and array of entertainment options, including the scenic National Park and historic sites, all within approximately six miles of the Ogle International Airport. The hotels will provide the benefit of shared spaces and amenities, while also offering unique property-specific experiences throughout their shared location.



The new build, 11-story Hilton Georgetown will feature an elevated stay experience with 253 guest rooms and suites, and an array of energizing spaces, including a striking lobby bar and signature restaurant with locally inspired menus and handcrafted cocktails. Guests will also enjoy an outdoor pool with all-day dining options.

The brand-new DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Georgetown will offer 158

contemporary suites with spaces where guests can relax, connect, and feel at home. The hotel will bring to life the brand's feel-good moments which start when guests check in and are welcomed with the brand's signature, warm DoubleTree chocolate chip cookie.

"We are proud to bring the flagship Hilton Hotels & Resorts brand, which continues to set the standard for travel, and



the renowned DoubleTree by Hilton tradition of warm welcomes and upscale comfort to Guyana," said Gary Steffen, global category head, Full-Service Brands, Hilton. "We look forward to welcoming travelers and bringing Hilton's iconic hospitality to Guyana through our award-winning brands."

Assets Group President, Ramez Al-Khayyat said "We look forward to contributing to the success of Guyana as a destination and working alongside a renowned hospitality leader like Hilton to welcome both international travelers and locals to experience all that our complex will offer. Hilton Georgetown and DoubleTree

Suites by Hilton Georgetown will stand as a testament of our dedication to creating premium and luxurious spaces that cater to the discerning needs of our guests."

Guests of Hilton Georgetown and DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Georgetown will also enjoy access to a member-only Social Club managed by Hilton that will enhance the stay experience for guests and provide special options for local members. Guests of each hotel and Social Club members will enjoy exclusive wellness and recreation amenities including a pool, fitness center and spa; a coworking space, and a library and boardroom perfectly designed for business travelers. The Social Club will also boast unique food and beverage experiences with two full-service dining options, two bars and a coffee and bakery shop, open to guests, members, and locals alike.

The complex also features a state-of-the-art conference center with a 25,900 square foot ballroom and meeting rooms that extend across 10,800 square feet, making the hotels ideal for meetings, incentives, conferences, and events. The facility boasts intuitive technology and seamlessly integrated food and beverage offerings for events of every size and type.

Hilton's entry to Guyana builds on rapid growth momentum in the Caribbean and Latin America region, where the company tripled in size over the past decade adding nine new countries and territories and launching seven new brands to its portfolio. With more than 225 open hotels and a robust pipeline of over 170 hotels, Hilton plans to enter eight new countries and territories in the region over the next few years, including Bermuda and Paraguay in 2024 and Guyana in 2027, among others.

Hilton Georgetown and DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Georgetown will offer guests the benefits of Hilton Honors, the award-winning guest-loyalty program for Hilton's distinct hotel brands.

For more Hilton development news, please visit stories.hilton.com.



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Doha set to hold Gulf Family Forum tomorrow

QNA
Doha

The Gulf Family Forum will be held in Doha tomorrow, under the slogan “Family is The Treasure of a Nation” with a broad participation of officials, leading family affairs’ experts, and social affairs’ stakeholders from the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) member states. Coinciding with the GCC Ministerial Meetings on Civil Service, Labour, and Social Development, the forum, organised by the Ministry of Social Devel-

Participants will explore the slogan “Family is The Treasure of a Nation” from the perspective of each GCC member state, and promote the cohesiveness of Gulf families

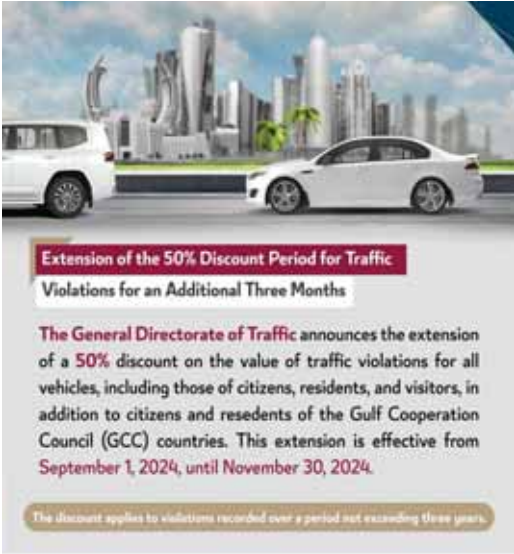
opment and Family, will discuss the challenges, aspirations, and Gulf family values and their impact on raising a more productive generation to invest in future opportunities. Participants will explore the slogan “Family is The Treasure of a Nation” from the perspective of each GCC member state, and promote the cohesiveness of Gulf families. The forum will showcase policy and initiative successes in the field of

strengthening family unity and contributing to national development, in addition to covering important and priority issues for those invested in family affairs. The GCC member states will celebrate the Gulf Family Day on September 14, in a reflection of their conviction in the importance of the family unit, its role in society, and its profound impact on solidifying social stability.


50% discount for traffic fines extended until November 30

The Ministry of Interior (MoI) has extended the grace period announced by the General Directorate of Traffic to pay fines until November 30. “The General Directorate of Traffic announces the extension of a 50% discount on traffic fines for all vehicles, applicable to citizens, residents, and visitors, as well as citizens and residents of GCC countries effective from September 1, 2024, until November 30, 2024,” MoI said in a post shared on X. The discount applies to violations recorded within a period not exceeding three years. The grace period started on June 1 and the ministry had earlier announced that it would expire on August 31.

MoI has also announced that traffic law violators can’t leave Qatar through any borders from September 1 without paying fines and dues. The vehicles with pending fines and dues will not be allowed to cross land, air and sea borders. The fines and dues can be paid through the Metrash2 app, MoI website, traffic offices or unified service centres. These were announced as part of a set of new traffic rules and procedures by the General Director of Traffic. According to the new rules, a permit must be obtained from the General Directorate of Traffic for mechanical vehicles to exit Qatar as per the prescribed form and the following conditions: The vehicle must not have any outstanding traffic violations; the final destination (point of arrival) for the



mechanical vehicle must be specified; the applicant for the permit must be the owner of the vehicle or present proof of the owner’s consent for the vehicle to exit the country.





The Transport Company
MOWASALAT (KARWA)

Mowasalat (Karwa) announces the following tender:

Tender Ref. No.	Tender Title	Tender Fee	Electronic Tender Fee Payment Dates	Tender Bond	Bid Closing Date
TC-036-LTS-2024	Lease of Innova Hybrid Vehicles	QAR 2,000	2 to 8 September 2024	QAR 450,000	8 October 2024
TC-038-EGS-2024	Maintenance of Automatic Doors, Roller Shutters & Gate Barriers	QAR 1,000	2 to 8 September 2024	QAR 36,000	9 October 2024

CONDITIONS:

- Interested bidder shall pay the tender fee to Mowasalat Bank Account details as shown:
- Bidder must submit proof of tender fee payment (Bank Deposit Slip + a Signed & Stamped Expression of Interest (indicating Tender Ref. No. and Title / Company Name and details of nominated contact person i.e., Tel. No., Fax No., and Email address) + Copy of valid Commercial Registration to Mowasalat Secretary - Tender Committee at email: tenders@mowasalat.com
- Tender documents will be released via email on the next working day after the tender fee payment date to all bidders who have submitted the bank deposit slip and other documents requested (i.e., **9 September 2024**)
- Bonds: Tender Bond & Performance Bond:** Bids must be accompanied by Bonds issued by a local bank operating in the State of Qatar as per the Qatar Central Bank template. Further details of bonds can be found in the tender documents. *Bids without Tender Bond shall not be considered.*
- Tender validity:** Bid validity period shall be 180 days from the bid closing date.
- Tender documents submission:** Bids must be submitted in 3 separate sealed (**IN RED WAX**) envelopes addressed to **Secretary - Tender Committee** clearly highlighting the Tender Ref. No. & Tender Title:
 - Envelope 1#** must include the Technical Bid submission (1 Original + 1 non-Editable copy in a USB)
 - Envelope 2#** must include Commercial Bid submission (1 Original + 1 Editable MS Excel spreadsheet copied in a USB)
 - Envelope 3#** must include the Tender Bond (1 Original)
- Bid Closing Date:** Bid submission deadline is **12.00 noon Doha Local Time** as on the Bid closing date shown above. The 3 envelopes must be handed over to the Office of The Secretary - Tender Committee, located at Mowasalat Head Office, Industrial Area. Any tender submitted after the deadline will not be considered.








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Supplier Registration

Mowasalat Location





Nomas Centre concludes field trips to Norway

Nomas Centre, of the Ministry of Culture, has concluded its trip to Norway organised under the theme “Knowledge, Etiquette, and Majid’s Company”. The agenda of this trip featured a range of heritage, historical, recreational and expeditionary activities. The participating team visited many historical landmarks in Norway, such as technology museum, maritime museum and the Viking Museum. Director of the Nomas Centre Ghanem Abdulrahman al-Kuwari affirmed that the trip accomplished the intended goals with students internalising many aspects of knowledge and exploring other cultures through touring museums and historical landmarks in Norway. He added that the trip agenda included field trips, expeditions and recreational activities The trip was launched on Aug 23, to explore young talents, forge communication and ingrain national identity principles, in addition to encouraging students to participate in cultural trips to civilisational landmarks worldwide. (QNA)



TENDER ADVERTISEMENT

ORYX GTL Limited is pleased to announce the following tender(s):

S. No.	Tender Ref.	Tender Title:	Tender Bond QAR	Bid Closing Date & Tender Bond Validity Period
1	TC-CN-027-24-MC	Call-off Contract for Electrical, Instrumentation and Analyzer Manpower Services	500,000/-	25 Sept 2024 at 12.00 noon & 180 days

Companies wishing to register their interest and obtain Tender Document(s) for the above Tender(s) must pay a non-refundable registration fee and register with ORYX GTL as detailed below:

Tender Registration Fee	QAR 500/- (Non-refundable) per Tender
Payable to	ORYX GTL Limited
IBAN (29 Digits)	QA23QNBA000000000013010705001
Bank	Qatar National Bank – HQ or any branch (cash only)
Registration Dates	From 01 st September 2024 to 05 th September 2024 8:00 am to 1:00 pm
Registration Process and Requirements:	Write an e-mail to oryxgtltenders@oryxgtl.com.qa with the following attachments: 1.Copy of Commercial Registration (CR) 2.Copy of bank deposit slip of the Tender Registration Fee. 3. Copy of ICV Certificate

COMPANIES WHO HAVE PAID THE NON-REFUNDABLE REGISTRATION FEE BUT FAILED TO FORMALLY REGISTER AT THE DATE AND TIME STATED ABOVE WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED AS ACCEPTABLE TENDERER.

TENDER BOND SHALL BE ISSUED BY A BANK REGISTERED IN THE STATE OF QATAR.

Effective from 1st July 2023, bids from Local Suppliers and Contractors (companies established under the Laws of State of Qatar with local Commercial Registration) who are not in possession of an ICV score in the ICV portal by Tender Closing Date (or commercial bid submission date if separately mentioned/notified) will not be accepted. Local Company that have been established for less than 2 years are exempted from this requirement. For further details please visit ICV Digital Portal:- <https://icv.qa/US>

For more information about ORYX GTL and its tenders, please visit our website: <http://www.oryxgtl.com.qa>



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Website: www.qchem.com.qa

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR TENDERS

No.	Document No.	Description	Tender Bond	Bid Closing Date
1.	QC/TC/TA/75/24	Hiring of Rescue Responders for Q-Chem, Q-Chem II and RLOC Turnaround	QR 409,500/-	12:00 hrs. on 21 st October 2024
2.	QC/TC/TA/76/24	Hiring of Breathing Apparatus System for Q-Chem, Q-Chem II and RLOC Turnaround	QR 318,500/-	12:00 hrs. on 21 st October 2024

Tender Documents for the above description can be obtained as follows:

A. Pay to Bank and send the original receipt with authorization letter via email.

For each tender pay a **non-refundable document fee of QR 1,000/-** Payable to Q-Chem, Bank Account (Contract Services - Tender) – Account Number 001-242007-003 with HSBC Bank) and submit the original receipt with an Authorization letter on Tenderer Company Letterhead with ID copy of the Tenderer representative via email to tadvertisment@qchem.com.qa In the authorization letter Tenderer shall nominate a single focal point with contact mobile number, **official email address**, office number, fax number for the communications related to this tender for the transfer and receipt of the tender documents. **The Bank receipt must indicate the tender number and the tenderer name (company name).**

B. Date and Time of Tender documents Issuance via email

Tender documents issuance from **1st September 2024 to 5th September 2024, 8am-12noon.**

C. Proposal details

Proposals should be valid for 240 days from the tender closing date.

D. Submission of Proposals

Guidelines for Electronic Bids Submission is attached in the Tender documents.

Don't carry other people's baggage, cautions MoI



The Ministry of Interior (MoI) has cautioned travellers against carrying other people's bags without knowing their contents. MoI, in an awareness video on X, said this could delay the travel procedures and expose the carrier to legal accountability. “Stay aware to ensure your safety. To stay safe and avoid legal risks refrain from taking additional baggage for others,” the video said.

QatarEnergy sets fuel prices for September

QatarEnergy yesterday set fuel prices for September unchanged from last month. Prices for a litre of diesel, Super Gasoline 95 and Premium Gasoline 91 are QR2.05, QR2.10 and QR1.95, respectively. (QNA)

Liquidation Announcement

First

Based on the Extraordinary General Assembly Resolution

To Liquidate

Qatar National Facility Services W.L.L

(the "Company")

(under Voluntary Liquidation)

The Liquidator-Rami Mohammad Ali Qudah

Deloitte & Touche-Qatar Branch

Announce the commencement of the liquidation of

Qatar National Facility Services W.L.L.

Commercial Registration No. (40999)

Any party who has any claims with this Company should send a registered letter, including all supporting documents, to P.O. Box 431, Doha – Qatar, within 45 days from the date of this publication.

Nissan to livestream world debut of all-new Nissan Patrol on September 3



Live Streaming of all-new Nissan Patrol world premiere event.

Nissan is gearing up to the world debut of the all-new Nissan Patrol, taking centre stage at an exclusive global event in Abu Dhabi on September 3 from 8.30pm (GMT+4) onwards.

This reveal promises to captivate car enthusiasts and fans worldwide, showcasing the legacy and innovations of the seventh-generation Patrol.

Nissan invites audiences from around the world to discover the next chapter of the Patrol's legacy, with the World Premiere being streamed live across the following channels:

- Worldwide Livestream: Nissan Middle East YouTube Channel
- Live broadcast in selected regions: MBC Action TV

○ Live streaming in selected regions: MBC's Shahid App

"The all-new Nissan Patrol is about to capture the hearts of car enthusiasts and fans around the world as the stunning seventh-generation Patrol – a legendary icon reimagined – takes centre stage," said Saleh Al Hamad Al Mana Co general manager (Automotive Group) Nassim Mourani. "This monumental launch is destined to make a powerful impact on the Qatari market, offering an unmatched combination of luxury, performance, and cutting-edge innovation that will redefine the driving experience."

Those eager to get a glimpse of the all-new Nissan Patrol can tune in to the *Feel Patrol* series on the Nissan Middle East YouTube page.



The QIC concluded its annual summer internship programme with an award ceremony on August 29.

QIC concludes summer internship programme

Qatar Insurance Company (QIC) has concluded its annual summer internship programme with an award ceremony on August 29.

The event was an opportunity to acknowledge students from different schools and academic institutions who took part of this year's programme.

This year, the QIC's Summer Internship Programme, which ran from June to August, was "meticulously designed" to help interns discover which direction they would like to take their careers in the future.

The paid internship offers qualified high-school students a meaningful, career-oriented experience with world-class mentors helping to guide them through their projects, and who will continue to support them even after the internship is finished.

This year, the interns were exposed to different aspects of the insurance business, such as underwriting, claims, risk management and customer service, and trained with departments such as human resources, information technology and legal.

They also participated in various workshops where they learned from the experts and gained practical real-world business experience.

The programme aimed to inspire the students to pursue a career in the insurance industry and to develop their skills in communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and innovation.

QIC Group chief administrative officer Rashid al-Buainain praised the interns for their enthusiasm and dedication.

"We are very proud of our summer internship programme, a yearly initiative that is part of our corporate social responsibility and our commitment to supporting the education and development of the youth in Qatar," he said.

"We believe that the programme offers a valuable opportunity for the students to discover the insurance industry and to enhance their skills and knowledge," the official added. "We hope that the programme will inspire them to join us in the future and to contribute to the growth and success of the QIC and the country."

Salem Ahmad al-Mansoori, an intern who participated in the programme this year, noted: "It was a challenging and rewarding experience that helped me develop my skills and knowledge in the insurance sector."

"I had the opportunity to assist with some projects within different teams," he said. "The best part of the internship was the mentorship and guidance I received from my managers."

Fellow intern Khalid Ahmed al-Sayed said: "My internship at Qatar Insurance Company gave me a great insight into the insurance industry and the corporate world. As an intern, I learned about the business and the skills needed to succeed in it."

"I also learned how corporate social responsibility matters for addressing social challenges in areas such as education, environmental sustainability, and health," he said. "I am excited to apply what I learned to my future studies and career."

Visit Qatar announces new organisational structure

Visit Qatar, the main marketing and promotional arm of Qatar Tourism, has announced a new organisational structure that aligns with the National Development Strategy 2024-2030 and Tourism Strategy 2030.

This realignment is designed to strengthen Visit Qatar's mission of increasing international visitor demand by cultivating Qatar's diverse touristic offering.

The new organisational structure introduces a number of key roles aimed at bolstering Visit Qatar's capacity to develop new thrilling attractions and diversify the country's events calendar.

Among the appointments are specialists in digital products, festivals and events, financial



management, and strategic project planning.

"As we continue to attract outstanding talent in line with the National Tourism Strategy 2030, Visit Qatar is pleased to unveil a new organisational structure that will empower us to further our mission of showcasing Qatar's rich tourism offering and enhancing our global presence,"

said Visit Qatar chief executive Abdulaziz Ali al-Mawlawi. "With our new team members on board, we are well-positioned to drive innovation, manage large-scale events, and deliver exceptional experiences that will attract visitors from around the world."

Through its extensive network of international offices, digital platforms and marketing campaigns, Visit Qatar is significantly broadening the country's global reach.

As part of its strategic vision, Visit Qatar is dedicated to diversifying the nation's offerings by organising a wide array of unique experiences, festivals, and events designed to captivate and attract visitors from around the world, while ensuring an exceptional and memorable experience for all in Qatar.



QNB concludes 'Sustainability Arts Kids Summer Camp 2024'

QNB concluded its "Sustainability Arts Summer Camp 2024", in partnership with KidZania Doha, the leading children's entertainment destination, which took place from June 26 to August 30.

This partnership aimed at raising awareness about key environmental and financial issues, encouraging eco-friendly behaviour, fostering sustainability awareness and financial literacy among children.

During the programme, children participated in interactive activities like creating ATM (automated teller machine) models and fashionable costumes out of recycled materials, all of which aimed at raising awareness and emphasising the culture of sustainability and protecting the environment to promote prosperity and a better future for all.

The participating children also attended money awareness workshops held by QNB employees, in which they learnt about the importance of money, financial governance, and saving money through adopting daily practices that promote financial wellbeing.

"We are happy to have sponsored this special programme, which supports our efforts in raising awareness about sustainability, being an essential pillar of our ESG (environmental, social, and governance) strategy," said QNB senior executive vice-president (Group Communication) Heba Ali al-Tamimi. "We strongly believe that today's children are tomorrow's future, and we hope that this programme provided the best guidance for our change makers for a better future and a sustainable world."



Works of Al Qoba Mosque at Al Hilal nearly over

The Construction Division of the Department of Engineering Affairs at the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs has completed the construction works of Masjid Qoba at Al Hilal.

According to a report by the local Arabic daily *Arrayah*, the department has started the final finishing works of the mosque.

The mosque, number M 703, is being rebuilt while retaining its old designs and features.

This is part of the efforts of the Mosques Department to preserve the heritage value and the unique interior and exterior architectural character of the mosque.

The construction work included the building of a floor with a basement to accommodate worshippers, a house for the imam and another for the muezzin.

The mosque has an advanced air conditioning network and a fire-fighting system, which comply with the requirements set by the authorities concerned.

The best and highest quality building materials were used for the construction.

The Department of Engineering Affairs is concerned with fulfilling the needs of the regions in the country for mosques and prayer grounds while providing temporary mosques and supervising their preservation as well as preparing the annual plan for the main-

tenance of mosques and imams' residences.

These are in co-ordination with the competent authorities.

For mosque designs, the department takes into account the requirements of different areas along with the guidelines for green and sustainable buildings.

The department also focuses on the conditions for sustainability in the use of electricity and water, and preserving the aesthetics of heritage in designs that reflect the authenticity of Qatari and Islamic heritage.

The ministry's plans to build mosques also take into account the population density map along with engineering and architectural specifications.

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HMC marks World Alzheimer’s Month

The Department of Geriatrics and Long-Term Care at Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), a WHO Collaborating Centre for Healthy Ageing and Dementia, is organising various activities throughout September – World Alzheimer’s Month – to raise awareness about dementia.

This year’s theme, *Time to Act on Dementia, Time to Act on Alzheimer’s*, emphasises the need to change attitudes towards dementia and to address the stigma surrounding the condition.

Dr Hanadi al-Hamad, head of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Collaborating Centre for Healthy Ageing and Dementia, has announced a series of events across Qatar in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health and the Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC).

She highlighted Qatar’s ongoing commitment to improving dementia care, not-

ing the significant progress made since she established the first Geriatric Memory Clinic at Rumailah Hospital in 2012.

Over the past 12 years, this service has expanded to multiple facilities across the country.

The specialised Geriatric Memory Team at Rumailah Hospital, consisting of geriatricians, geriatric psychiatrists, occupational therapists, dementia care co-ordinators, and specialised memory nurses, conducts clinics in other HMC facilities like Al Khor Hospital and in collaboration with PHCC at various locations including Al Sadd, Al Wajbah, Rawdat Al Khail, Lebaib.

These clinics provide person-centred care and evidence-based treatment options, with comprehensive evaluations using the latest biomarkers for accurate diagnosis.

For complex cases, a multidisciplinary

team involving the Neurosciences Department – including neuroradiologists, neurologists, neuropsychologists, geriatricians, geriatric psychiatrists, psychologists and dementia care co-ordinators – ensure a holistic approach to patient care.

For those diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease, evidence-based treatments and Cognitive Stimulation Therapy are offered.

These models of dementia care are unique to Qatar and represent the latest advancements of their kind.

Dr al-Hamad discussed the latest services established focusing on dementia prevention.

For individuals diagnosed with Mild Cognitive Impairment, the Geriatric Wellness Clinic offers cutting-edge services aimed at addressing modifiable risk factors to reduce the progression of the condition.

This clinic comprises a multidisciplinary

team of geriatricians, dietitians, physiotherapists and occupational therapists offering tailored treatment programmes following Comprehensive Geriatric Assessments which includes dietary supplements, targeted strength training exercises and cognitive rehabilitation therapy.

In addition, the department launched RAHA, the National Alzheimer’s and Memory Services Helpline, in 2020, providing direct and easy access designed to alleviate stress and ensure that support is readily available for people living with dementia and caregivers.

It stands out as the only helpline offering a unique service of direct access to a specialised multidisciplinary team comprising of a geriatrician, geriatric psychiatrist, memory nurse, psychologist, and dementia care co-ordinators, through a direct number 40262222.

Dr al-Hamad added: “Through these



Dr Hanadi al-Hamad

initiatives, Qatar continues to lead the way in dementia care and remains committed to providing dementia friendly communities to support and empower people living with dementia and their caregivers.”



Cancer treatments for children on focus at Science Cafe debate

Sidra Medicine has announced on its website that it is organising the fourth edition of the “Science Cafe” under the title *Hope for Little Heroes: Advances in Childhood Cancer Treatments*, in collaboration with Msheireb Museum, tomorrow at Bin Jelmood House, Msheireb Downtown Doha.

The debate is in Arabic and English as simultaneous translation will be provided.

The event focuses on key topics about the future of precision medicine in the field of childhood cancer.

The “Science Cafe” event aims to promote dialogue and raise awareness about the latest developments in this field, and brings together specialists, researchers and individuals with personal experiences to share their knowledge and expertise.

The session will review the latest technologies in the field of childhood cancer, while providing a platform for experts and individuals to share their knowledge and experiences.

DFI, Media City Qatar inspire next generation of game developers

The Doha Film Institute (DFI), in partnership with Media City Qatar, recently hosted the “Geekdom Game Development Workshop”, an initiative to foster creative development among Qatar’s youth.

This collaboration seeks to strengthen the foundation of a thriving creative industry and a robust media scene, aligning with the country’s vision for innovation and technological advancement.

The immersive game development workshop, in partnership with COREGAME and powered by Media City Qatar, was aimed at participants aged 13-17, and took place from August 12-29 at the DFI headquarters.

Conducted over 12 sessions, the workshop fused theory with practice and covered essential topics including Introduction to Game Development, Understanding Game Design, Creating Game Elements, Basic Movement, Enhancing Gameplay, Animation and Interactivity, Collectibles and Scores, and Level Design and Testing.

The workshop’s modules were delivered by experts from Geekdom and COREGAME Technology Solutions.

Instructors included Fadi Soufi and Dave Andrew, who delivered intensive and varied sessions to aspiring creative participants.

They provided practical lessons to help familiarise participants with industry-standard software like Unity, Visual Studio Code and Aseprite.

Throughout the workshop, each participant demonstrated their passion for game develop-



One of the sessions at the workshop.

ment and their eagerness to bring their ideas to life.

“We are dedicated to nurturing the next generation of creative talent,” said Media City Qatar business development director Thair Khaled al-Anani. “The ‘Geekdom Game Development Workshop’ is a perfect example of our commitment to providing young people with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.”

“We are thrilled to see the passion and creativity these young participants brought to the

table, and we look forward to supporting more initiatives like this in the future,” he said.

Abdulla al-Mosallam, founder of Geekdom and chief administrative officer of the DFI, stated: “Qatar’s creative industries have experienced significant growth over the years, driven by local talent that continues to lead the way in inventiveness and ingenuity.”

“Geek culture has become a dynamic and integral part of our creative community, providing a space where imagination thrives and new ideas are embraced,” he said.

QRCS wraps up training session with participation of 14 national societies

The Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) has concluded its emergency operations centre training session.

The week-long training session was organised in partnership with International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and brought together rep-

resentatives of 14 national societies in the Middle East and North Africa (Mena) region.

QRCS secretary-general Faisal Mohamed al-Emadi said that such training sessions enhance the relief workers’ capabilities and the national societies’ preparations to counter emergencies and disasters.

He added that such a session was also an invaluable opportunity to share skills and impart knowledge to workers in the field, elevating the level of disaster and crisis management while enforcing highest standards of planning and effective response.

Speaking virtually, IFRC regional director (Mena) Dr Hosam ElSharkawi commended the QRCS’s hosting such training sessions, which he said would enhance and share expertise with respect to preparations and response to emergencies and disasters.

He emphasised that even if there is a technological edge, the human element cannot be overlooked as they are the major component whose potential must be advanced with enhanced capabilities to serve the community in the emergency field.



Senior official in the IFRC’s risk management unit, Khaled Rabelh, said that the IFRC strives to train volunteers and staffers from national societies in Mena, bolstering their technical and administrative capabilities in managing and operating emergency operations centres through state-of-the-art technologies to ensure maximum and effective responses to emergencies and disasters that occur in the region.

The session focused on planning and surveillance, in addition to

helping workers share their expertise to efficiently address current and future challenges.

The participants underscored the importance of building a robust knowledge base that enhances societies’ readiness and those operating in managing the emergency at the centre.

Senior Disaster Management Specialist at the Saudi Red Crescent Authority, Ahmed Faisal al-Oudah, said that his participation was aimed at sharing knowledge with others in the region and to

bolster the authority’s capabilities.

Employee at the Palestinian Red Crescent’s Central Operations Room, Nihal Mousa Kurdi, said that such a training would upgrade response capabilities, especially during the ongoing humanitarian and health crises faced by the Palestinian people.

QRCS Relief and International Programmes Division director Mohamed Salah Ibrahim honoured the participants and handed over training completion certificates to them. – QNA

Qatar’s air-conditioned streets and parks boost the hospitality sector

Qatar’s air-conditioned parks, markets and spaces have become a prominent tourist destination in the past few years, attracting a large number of tourists, citizens and residents looking for entertainment services and experiences different from those available in closed spaces, especially during the summer season.

Doha features air-conditioned parks, spaces, and streets, including Al Gharafa Park, Umm Salal Mohamed Park, Souq Waqif, Galeries Lafayette, Alhazm Mall, the Dancing Fountains area at Place Vendome Mall, Lusail Boulevard, and West Walk.

Qatar has succeeded in harnessing technological progress to offer a real solution regarding the high temperatures in the summer, mitigating their impact by making many of its outdoor spaces and venues air-conditioned, a new dimension added to the list of tourism options in Qatar and promoted its competitive capabilities.

In statements to the Qatar News Agency (QNA), specialists stressed the role that these markets and air-conditioned spaces have begun to play in attracting tourists, especially during the summer season, in line with families’ desire to expand their options and not limit them to traditional entertainment venues and closed spaces.

They pointed out that a number of foreign tourists have begun to choose Qatar as a destination during the summer in light of the wider tourism options, including the availability of spaces that combine luxury with Qatari traditions and customs, such as those in Katara – the Cultural Village, Souq Waqif, or those with their world’s class designs and architecture as well as air-conditioned public parks.

Director of the Ministry of Municipality’s Parks Department, Mohamed al-Sada, told the QNA that air-conditioned parks are part of the advanced infrastructure in Qatar and are designed to adapt to the hot climate in the country.

He said that they are aimed at improving the quality of life, providing a comfortable environment for citizens, residents and tourists even in the hottest summer days.

Al-Sada added that air-conditioned parks are a comfortable venue for families and individuals to entertain themselves, enjoy green spaces and practice various sports without being exposed to the extreme summer heat.

He pointed out that these parks have cooling systems designed and implemented according to the highest sustainability standards.

Al-Sada cited Umm Al Seneem Park, which features 1.143km of air-conditioned

track, an achievement recognised by the *Guinness Book of World Records*.

Al Gharafa Park also has an air-conditioned path, at 657m, while a new park called Rawdat Al Hamama Park will be opened soon.

The official said that the air-conditioned parks in Qatar are among the first spaces launched in the world, and have attracted visitors from within Qatar and abroad, contributing to strengthening the country’s position in the field of innovation and sustainability, and employing them to serve the diversification of the economic fabric, especially in the tourism sector.

Katara public relations and communication director Salem al-Marri meanwhile said that the Cultural Village’s air-conditioned street is the first in the world.

The concerned authorities have been working since 2009 for the country to attract visitors even during the summer, which is known for high temperatures.

Al-Marri said that air-conditioned open-air attractions have become a key element of Qatar’s tourism appeal, complemented by the country’s tourism sector’s other distinctive features.

He pointed to Katara as an example of an attractive destination with a unique architectural style, enriched by an array of

events and activities, all of which contribute to an outstanding Qatari identity and appeal that increasing attracts visitors, particularly tourists seeking a blend of entertainment and culture in a refreshing summery environment.

Al-Marri noted that all this undoubtedly helps highlight Qatar’s image as a tourist destination capable of adapting to climatic change and offering a tourism product that respects Qatari traditions and heritage.

He said that this dual aspect sets the Qatari tourism sector apart, which should be further enhanced given the stereotypical image prevalent in several international tourism markets.

Al Emadi Enterprises chief executive Mohamed Abdul Karim al-Emadi told the QNA that open-air commercial spaces, along with Qatar’s entertainment and tourism projects, contribute to attracting tourists.

He said 80% of Gulf tourists visit Alhazm Mall to shop and enjoy its facilities and exhibitions held throughout the year.

The official said that Alhazm Mall is one of the ideal places in Qatar to enjoy shopping and spending time with family and friends during the summer.

Al-Emadi noted that it is among the largest projects in the Middle East, offering a well-rounded luxury experience of

art and culture in a fully air-conditioned environment.

Tourism specialist Ahmed Hussein highlighted the role air-conditioned open-air venues play in boosting and diversifying tourism activities, attracting tourists to these spots and enabling them to enjoy their services, restaurants, events, and entertainment activities.

He estimates that there has been a 30-40% increase in the number of tourists visiting these open, air-conditioned spaces compared to other closed or air-conditioned spaces.

Hussein told the QNA that Qatar has managed to successfully attract a new segment of tourists to Doha specifically for shopping, by establishing infrastructure for open-air markets and air-conditioned streets.

He added that travel specialists now promote these destinations that are becoming increasingly popular among tourists and families who seek to shop and enjoy vacations in open, air-conditioned spaces, as opposed to the closed environments they are accustomed to.

Hussein noted that air-conditioned open spaces have become part of Qatar’s infrastructure, which also includes world-class hotels and commercial spaces. – QNA

Iraq-US joint operation kills 15 IS fighters in western desert

AFP
Baghdad

A joint operation by US and Iraqi forces killed 15 Islamic State group fighters in Iraq's western desert, with seven US troops hurt during the operation, US Central Command said. The raid targeted Islamic State leaders and was carried out early Thursday morning, resulting "in the death of 15 ISIS operatives" with "no indication of civilian casualties", CENTCOM said. It said the IS fighters were "armed with numerous weapons, grenades and explosive 'suicide'

belts", and that Iraqi forces were continuing "to further exploit the locations raided". Five US troops were wounded during the raid and another two injured in falls, a defence official said. One of the wounded was evacuated for treatment, as was one of the personnel injured in a fall. All seven were in stable condition, the official said. The CENTCOM statement was posted early on Saturday, hours after the Iraqi authorities put out their own statement on the raid. The Iraqi intelligence services said "more than two months of human and technological surveillance" had allowed the identification of "four safe houses" used by the ji-

hadists. They said the dead "likely included senior leaders", adding that forensic tests were under way. The suspected IS safe houses were all hit repeatedly from the air before helicopters landed commandos at the sites, the intelligence services said. The Iraqi military regularly announces operations against IS hideouts in remote desert or mountain areas. They are currently still carried out with the support of military advisers from a US-led coalition deployed to Iraq and neighbouring Syria a decade ago when the power of IS was at its peak. Baghdad and Washington have

been engaged in months of talks over the future of anti-jihadist coalition forces in Iraq. Despite Iraq's stated goal of a full withdrawal of the forces, no timeline has been made public. The United States has some 2,500 troops in Iraq and 900 in Syria as part of the coalition against IS. Coalition forces have been targeted dozens of times with drones and rocket fire in both Iraq and Syria, as violence related to the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza that broke out in early October has drawn in Iran-backed armed groups across the Middle East. IS is now a pale reflection of the group whose fighters swept through Syria and Iraq in 2014,

proclaiming a "caliphate" in which they brutally imposed their extreme interpretation of Islamic law. After losing its last redoubts in Iraq in 2017 and in Syria in 2019, the group has been reduced to small bands of guerillas that no longer control any territory. Iraqi security forces insist they are now capable of tackling IS remnants unassisted, as the group poses no significant threat. A UN report released in July found the group's combined strength in Iraq and Syria had fallen to between 1,500 and 3,000 fighters as a result of "battlefield losses, desertions, and recruitment challenges". In Iraq, its "ac-

tivities remain largely contained but the group remains capable of sporadic, impactful attacks," the UN report found. Its "modus operandi consists of kidnapping for ransom, infrastructure disruption and the selective targeting of security forces while avoiding direct confrontations," it added. The UN said that desert areas of Al-Anbar province, where Thursday's joint operation took place, were among the group's last havens. "Western Al-Anbar, particularly Al-Rutbah and the desert in Al-Rawah, remains a significant haven and operational zone, benefiting from smuggling across the Iraqi-Syrian border," it said.

Houthi rebels say attacked ship off Yemen

AFP
Dubai

Yemen's Houthi rebels said yesterday they had attacked a merchant ship in the Gulf of Aden, as a multinational naval force said two missiles exploded near a Liberia-flagged vessel. "The Yemeni Armed Forces carried out a military operation targeting the ship (GROTON) in the Gulf of Aden," Houthi spokesman Yahya Saree said in a televised statement. He said the ship had been hit and that it was the second time it had been attacked after a similar incident on August 3. The Yemeni rebels have waged a campaign against international shipping passing through the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden that they say is in solidarity with Palestinians amid the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip. Earlier yesterday, the Joint Maritime Information Centre (JMIC), run by a Western naval coalition, reported that the Groton had been targeted by two ballistic missiles when it was 130 nautical miles east of Aden. The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) agency, run by Britain's Royal Navy, said the captain reported that all crew were safe and the Groton was "proceeding to next port of call". The Houthi attacks, targeting ships that they say are linked to Israel, have disrupted traffic in a maritime zone that is vital to global trade.

Polio vaccine campaign begins in war-torn Gaza

AFP
Gaza

A health official said a polio vaccination campaign began in Gaza yesterday, while an aid worker said a large-scale rollout would begin on Sunday, coinciding with a "humanitarian pause" agreed by Israel and Hamas. The vaccination drive was announced after Gaza recorded its first polio case in a quarter of a century earlier this month. Local health officials along with the UN and NGOs "are starting today the polio vaccination campaign", Moussa Abed, director of primary health care at the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza, told AFP yesterday. An unspecified number of children received the first dose of the vaccination, which involves two doses and is administered orally, at Nasser Hospital in the southern city of Khan Yunis. Among them was Amal Shaheen's three-year-old daughter, who was already in the hospital being treated for pneumonia. "We have been in the hospital for 17 days... I spend all my days worrying about her," Shaheen said. "Today she was vaccinated against polio to protect her, like all the children in the hospital have been vaccinated." The World Health Organisation (WHO) said on Thursday that Israel had agreed to a series of three-day "humanitarian pauses" in Gaza to facilitate vaccinations,

though officials had earlier said the campaign was expected to start on Sunday. An international aid worker told AFP that Palestinian authorities had organised a launch event on Saturday and that the vaccination campaign was still expected to begin in full on Sunday. After beginning in central Gaza, vaccines are set to be administered in southern Gaza and then in northern Gaza. The campaign aims to cover more than 640,000 children under 10 years old. Michael Ryan, WHO deputy director-general, told the UN Security Council this week that 1.26mn doses of the oral vaccine had been delivered in Gaza, with another 400,000 still to arrive. The Ramallah-based Palestinian health ministry said earlier this month that tests in Jordan had confirmed polio in an unvaccinated 10-month-old baby from central Gaza. Poliovirus is highly infectious and most often spread through sewage and contaminated water - an increasingly common problem in Gaza as the Israel-Hamas war drags on. The disease mainly affects children under the age of five. It can cause deformities and paralysis and is potentially fatal. Bakr Deeb told AFP yesterday that he brought his three children - all under 10 - to a vaccination point on Saturday despite some initial doubts about its safety. "I was hesitant at first and very afraid of the safety of this vacci-



Polio vaccine drops administered to Palestinian children at the Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip.



nation," he said. "After the assurances of its safety, and with all the families going to the vaccination points, I decided to go with my children as well, to protect them." Abed, the health official, stressed yesterday that the vaccine was "100 percent safe". Is-

rael's military campaign has killed at least 40,691 people in Gaza, according to the territory's health ministry. The UN rights office says most of the dead are women and children. Incessant Israeli bombardment has also caused a major humanitarian crisis and devastated the health system.

Tunisia groups urge inclusion of rejected candidates in poll

A petition signed by prominent Tunisians and civil society groups was published yesterday urging that rejected candidates be allowed to stand in the October 6 presidential election. Signed by 26 groups including Legal Agenda, Lawyers Without Borders and the Tunisian Human Rights League, it welcomed an administrative court decision this week to reinstate three candidates who had been disqualified. They are Imed Daimi, who was an adviser to former president

Moncef Marzouki, former minister Mondher Zenaïdi and opposition party leader Abdellatif Mekki. The three were among 14 candidates barred by the Tunisian election authority, ISIE, from standing in the election. If they do take part, they will join former parliamentarian Zouhair Maghzaoui and businessman Ayachi Zammel in challenging incumbent President Kais Saïed, whom critics accuse of authoritarianism. Saïed was democratically elected in 2019 but orchestrated

a sweeping power grab in 2021. A number of his political opponents and critics are currently in jail or being prosecuted. Saturday's petition was also signed by more than 180 civil society figures including Wahid Ferchichi, dean of the public law faculty at Carthage University. It called the administrative court "the only competent authority to adjudicate disputes related to presidential election candidates". The petition referred to statements by ISIE head Farouk Bouasker, who

on Thursday indicated that the authority will soon meet to finalise the list of candidates, "taking into consideration judicial judgements already pronounced". This has been interpreted as suggesting the ISIE may reject new candidacies if they are the subject of legal proceedings or have convictions. The administrative court's rulings on appeals "are enforceable and cannot be contested by any means whatsoever", the petition said. It called on the electoral author-

ity to "respect the law and avoid any practice that could undermine the transparency and integrity of the electoral process". Last week, Human Rights Watch said Tunisian authorities "have prosecuted, convicted or imprisoned at least eight prospective candidates" for October's vote. HRW said that the North African country was "gearing up for a presidential election amid increased repression of dissent and free speech, without crucial checks and balances on President Saïed's power".

Decades after independence, France-Algeria ties still tense

AFP
Algiers

The fraught relations between France and its former colony Algeria had eased a little in recent years, but a new rift over Paris backing Morocco's autonomy plan for disputed Western Sahara has sent rapprochement efforts into a tailspin. Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, who is seeking a second term in presidential elections on September 7, was set to travel to France for a state visit, but this has been rescheduled twice and it is now doubtful in will happen at all. Last month, Algiers withdrew its ambassador to Paris after French President Emmanuel Macron said Morocco's autonomy plan was the only solution for the territory. Algeria, which backs the territory's pro-independence Polisario Front, denounced this as a "step that no other French government had taken before". France colonised Algeria in 1830 and the North African country

only gained independence in 1962, after a war that authorities say killed more than 1.5mn Algerians. French historians say half a million civilians and combatants died during the war for independence, 400,000 of them Algerian. While France has made several attempts over the years to heal the wounds, it refuses to "apologise or repent" for the 132 years of often brutal rule that ended in the devastating eight-year war. Experts now accuse both countries of exploiting the war for present-day political ends. "The national narrative about the Algerian war is still dominant and during a campaign like the presidential election, Algerians are sensitive to these issues in their internal policy choices," Hasni Abidi of the Geneva-based CERAMAM Study Center told AFP. Abidi said Tebboune now needed to "readjust his electoral speeches to protect himself from criticism on foreign policy" after the "complete fiasco" of failed attempts to restore relations with Macron. Last week, Algeria



French President Emmanuel Macron with Algeria's President Abdelmadjid Tebboune at the Borgo Egnazia resort during the G7 Summit in Savelletri near Bari, Italy, earlier this year.

marked its Moudjahid National Day commemorating war combatants with a speech by Tebboune, in which he said France wrongly "believed it could stifle the people's revolution with iron and fire". In 2022, the two countries set up a joint commission of historians

in an attempt to mend historical differences and appease tensions. But, according to Abidi, the commission didn't work fast enough and "did not succeed in freeing itself from political supervision". The expert said France's latest move backing Morocco's plan in

Western Sahara "will deal another blow to the issue of memory" at the risk of "reopening old wounds and stigma from the colonial past". What followed France's conquest of then Ottoman ruled Algiers was the destruction of its socio-economic structures, mass displacement, and the bloody repression of numerous revolts before the war erupted in 1954. This chapter in the two countries' history has been "exploited according to their issues and interests of the moment", historian Hosni Kitouni told AFP. During the historians' debate, Algeria asked France to return the skulls of resistance fighters and historical and symbolic artifacts from 19th-century Algeria, including items that belonged to Algerian anti-colonial figure Emir Abdelkader. "These items are in museums in France, where, from a legal standpoint, their presence is illegal," Amira Zatir, an advisor at the Emir Abdelkader Foundation, told AFP. She said many of these items were stolen when French forces looted

the emir's library during the Battle of Smala in 1843. Algeria has also demanded the return of original archives from the Ottoman and colonial eras that were transferred to France before and after Algeria's independence. Algeria seeks reparations for actions committed by the former occupying power, such as the 17 nuclear tests conducted in its Sahara desert between 1960 and 1966. Mustapha Boudina, a 92-year-old former war combatant who now heads the National Association of Former Death Row Inmates, said Algeria should require even more reparations. "We need to put pressure on our enemies of the time so that they repent and apologise" for their "numerous crimes", he said. Several historians believe that recognising French colonisation as a "crime against humanity" would be more appropriate. That was exactly how Macron described it during a visit to Algiers amid his presidential campaign in 2017, sparking an outcry from the French right.

Norwegian princess marries her California shaman

AFP
Oslo

Norwegian Princess Martha Louise married American self-proclaimed shaman Durek Verrett yesterday, a union of two alternative therapy devotees that has raised eyebrows in Norway.

Martha Louise, a 52-year-old divorcee, claims to be a clairvoyant, a gift she has shared – and profited from – in books and courses.

Verrett, 49 and from California, calls himself a “sixth-generation shaman” and sells pricey gold medallions that he says save lives.

“I’m very spiritual, it’s just so nice to be with a person who embraces it,” Martha Louise said on Instagram after the couple announced their engagement in June 2022.

The pair tied the knot yesterday afternoon at a hotel in the hills of Geiranger, a picturesque village on the shores of a fjord on Norway’s west coast.

The ceremony took place under a white tent, concealing the party, with the couple having sold exclusive photo and video rights to the ceremony.

Martha Louise wore a traditional white wedding dress and a tiara given to her by her grandfather, King Olav, on her 18th birthday, according to photos taken by Norwegian press.

Durek wore a black suit with a gold cummerbund.

Aside from 87-year-old King Harald and Crown Prince Haakon who wore dark suits, the royal family was dressed in traditional Nor-



Princess Martha Louise of Norway and Durek Verrett arrive at their wedding party at Hotel Unio in Geiranger yesterday. **Right:** Norway’s King Harald, Queen Sonja, Crown Prince Haakon, Crown Princess Mette-Marit, Princess Ingrid Alexandra, and Prince Sverre Magnus pose for pictures aboard the royal yacht in the Geirangerfjord on the day of the wedding. (AFP, Reuters)



wegian dress, called bunad, made of embroidery and wool fabrics.

Festivities kicked off Thursday with a meet-and-greet party for the more than 350 guests.

According to Verrett, the nuptials are actually a renewal of the couple’s vows.

The spiritual guide, counts Hollywood celebrities Gwyneth Paltrow and Antonio Banderas among his followers.

The couple’s eccentricity has ruffled feathers in no-nonsense Norway, as has their disregard for science and their use of their royal ties for commercial gain.

To avoid confusion over her role, Martha Louise relinquished her royal duties in November 2022. She kept her title but agreed not to use it in her commercial endeavours.

She has however violated the agreement several times since then, most recently when she and Verrett released a “wedding gin” for sale in Norway that bore her princess title on the label.

“Seeing as the agreement has not been respected, it’s time to take away Martha Louise’s princess title before King Harald sees his life’s work destroyed even further,” historian and royal expert Trond Noren Isaksen wrote in an op-ed in July.

The couple has also angered Norwegian media by signing deals with *Hello!* magazine and Netflix for exclusive coverage of the wedding.

Martha Louise has three daughters from her first marriage to Norwegian author Ari Behn, who killed

himself three years after their 2016 divorce.

She is fourth in line to the Norwegian throne; her younger brother Crown Prince Haakon is due one day to succeed King Harald.

Norway’s royal family has been largely spared from scandal – until recently.

Martha Louise and Verrett have contributed to an erosion of public support for the monarchy, from 81% in 2017 to 68%, a poll by public broadcaster NRK showed this week.

A recent scandal involving the 27-year-old son of Crown Princess Mette-Marit – from a relationship prior to her marriage to Crown Prince Haakon – has also contributed.

Earlier this month, Marius Borg

Hoiby admitted to a cocaine- and alcohol-fuelled assault on his girlfriend, and two ex-girlfriends have since come forward with similar claims.

Four in 10 Norwegians said their view of the royal family had grown more negative in the past year, with many citing Martha Louise, Verrett or Hoiby as the reason, the poll showed.

Martha Louise has accused the media of pursuing a witch hunt against her.

But it is Verrett who has received the most criticism, labelled a “charlatan and a quack” in the press.

In one of his books, he suggested that cancer was a choice.

On his website, he sells a \$222 “Spirit Optimiser” medallion

which he says helped him overcome Covid.

While Verrett has acknowledged his beliefs may be unsettling for some, he claims he is a victim of racism.

“White people write all this hate and death threats to us... because... they don’t want to see a black man in the royal family,” he said on Instagram in June 2022.

Meanwhile, King Harald – who fought for years to be allowed to marry Queen Sonja, a commoner – has said little about his future son-in-law, referring only to a “culture clash”.

He has described him as “a great guy and very funny”.

“We’ve agreed to disagree” on some things, the king said in November 2022.

Indigenous mothers fight to search CIA experiment site

AFP
Montreal

A group of Indigenous women are hoping to stop the bulldozers at a former Montreal hospital which they believe could hold the truth about children still missing from a grisly half-century-old CIA experiment.

They have spent the last two years trying to delay the construction project by McGill University and the Quebec government.

“They took our children and had all kinds of things done to them. They were experimenting on them,” said Kahentinetha, an 85-year-old activist from the Mohawk community of Kahnawake, southwest of Montreal, who goes by just one name.

The activists are relying on archives and testimonies that suggest the site contains unmarked graves of children formerly interned at the Royal Victoria Hospital and Allan Memorial Institute, a neighbouring psychiatric hospital.

In the 1950s and 1960s, behind the austere walls of the old psychiatric institute, the US Central Intelligence Agency funded a human experiments programme called MK Ultra.

During the Cold War, the programme aimed to develop procedures and drugs to effectively brainwash people. Experiments were conducted in Britain, Canada and the United States, subjecting

people – including Indigenous children in Montreal – to electroshocks, hallucinogenic drugs, and sensory deprivation.

“They wanted to erase us,” said Kahentinetha.

A leading figure in the Indigenous rights movement who has travelled to Britain and the United States to denounce colonialism, she called this fight “the most important of (her) life.”

“We want to know why they did this and who’s going to take the blame for it,” she said.

In the fall of 2022, the mothers obtained an injunction to suspend work on a new university campus and research centre at the site – a project worth Can\$870mn (US\$643mn).

Fellow activist Kwetio, 52, who also uses just one name, said they insisted on arguing the case themselves without lawyers, “because in our ways, no one speaks for us.”

Last summer, sniffer dogs and specialised probes were brought in to search the property’s expansive and dilapidated buildings. They managed to identify three areas of interest for excavations.

But, according to McGill and the government’s Societe Quebecoise des Infrastructure (SQI), “no human remains have been discovered.”

The Mohawk mothers accuse the university and the government infrastructure agency of breaching an agreement by selecting the archaeologists who did the search and then ending their work too soon.

Brazil block on X takes effect as Musk blasts ‘dictator’ judge

AFP
Brasilia

A block on Elon Musk’s X social network in Brazil started to take effect early yesterday after a Supreme Court judge ordered its suspension, according to AFP.

Brazilian Supreme Court judge Alexandre de Moraes on Friday ordered the suspension of the platform following a months-long standoff with the tech billionaire over disinformation in South America’s largest nation.

Moraes handed down the ruling after Musk failed to comply with an order to name a new legal representative for the company.

Early yesterday access to X was no longer possible for some users in the South American country, who were presented with a message asking them to reload the browser without being able to log in successfully.

Musk, who also owns Tesla and SpaceX, reacted with fury to the judge’s order, branding Moraes an “evil dictator cosplaying as a judge” and accusing him of “trying to destroy democracy in Brazil.”

“Free speech is the bedrock of democracy and an unelected pseudo-judge in Brazil is destroying it for political purposes,” the billionaire, who has become increasingly aligned with right-wing politics, wrote on X.

The two have been locked in an ongoing, high-profile feud for months as Moraes leads a battle against disinformation in Brazil.

Musk has previously declared himself a “free speech absolutist,” but since he took over the platform formerly known as Twitter in 2022 he has been accused of turning it into a megaphone for right-wing conspiracy theories.

He is a vocal supporter of former US president Donald Trump’s bid to regain the White House.



A Brazilian user of the social network X browses posts on a cell phone in Brasilia yesterday. Despite the court order, some users are still able to access the social network’s pages in the country. (AFP)

Moraes ordered the “immediate, complete and comprehensive suspension of the operation of” X in the country, telling the national communications agency to take “all necessary measures” to implement the order within 24 hours.

He threatened a fine of 50,000 reais (\$8,900) to anyone who used “technological subterfuges” to get around the block, such as a VPN.

The judge also demanded Google, Apple and Internet providers “introduce technological obstacles capable of preventing the use of the X application” and access to the website – though he later walked back that order.

The social media platform has more than 22mn users in Brazil. Musk shut X’s business operations in Brazil earlier this month, claiming Moraes had threatened the company’s previous legal representative with arrest to force compliance with “censorship orders.” On Wednesday, Moraes told Musk he had 24 hours to find a new representative or he would face suspension.

Harris says Trump ‘disrespected sacred ground’ at US military cemetery

AFP
Washington

Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris said yesterday that her Republican rival Donald Trump “disrespected sacred ground” at a US military cemetery after reports that his campaign team pushed a staff member during a politicised visit.

Trump’s cemetery visit – intended to provide a campaign boost ahead of November’s election – has instead mushroomed into a public dispute between the former president and the military.

“Let me be clear: the former president disrespected sacred ground, all for the sake of a political stunt,” Harris said of Monday’s incident at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, where Trump was accompanying relatives of US service members killed in Afghanistan.

“If there is one thing on which we as Americans can all agree, it is that our veterans, military families, and service members should be honoured, never disparaged, and treated with nothing less than our highest respect and gratitude,” Harris wrote on X.

On Thursday, the US Army confirmed that a cemetery staff member had been pushed aside after asking Trump’s team to stop filming in a burial section for those killed in recent wars, where photography is banned.

The military condemned the incident as “unfortunate.”

Meanwhile, Trump’s campaign team has gone on the offensive by describing the employee as a “despicable individual” and claiming she was suffering a mental health episode.

Trump has made criticism of Biden’s handling of the retreat from Afghanistan a keynote of his campaign, arguing that he would have managed it better.

He attended the cemetery with families of some of the 13 service members killed in a 2021 bombing in Kabul during the last hours of the US withdrawal.

After the visit to the Arlington cemetery, Trump’s campaign posted a photo of the former president standing with the relatives and giving a thumbs-up gesture.

The uproar over the incident is the latest in a long line of controversies over Trump’s relationship with the military.

While often touting his support for the armed forces, he privately mocked the war dead while he was president and did not want to be seen near military amputees, according to his former chief of staff.

Reporters cry foul with little access to stars at Venice festival

Hollywood’s biggest stars are at the Venice Film Festival this year, but some international cinema journalists say they are being cut out of interviews, in a threat to their profession.

Angelina Jolie, Nicole Kidman, Michael Keaton and Jude Law have already arrived in Venice for the prestigious festival running through September 7, with Brad Pitt and George Clooney expected to hit the Lido today.

But the opportunities to interview these big names are few and far between, claim about 100 journalists who have signed an open letter of protest.

“The festival is bringing names to achieve prestige and media exposure but then seem to develop amnesia when it comes to the actual journalists,” wrote the letter, posted this week on the private Facebook group International Film Festivals Journalists.

So-called press “junkets” – in which directors and their casts accord short, filmed interviews, one after the other, to journalists in advance of their films – have almost disappeared this year except for the biggest media outlets.

Instead, those who are left out must rely on press conferences organised by the festival, or stars’ appearances on the red carpet.

A French press officer told AFP that distributors could no longer afford the high cost of interview slots charged by studios.

“Cinema journalism is in danger of extinction” wrote the letter, which added that interviews with big stars help freelance journalists continue working, which allows them to cover lesser-known films and emerging talent.

The freelance journalists say they have seen the



Cast members Antonio Banderas and Nicole Kidman speak as they attend the red carpet during arrivals for the screening of the movie *Babygirl*, in competition, at the 81st Venice Film Festival. (Reuters)

trend growing at other film

festivals including at Cannes

and Berlin, but “the scope of (stars’) unavailability during this upcoming festival is unprecedented.”

On the festival’s first day Wednesday, a German freelancer confronted the festival’s director, Alberto Barbera at a press conference, asking him to intercede.

“We are coming here to work and the interaction this year is not possible because we are not given any interviews,” she said.

“No junkets are happening.” Barbera said he was not aware of the issue, but noted that the festival does not organise such interviews and had little power to influence them, calling them “marketing choices that must be respected.”

The organiser of the international journalists group, Italian freelancer Marco Consoli, said there had been no official reaction to the letter.

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GULF TIMES

Rising sea levels complicate efforts to mitigate climate change

Rising sea levels have a significant impact on global climate, influencing weather patterns, ecosystems, and human communities.

Higher sea levels often lead to more powerful and frequent coastal storms, such as hurricanes and typhoons. These storms may become destructive due to the higher starting point of storm surges.

As sea levels rise, the distribution of heat in the oceans changes, which may disrupt major ocean currents like the Gulf Stream. This can alter global climate patterns, potentially leading to changes in temperature and precipitation in various regions.

Rising seas inundate coastal wetlands, mangroves, and estuaries, which are crucial for biodiversity.

As sea levels rise, saltwater infiltrate freshwater systems, including rivers and aquifers. This harms freshwater species and disrupt agricultural practices dependent on freshwater.

Higher sea levels increase the risk of coastal erosion and permanent flooding, threatening infrastructure, homes, and livelihoods. Low-lying areas and small island nations are particularly vulnerable.

The Pacific Islands can expect additional sea level rise of 15cm by 2050 if the pollution levels do not drop

three times the rate worldwide, and its population was “uniquely exposed” to the impact of rising sea levels.

At the Pacific Islands Forum in Tonga recently, Guterres highlighted the findings of a report that showed the South West Pacific was worst hit by sea level rises, in some places by more than double the global average in the past 30 years.

“Rising seas are amplifying the frequency and severity of storm surges and coastal flooding. These floods swamp coastal communities. Ruin fisheries. Damage crops. Contaminate fresh water. All this puts Pacific Island nations in grave danger,” he said.

Water expands as it warms, contributing to sea level rise, he said.

He called for global leaders to “massively boost climate adaptation investments” in vulnerable countries.

A “loss and damage” fund to help poor nations cope with costly climate disasters was approved at last year’s UN climate summit, after years of lobbying by groups including the Pacific Islands, opens new tab, but the challenge remains to attract significant contributions to the fund from wealthier nations.

“Developed countries must deliver on their finance commitments – including the commitment to double adaptation finance to at least \$40bn a year by 2025,” Guterres noted.

Many scientists blame the planet’s rising temperatures on pollution from fossil fuel use. Guterres said the Pacific Islands can expect additional sea level rise of 15 centimetres by 2050 if the pollution levels do not drop.

Guterres urged world leaders to greatly increase the level of climate-related investments, especially for at-risk countries, to help fight the problem.

Rising sea levels are both a consequence and a driver of global climate change, with far-reaching implications for the environment, human societies, and the global economy at large.

Undoubtedly, rising sea levels complicate efforts to mitigate climate change.

Addressing this issue requires comprehensive strategies that include mitigation, adaptation, and resilience-building.

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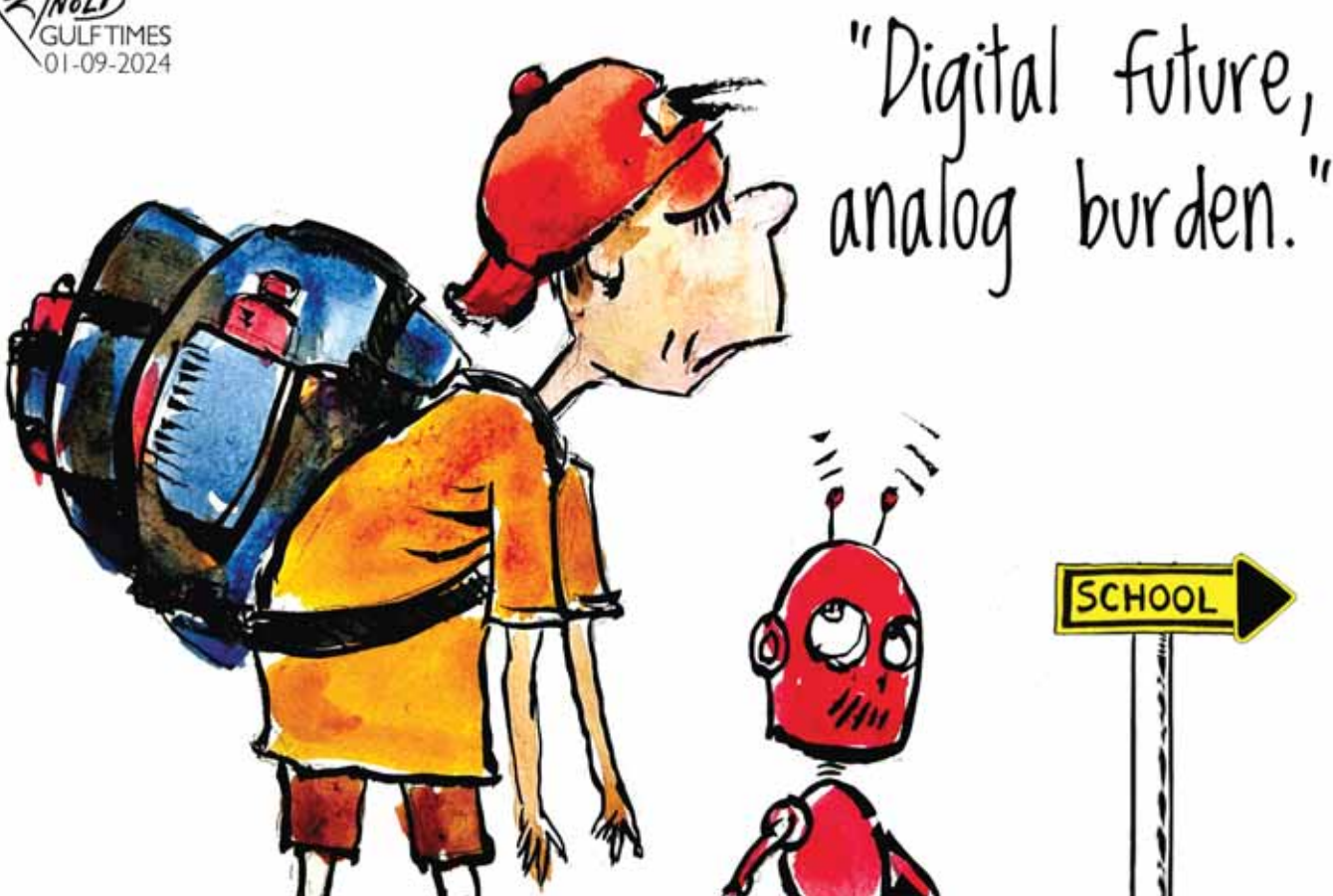
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REYNOLD
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A new political ‘youthquake’

By Binaifer Nowrojee

Washington, DC

Six months ago, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s grip on power in Bangladesh appeared unbreakable. The ruling Awami League had just won a fourth successive term in an uncontested election, allowing it to remain in full control of the country’s institutions. With journalists, human-rights defenders, opposition members, and other critics facing politically motivated prosecution, prison, exile, and forced disappearance, the country’s continued descent into authoritarianism seemed certain.

But suddenly, in July, student-led protests erupted across the country, fuelled by outrage over a quota system that allocates government jobs to the ruling party’s allies. The state’s response – a violent crackdown that claimed more than 400 lives – revealed the brittleness of Hasina’s 15-year rule. In scenes reminiscent of the Sri Lankan “Aragalaya” mass protests that ended the rule of the Rajapaksa family in 2022, young Bangladeshis forced Hasina to resign and flee into exile.

Bangladesh is the latest in a series of youth-driven uprisings that have shaken countries in Asia and Africa this year. In February, young Pakistanis delivered a shock result when, defying the military, they voted en masse for the imprisoned former prime minister Imran Khan, giving his allies the highest number of votes and seats in parliament.

The following month, young Senegalese voters reclaimed their democracy in an election that was nearly stolen from them. Bassirou Diomaye Faye, a little-known tax inspector, was catapulted from prison to the presidency in the space of just a few weeks.

Then, in June, the tremors reached Kenya, where protesters, proudly identifying themselves as “Gen Z”, took to the streets to express their outrage against President William Ruto’s plan to introduce new taxes on essential items. As in Bangladesh, the authorities responded with lethal violence, killing dozens and injuring hundreds. Ultimately, though, Ruto was forced to withdraw the bill. Now attention has turned to Nigeria, which has been jolted by protests over the rising cost of living.

A new generation is asserting itself in parts of Asia and Africa. Young people are spontaneously forming protest movements and forging rare coalitions. This is the first generation that has not known life before the internet, and they are using social media not just to announce and live-stream street protests, but also to organise and debate.

In the process, they are devising innovative tactics, including the use of artificial intelligence, and creating new spaces by holding digital demonstrations when the streets are closed off to them. In response, governments have

unleashed their own techno-repression, from throttling the internet to shutting it down altogether.

These movements also are unsettling conventional views of politics, transcending traditional ethnic and political divides, and often shunning traditional political parties and civil-society organisations. It is typically assumed that populism and authoritarianism are complementary forces, yet here we see expressions of populism challenging authoritarianism – and by a generation that is proving to be both fearless and uncompromising. Far from deterring them, state violence has often hardened their resolve.

Of course, it would be a mistake to overstate this “youthquake” or to generalise across two vast continents. Gen-Z protesters are not monolithic, nor are they all idealistic in their ambitions. Like any other age cohort, the young are politically divided. In Bangladesh, for example, the ruling party’s thuggish youth wing, the Chhatra League, was partly responsible for the violence.

While Senegal had a

relatively smooth transition, owing to the resilience of its institutions, Bangladesh is on a more uncertain path, with the threat of violence and civil disorder still hanging over the country. Recent reprisals against members of the Awami League and attacks on the Hindu minority show how the taste of victory can lead some to temptations of vengeance.

Nonetheless, there are striking similarities. In each case mentioned above, people between the ages of 15 and 34 constitute at least one-third of the total population. Despite strong economic growth of around 6% per year, Bangladesh struggles with 15% youth unemployment. And many of these countries are weighed down by heavy debt burdens, using between 20% and 60% of government expenditures to keep their creditors at bay – a sum that dwarfs public spending on education, health, and urgently needed climate action.

It’s no coincidence that these protests are taking place in some of the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world.

The protests were sparked in many cases by the

announcement of new measures that would have inflicted more economic pain on young people – whether it was regressive taxes in Kenya, the unfair allocation of jobs in Bangladesh, or the rising cost of living in Nigeria. But these moves merely set aflame a tinderbox of grievances that had accumulated over decades. Young people are despairing not just the lack of economic prospects, but also their rulers’ greed, the state’s brutality, and a general unresponsiveness to their needs. There is an impatience with the status quo. They want to sweep away old, outdated orders and reimagine their political systems.

But this change will not come easily, nor is it guaranteed. A decade ago, youthful revolts also broke out across the Arab world, toppling dictatorships and rousing hopes for a more just and equitable order. To avoid those failures, the openings this moment has created will have to quickly be seized and built upon – and the dangers will have to be carefully navigated. – Project Syndicate

• Binaifer Nowrojee is President of the Open Society Foundations.



Students chant slogans near a vandalised mural of Bangladesh’s ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina during a protest demanding accountability and trial against Hasina in Dhaka last month. (AFP)



Qatar: A lush green oasis for sustainable culture

QNA
Doha

Driven by its commitment to promoting a culture of sustainability and its dedication to making the country a lush green oasis as part of its National Vision 2030, Qatar has been keen on embedding green culture into the consciousness of its people, making it a lifestyle for everyone. This has been achieved through numerous governmental and non-governmental initiatives aimed at making sustainability and a green environment an integral part of the lives of both citizens and residents in Qatar. One of the key mechanisms the state employs to enhance green culture and environmental awareness is the esteemed Cabinet's approval for all government entities and ministries to take part in marking Qatar Environment Day, which falls on February 26 each year. This observance aims to highlight the importance of developing appropriate technologies to address climate change, adopting clean energy, and increasing green spaces in a region with a desert climate, which, like the rest of the world, is affected by geographical changes and climatic shifts.

Qatar, represented by the Ministry of Municipality, has been keen to launch numerous national initiatives to expand green spaces in the country. Among the most significant are the "One Million Trees Initiative" and the "Ten Million Trees Initiative", which aim to enhance the quality of life in cities and achieve sustainable development. These efforts have contributed to all eight Qatari municipalities accredited as healthy cities by the World Health Organisation (WHO), with seven Qatari cities also joining the Unesco Global Network of Learning Cities.

This commitment does not stop with initiatives alone, as various state institutions, including the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, the Ministry of Municipality, and all entities involved in education, culture, and the arts, actively organise events that focus on environmental education and promoting green culture. A notable example is Qatar's six-month hosting of the horticultural exhibition "Expo 2023 Doha", which highlighted the latest and most important Qatari and global initiatives, innovations, and efforts in modern agriculture, urban greening, and vegetation cover.

The exhibition took place from Oct 2, 2023–March 28, 2024, marking the first time such an event was held in a desert climate region, under the theme "Green Desert, Better Environment." Expo 2023 Doha was based around four subthemes: Modern Agriculture, Technology and Innovation, Environmental Awareness, and Sustainability. It also aimed to enhance international co-operation on environmental, cultural, and financial issues, addressing the shared global challenge of desertification, and inviting the global horticultural sector to exchange knowledge and expertise, guiding the region towards implementing the concept of a green city.

In an exclusive statement to Qatar News Agency (QNA), Director of Events and Corporate Communications at Expo 2023 Doha Haifa al-Otaibi underlined that Expo 2023 Doha succeeded in instilling a green culture within the community, noting that this success is evident through various indicators, including attracting 4mn visitors and organising over 7,000 events focused on sustainability, as well as the quality and diversity of the events that included 54 national celebrations, 124 conferences and seminars, 198 events for ministries and government agencies, 601 stage performances, and 1,727 workshops about topics such as sustainability, environmental awareness, modern agriculture, technology, and innovation in the field of agriculture, among others, which reflect the public's commitment to environmental issues.

She also noted that success was further demonstrated through collaboration with key partners to integrate sustainable practices into all Expo operations, as well as promoting innovative environmental solutions such as the use of biodegradable materials and sustainable technology in buildings and activities.

"We worked with a distinguished group of leading institutions, such as Qatar Airways Group, Hamad International Airport, Ooredoo, Qatar National Bank (QNB), Msheireb Downtown Doha, Microsoft, and Mazzratty, among others," al-Otaibi said, adding that the partners fully collaborated with Expo 2023 Doha and contributed to making it an attractive global event that highlights technological advancements and contemporary agriculture and horticulture methods.

Al-Otaibi explained that the achievements and successes of the exhibition will be transformed into long-term initiatives that promote a sustainable green culture through strategic partnerships with leading institutions in their fields. "Our goal is to integrate sustainable practices into economic and social sectors, benefiting from the green innovations and technology showcased during the event," she noted.

She also emphasised the need to continue encouraging local projects and initiatives that support sustainability and green innovation, including the use of sustainable materials and renewable energy technologies, pointing out that education and awareness are fundamental pillars, and workshops, seminars, and educational programmes will continue to be organised to raise awareness about the importance of sustainability and empower the next generation of leaders and innovators in this field, with the aim of building a greener and more sustainable future for Qatar and the world.

She said that the upcoming vision, as part of the ongoing strategy to sustain Qatar's green culture, involves advancing and maintaining Qatar's green



culture by solidifying the achievements made at Expo 2023 Doha, stressing that it is crucial to build on this success by launching new and sustainable initiatives, expanding environmental awareness programs to reach more segments of society and enhance co-operation with international partners to exchange knowledge and expertise in sustainability and green technology to ensure that Qatar remains at the forefront of environmental innovation and sustainability at the global level.

Al-Otaibi also emphasised that the role expected from the State and civil society institutions in leveraging this legacy involves continuous integration and cooperation between these institutions to support and implement sustainable projects that enhance the culture of sustainability and green innovation in Qatar. This includes developing educational and awareness programs targeting all segments of society to increase awareness of the importance of sustainability and how to contribute effectively, investing in new research and technologies that support sustainability and environmental conservation, and developing smart and green cities, she added.

She underlined the importance of encouraging innovations and projects that lead to improved quality of life while preserving natural resources, and strengthening partnerships between the public and private sectors to fund and implement sustainable initiatives that contribute to the development of infrastructure, sustainable agriculture, and green technology, thereby solidifying the State of Qatar's position as a model of sustainability.

The environment in Qatar has been a constant source of inspiration for creators in the fields of scientific and academic research on nature and in the field of literature and arts, where they celebrated and inspired it in their works, calling for the preservation of its natural and aesthetic elements and treasures, and contributed with their writings to spreading awareness about the environment.

Many books have addressed the promotion of environmental culture, most notably the *Environment and Climate Challenges: Reality and Ambitions* book by Dr Mohamed bin Saif al-Kuwari, an environmental expert and engineering consultant in the office of HE the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, focused throughout its five chapters on the definition of the subject of the environment in science and knowledge, and provided a scientific explanation of the causes of the phenomenon of global warming and its negative effects on the planet.

Dr al-Kuwari affirmed in a statement that culture, literature, and scientific research all play an important role in establishing awareness about the environment and preserving it, appreciating the efforts of creative writers, authors, and artists in this field, as the environment was the most important source of inspiration for them.

He said that the best ways to promote and spread environmental culture lie in focusing on education and media to build a generation aware of the importance of the environment and its preservation through educational curricula, workshops, and educational seminars that clarify the negative effects of pollution and practices in dealing with nature on the present and future of the individual and society, calling on the private sector to support the states efforts and contribute effectively to promoting and spreading culture and awareness about the environment and adopting ambitious initiatives to preserve it.

The Qatari poet and novelist Mohamed Ibrahim al-Sada is one of the creators who drew inspiration from nature in their poetic experiences, as he employs the elements of the natural and social environment in his poems. This passion for nature and the environment has been reflected in the titles and contents of his poetry collections, such as *On the Sand of the Gulf*, *Dunes and Waves*, *Watering Hole*, and *Letters through the Moon*.

The poet also employed nature in his educational poems for children in his two collections, *Hymns of the Nightingales*, and *Tunes of the Buds*.

The poet's passion for nature and his celebration of it in his creative works extends to his narrative experience, including his novel *My Boat Will Return*, published by the Ministry of Culture in 2023, in which the author

transports us in his narrative style to the world of the 1930s, social life, and human relations in the Qatari environment.

In a similar statement, al-Sada said that artists are a product of their environment, emphasising that he has been influenced by the Qatari environment with its dunes, sea waves, beaches, meadows, as well as its people, customs, social relations, and the heritage to which he belongs and carries the history of the ancestors.

The Qur'anic Botanic Garden (QBG) is the first of its kind in the world to grow plants mentioned in the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

The garden aims to promote and disseminate knowledge of the plants, botanic terms, and conservation principles. The garden consistently promotes and consolidates the green culture in Qatari society.

Since its launch in 2008, QBG has been instilling a green culture in Qatari society, hosting the UN campaign to plant 1bn trees in Education City in 2010. Since then, the park has launched its 'plant 2,022 trees' campaign, an initiative to promote environmental awareness and encourage tree planting.

QBG named the campaign Ghars, inspired by the Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that encourages planting trees while referring to the reward for this work until the Day of Judgment.

Director of the Qur'anic Botanical Garden Fatima bint Saleh al-Khulaifi said in a statement that the main objectives of the campaign were to raise awareness of the importance of trees, emphasise the need to plant them for their environmental benefits and educate the community on how to plant and care for them.

She noted that the QBG extends over a green oasis in the heart of Education City in Doha, where it contains more than 77 plant species with an area of 25,000sq m and includes 1,700 trees and 15,000 shrubs and herbaceous plants, as this garden is the ideal choice for families and lovers of gardens and parks because of the comfortable view of the eye surrounded by the unique design of the gardens that include this green and flowering group of plants and trees.

Al-Khulaifi explained that the park contains a Plant Resource Conservation Programme that includes a unique nursery that is rich in a large number of plants native to Qatar, as well as ornamental plants and plants mentioned in the Holy Qur'an and the Hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him), noting that the park works closely in Rawdat Al Faras, where the garden was rehabilitated by planting more than 350 wild trees in it, representing an initial stage within the framework of the garden revitalisation programme launched by the park in co-operation with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, as it evaluates the environmental impact of replanting in terms of its impact on the vital system of the garden, stressing the parks keenness on the participation of the community with it in planting these trees as part of the solution in reviving the Qatari ecosystems.

Al-Khulaifi pointed out that the QBG recently launched an ambitious programme to distribute more than 2.5mn trees over the next decade to improve the ecosystem and combat desertification as part of its contribution, as Qatar has pledged to plant 10mn trees under the Middle East Green Initiative (MGI) which is part of Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV 2030) and supports environmental sustainability by distributing local trees whose seeds have been carefully collected and planted in the gardens nursery.

"A Flower Each Spring" programme, which instils environmental values in new generations, and "A Flower Every Spring" which was launched in 1999 and was officially merged with Qur'anic Botanic Garden's programmes in 2016, aim to instil environmental values in present and future generations in appreciation of the blessings of Allah, and to achieve a sustainable environment.

Head of the "A Flower Each Spring" programme, Dr Saif Ali al-Hajari, said that the programme's message is to explore the beauty of the homeland, from its enchanting natural environment to its dazzling built environment. The programme works to promote positive behaviour towards the natural environment among young people, and to raise awareness of the

importance of preserving the environment from deterioration and desertification, in addition to developing innovative and creative capabilities in the areas of sustainable development, along with encouraging industrial and economic activities to adopt the concept of green industry.

This programme has succeeded throughout its journey in changing the behaviour of the youth and introducing them to their environment. A number of environmental initiatives has emerged from this program to keep pace with and provide solutions to many environmental problems, including the 'My Country's Tree' initiative, which aims at increasing the green area in the country, supporting biodiversity, raising awareness of the importance of vegetation in preserving the environment, adding joy and beauty to the Qatari environment and its cities, contributing to reducing global warming and climate change, identifying the economic and medical benefits of plants and urging their good use, in addition to introducing and localising types of trees that are able to adapt to Qatari local environment, Dr al-Hajari said.

Throughout its journey of over 25 years, the programme will remain evidence of Qatar's keenness to promote green culture in society, as embodied by the "A Flower Each Spring" programme and related initiatives, events and forums accompanying the International Horticultural Exhibition "Expo 2023 Doha" which concluded last March, Dr al-Hajari added.

Regarding the role of this programme in promoting plant culture, he said that 'A Flower Each Spring' programme continues to mobilise all efforts to enhance values that enable the achievement of sustainable development goals, noting the importance of the role of individuals affiliated with governmental, civil and private institutions, and the advancement of common concepts and the benefit of all efforts.

Dr al-Hajari added that it was necessary to build strong programmes and carry out activities capable of transforming these goals into behaviour, and ensuring that wishes are embodied in the form of real results, especially those principles related to environmental issues.

Civil Society Efforts are Present in Promoting Green Culture In addition to efforts of the government sector, the civil society's efforts clearly promote green culture, as a number of private institutions are popular in spreading environmental awareness, including the Friends of the Environment Centre (FEC), which was established in 1992 and is affiliated with the Ministry of Sports and Youth.

The FEC's philosophy is based on deepening environmental awareness in the Qatari community, developing knowledge, skills and environmental behaviour, instilling a sense of responsibility in individuals, deepening the sense of the importance of the environment in development, in addition to highlighting the country's efforts in preserving the environment, introducing the activities of public and private agencies directly related to the environment, working to form groups of environmental friends in clubs, schools, universities, public and private bodies, encouraging private institutions to donate to implement environmental projects to preserve the components of the environment, conducting scientific research related to environmental matters and publishing distinguished ones, and establishing an environmental information base for school students every year with the aim of spreading environmental awareness.

Another pioneering community initiative is 'Qatar e-Nature', a website and an interactive smartphone application that sheds light on the rich diversity of the environment in Qatar, with the aim of supporting the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030 in promoting sustainable development by contributing to raising environmental awareness in society.

The app and website contain detailed and documented information about birds and their sounds, plants, insects, mammals, reptiles, marine life, and nature reserves in Qatar.

Qatar Green Building Council, a member of Qatar Foundation, is a non-profit membership organization that promotes collaboration and leadership in the implementation of environmentally sustainable practices in the design and development of green buildings in Qatar.

Established in 2009, the council aims to support the overall health and sustainability of the environment, people and economic security for generations to come.

Through the council, Qatar has joined a network of 80 different countries that have active national green building councils under the World Green Building Council.

In order to raise awareness and knowledge of green building practices, the council builds the capacity of professionals in this sector through continuous professional development and research.

Qatar Green Building Council projects are based on three main pillars: developing technical expertise, research and innovation, and education and training in the field of sustainability.

A group of environmental activists also established the 'Al Shabbana Association' in March 2016, with the aim of spreading awareness among the community about the need to preserve its environment.

'Al-Shabbana', a name that goes back to a tree that has become rare in Qatar, which rings the alarm bell for the need to preserve what remains of the environmental memory in the country. The association aims to save all wild plants by planting them in the Al-Faq'a Reserve, which is located in "Masra Khattaf" area in the north of the country. It was established in 1997 and works to care for wild plants, and encourage families and children to care for them in the wilderness, and plant them in wild seedlings.





LuLu Hypermarket holds prize distribution ceremony for ‘Shop & Win’ promotion

LuLu Hypermarket recently hosted a grand prize distribution ceremony at its regional office on D-Ring Road, Doha.

The event celebrated the winners of the mega e-raffle draw for the “Win 1mn Riyals Cash/Gift Vouchers + 1mn Loyalty Points” promotion.

Among the lucky winners were Fayis Njarakattil Mohamed Asharaf, who won the first prize of QR100,000 (Coupon No 105338907), and Raymond Cyril Miranda (Coupon No 99380715) and Rekha Kumari (Coupon No 102749726), who each won the second prize of QR50,000.

The winners of loyalty points included Kamalam Krishnakumar, who secured 100,000 loyalty points (Coupon No 96657177), and Mohamed Elias (Coupon No 96148916) and Snibin Baby (Coupon No. 102543883), who each received 50,000 loyalty points.

Shajian M O, the regional director of LuLu Hypermarket Qatar, and Shanavas P

M, the regional manager, personally presented the prizes to the winners.

The event was attended by LuLu officials and staff members.

In addition to the grand prizes, a total of 288 winners were selected during the promotion, including recipients of cash, gift vouchers, and loyalty points.

LuLu Hypermarket Group also rewarded QR25,000 worth of LuLu vouchers to four winners, QR10,000 in LuLu vouchers to 30 winners, QR5,000 in LuLu vouchers to 50 winners, and QR2,500 in LuLu vouchers to 60 winners.

Additionally, four winners received 25,000 loyalty points, 30 winners received 10,000 loyalty points, 50 winners received 5,000 loyalty points, and 60 winners received 2,500 loyalty points.

This resulted in a total giveaway of QR1mn in cash, gift vouchers, and 1mn loyalty points among the lucky shoppers who participated in the “Shop to Win” campaign.



LuLu officials with the winners.

2nd edition of Katara Book Fair kicks off on October 13

Katara – the Cultural Village Foundation has announced the launch of the second “Katara Book Fair” on the sidelines of the “Novel Week” activities, which will be held from October 13–20.

Boasting of the participation of various publishing houses and a large number of major local libraries, the weeklong event is aimed at facilitating readers’ access to Qatari publishing houses, and to keep up with their latest releases in one place.

The book fair is aimed at contributing to spreading the culture of reading among the public, and support local publishing houses.

The fair will focus on Arabic literature books in all its forms, poetry, novels and criticism, in line with the Arab Novel Week.

The opening ceremony of the Katara Festival for the Arab Novel is expected to take place on October 13, and will include the opening of the second Katara Book Fair.

This year, the Katara Festival for Arabic Novel celebrates the 10th anniversary of the launch of the Katara Prize for Arabic Novels.

The winners from the shortlist of nine, which was recently announced, will be announced during the festival.

Katara celebrated the first launch of the Novel Week at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) in Paris on October 2022, during which the winning works of the 8th Katara Prize for Arabic Novel were announced.

The total value of the Katara Prize for Arabic Novel in its various branches is approximately



A snapshot from the previous edition of the book fair.

\$375,000, of which \$90,000 are for the category of published novels, with three winners receiving \$30,000 each.

Under the category of unpublished novels are three prizes totalling \$90,000.

Under the category of studies in criticism of the unpublished novel are three prizes of \$30,000 each, for a total of \$90,000.

Under the category of unpublished novels for young writers, three winners will win \$15,000 each.

The sole winner in the category of published Qatari novels will receive \$30,000.

The sole winner of the unpublished historical novel category will receive a cash prize of \$30,000.



The membership campaign is themed ‘QNL4ALL.’

QNL launches ‘QNL4ALL’ membership campaign

The Qatar National Library (QNL) has launched its 2024 September Membership Campaign, offering new subscribers the chance to enter a prize draw.

Themed “QNL4ALL”, the annual initiative reflects the QNL’s commitment to serving the community by offering free access to knowledge and resources and showcasing its continuous efforts to meet the diverse needs of existing and new members.

To encourage new members to join the QNL community, the QNL has organised a prize draw with two lucky winners to be chosen at random.

For an opportunity to be selected, residents who sign up to become a member of the Library during September will need to download the QNL mobile app and borrow at least five books, either physical or digital, to enter.

Winners will be announced on November, 17.

Becoming a member is free of charge and grants access to the QNL’s collections and services.

In addition, to celebrate avid book readers, the QNL will reward its top 15 book borrowers of the 2023–2024 year with special library gifts, split evenly among children, young adults, and adults.

“QNL4ALL isn’t just a slogan – it’s a promise,” said QNL access officer Fatma al-Sahli. “It embodies our commitment to breaking down barriers to knowledge, learning and culture, ensuring that our diverse range of resources and services reaches every member of the community.”

“We continue to implement advanced technology to enhance our members’ experience, offering unparalleled digital access that connects our community with a global repository of knowledge,” she said.

Joining the QNL provides more than just access to an expansive collection of more than 1mn physical books in 16 languages – it provides a gateway to a world of resources and services including exclusive digital archives, Innovation Stations like music studios and green rooms, and dedicated study and media rooms in addition to a rich children’s library with interactive learning activities.

The QNL also has a welcoming space for both adults and children with special needs, with an Assistive Technology Centre specifically designed for people with disabilities, and a sensory room combining a range of stimuli to develop sensory skills and perception in children with autism and other neurodevelopmental disorders.

Membership includes expert guidance for academic and professional pursuits, as well as institutional memberships for workplaces – all at no cost.



Tamani al-Yafei

‘Think and Answer’ competition at Msheireb Downtown Doha

The fourth edition of the “Think and Answer” cultural competition, held under the title “Back to School” and organised by the Hour and Hour Programme in co-operation with Msheireb Downtown Doha (MDD) over three days, concluded yesterday.

The competition witnessed the participation of youth centres and schools.

Students from Al Khor Model School for Boys participated in the launch ceremony, singing the national anthem along with students from Al Jamiliya Youth Centre.

The first day witnessed wide participation from the audience at Msheireb Galleria, where the audience interacted with media figure Mohamed al-Marri and young broadcaster Asmaa al-Kuwari.

Hour and Hour Programme chief executive Tamani al-Yafei said that the fourth edition of the competition witnessed the co-operation of many governmental and non-governmental institutions and support from various local media outlets and social media platforms.

She said that the participation of schools enriched this edition of the cultural competition.

Al Dhakira School presented a workshop on greeting cards with a heritage character and on the occasion of the reopening of schools, while the Friends of the Environment Centre organised a workshop on the importance of local plants.

The workshops, which included those on the heritage and historical importance of wild plants in Qatar by Dr Hael Mohamed al-Wawi al-Arabi, “My Beautiful School” by visual artist Laila Darwish, on calligraphy by Professor Tariq Abdul Rahman, and the story of a player by Professor Hessa Lahdan al-Mohannadi, featured cultural, sports and educational themes.

Regarding the “Think and Answer” competition, al-Yafei said: “It was created with the aim of consolidating and preserving the legacy through cultural and artistic visions, in co-operation with relevant authorities in the country, strengthening partnership with various community institutions as we work to develop promising artistic talents through various activities.”

“This is in a clear blend of the connection between culture, sports, learning and heritage,” she said.

Al-Yafei confirmed that the future editions of the competition will be organised in several areas in the country to ensure access to all segments of society.



Snapshots from the ‘Think and Answer’ competition.

Ministry of Municipality continues support for local dates farms

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

The Ministry of Municipality (MoM)’s Agriculture Affairs Department has invited farm owners who want to supply local dates to the ministry for the 2023/2024 season to register at the ministry’s website.

The ministry has been supporting local farmers, in particular dates farms, in various ways to help them improve their production and increase their income, to

further expand and enhance their business, and to increase the participation of local farm and agriculture production for the country’s food security.

The ultimate aim is to reach as much as possible of self-sufficiency through local supply and reduce dependency on imported food products.

The ministry organised the 9th Local Dates Festival at Souq Waqif from July 23 to August 3 with the participation of more than 100 local farms.

The festival, held regularly, helps farm owners display and sell their products di-

rect to customers.

The dates bought by the ministry through such initiatives are marketed locally in part and donated to the various local charities for distribution to the needy.

Earlier, the ministry’s Agriculture Research Department offered for sale Tissue Culture Date Palm Seedling for both Qatari individuals and farms at QR85 a seedling.

Under this initiative, more than 10,000 seedlings of three types of dates were sold within five months.

Any Qatari adult could buy up to 10 of these seedlings at one time while regis-

tered farm owners can buy up to 150 seedlings within one year.

These seedlings are known to be resistant to diseases and bugs, bear fruit earlier than other varieties, and enjoy high quality and abundant production of dates.

It is estimate that there are currently around 916 palm tree farms in the country, with more than 675,670 palm trees producing different types and varieties of dates.

The country has almost hit self-sufficiency dates production, with the largest amount of local needs of dates covered



through the local production.

However, imports of different types of dates will continue to be imported due to different customer preferences.