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SPORT | Page 1

Arshad qualifies for final at Paris Paralympic Games

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Amir issues law on localising private sector jobs

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani issued yesterday Law No. (12) of 2024 on localising private sector jobs. The law will be effective six months after it is published in the official gazette. The Ministry of Labour said the legislation aligns with Qatar National Vision 2030, particularly within the pillar of human development, by facilitating strategic investments and creating opportunities for employment and training for Qatari citizens. (QNA) Page 7

QR8.16bn real estate deals in 2024 H1

The volume of real estate transactions in Qatar stood at QR8.16bn in the first six months of 2024, the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (Aqarat) president Khalid bin Ahmad al-Obaidli said yesterday. He told a press conference that the "unprecedented growth" witnessed by Qatar's property sector was driven by several factors, including the QR2.6bn budget surplus achieved in the second quarter of the year, a 1.2% year-on-year increase in Q3 2023, and a 4% increase compared to the second quarter of last year. Page 4

Germany's far-right gains in regional vote

The Alternative for Germany (AfD) was on track yesterday to become the first far-right party to win a regional election in Germany since World War Two, projections showed, but was almost certain to be excluded from power by rival parties. Page 11

Amir begins 3-nation European tour today

● Visit to Sweden, Norway and Finland to unleash new momentum in relations

QNA
Doha

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani will begin an official tour of a number of friendly European countries today, upon the invitation of their leaders.

His Highness the Amir will begin the tour with a visit to the Kingdom of Sweden, followed by the Kingdom of Norway, and will conclude it with a visit to the Republic of Finland.

His Highness the Amir will hold talks with the leaders and senior officials of these countries on ways to enhance co-operation relations and a number of issues of common concern.

His Highness the Amir will be

accompanied during the tour by an official delegation.

The three-nation European tour marks a new phase in the long-standing relationship between Qatar and these three countries.

The significance of His Highness the Amir's tour lies in the fact that it aims to enhance ongoing co-operation and focus on developing bilateral relations across various levels, as well as to continue joint efforts to achieve sustainable development goals and promote innovation in strategic sectors. This will, in turn, contribute to advancing economic development in Qatar in addition to Sweden, Norway, and Finland.

Qatar's ties to these three countries are exemplary based on building economic partnerships, exchanging investments, encouraging international dialogue, co-

operation, and resolving international disputes through diplomatic mediation, in addition to maximising shared values rooted in justice and human rights.

His Highness the Amir's tour is expected to open new channels for further co-ordination and mutual benefits between Qatar and the three countries through the signing of agreements and Memoranda of Understanding to enhance co-operation, generating new investments and improve trade ties, especially considering the ongoing economic growth and efforts to diversify economies and increase revenues from foreign investments in all four countries, thus, necessitating developing bilateral relations between Qatar and each of the three countries to keep pace with international challenges. To Page 4

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani

World-scale plant at Mesaieed to double Qatar's urea output

● New complex will make Qatar the world's largest urea exporter by 2030

HE Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi announcing Qatar's new world-scale urea fertiliser complex at Mesaieed Industrial City (Left). Senior QatarEnergy executives at the ceremony, which was held at the company's headquarters yesterday. PICTURES: Shaji Kayamkulam

By Pratap John
Business Editor

Doubling Qatar's annual urea production capacity to 12.4mn tonnes, QatarEnergy has announced a world-scale urea fertiliser complex at Mesaieed Industrial City, which will make Qatar the world's largest urea exporter by 2030.

Unveiling the project at a press conference at the QatarEnergy headquarters yesterday, HE the Minister of State for Energy Af-

fairs, Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi said the new mega project entails building three ammonia production lines that will supply feedstock to four new world-scale urea production trains in Mesaieed Industrial City.

"The new facilities, which are planned to be built, will more than double the State of Qatar's urea production from about 6mn tonnes per year currently to 12.4mn tonnes per year. Production from the project's first new urea train is expected before the end of this decade," HE al-Kaabi noted.

The construction of four new production lines for urea, a key ingredient in fertilisers, would boost output by 106%.

Besides achieving continued economic growth for Qatar and the world at large, HE al-Kaabi said the new mega-scale urea plant at Mesaieed will ensure enhanced energy and food security of people around the globe through a balanced approach to meeting ever-growing demand and the sound management of the country's natural resources.

To Page 2

2,000MW solar project to be built at Dukhan

● Dukhan project, expected to be operational by 2030, to more than double Qatar's solar power production capacity to 4,000MW

By Pratap John
Business Editor

QatarEnergy has announced that it will build a new solar power mega project at Dukhan, which will more than double the country's solar energy production, significantly contributing to lower carbon emissions in the framework of a realistic energy transition.

The new project will boost Qatar's PV solar power production capacity to about 4,000 megawatts by building one of the world's largest solar power plants in the Dukhan area, with a production capacity of 2,000 megawatts.

The announcement was made by HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs, Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi, who is also the President and CEO of QatarEnergy, at a press conference yesterday.

HE al-Kaabi said, "I am pleased to announce that, in line with our Sustainability Strategy, we will more than double our solar power production capacity to about 4,000 megawatts by 2030 through the world-scale, 2,000 megawatt Dukhan Solar Power Plant."

"I would like to emphasise that developing solar power plants is

one of Qatar's most crucial initiatives to reduce CO2 emissions, develop sustainability projects, and diversify electricity production, reducing carbon dioxide emissions by more than 4.7mn tonnes per year."

The new solar project will be added to QatarEnergy's solar power portfolio, which includes the existing Al-Kharsaah solar power plant, which was inaugurated in 2022 with a capacity of 800 megawatts of electricity, and to two solar power projects that QatarEnergy is building in Ras Laffan and Mesaieed industrial cities with a total production capacity of 875 megawatts, and which are expected to start production before the end of this year.

With the addition of the new Dukhan Solar Power Plant, QatarEnergy's portfolio of solar power projects in Qatar will reach a capacity of about 4,000 megawatts by 2030. This represents approximately 30% of Qatar's total electrical power production capacity.

Minister HE al-Kaabi concluded his remarks by expressing sincere thanks and gratitude to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani for his wise leadership and the continued support of Qatar's energy sector.

Violence rages in occupied Palestinian territories

● Gaza massacre toll mounts to 40,738

AFP/Reuters
Gaza Strip/Occupied West Bank

Israel announced yesterday its troops had found six dead hostages in a Gaza tunnel, as Israeli police said a "shooting attack" in the occupied West Bank killed three officers.

The deadly shooting near Hebron added to surging

violence in the West Bank, where Israel has since Wednesday carried out a large-scale military operation that has sparked international concern.

In the besieged Gaza Strip, "humanitarian pauses" in the nearly 11-month war between Israel and Hamas were set to take place to facilitate a massive polio vaccination drive which a health official said had begun.

Israel's military said the remains of six hostages were recovered Saturday "from an underground tunnel in the Rafah area" in southern Gaza and formally identified in Israel.

US President Joe Biden said he was "devastated and outraged" by their deaths, but told reporters he was

Palestinians inspect a school for victims, after it was hit by an Israeli strike in Gaza City, yesterday.

"still optimistic" a Gaza truce and hostage release deal can be reached.

"It's time this war ended," said Biden, whose administration has been involved in ceasefire mediation efforts along with Qatar and Egypt.

Campaign group the Hostages and Missing Families Forum said a negotiated "deal for the return of the hostages" was urgently needed.

Israel's offensive since October 7 has killed at least 40,738 people in Gaza, according to the Hamas-run territory's health ministry. Critics in Israel have accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of prolonging the war for political gain. Page 8

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Qatar, Saudi push relations towards broader horizons

● **Qatari-Saudi Co-ordination Council's committee meets in Riyadh**

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani and Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah al-Saud chaired in Riyadh yesterday the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Qatari-Saudi Co-ordination Council.

Speaking at the meeting, the Saudi foreign minister welcomed HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and his accompanying delegation. He stressed that the meeting comes to strengthen bilateral relations in a way that achieves the aspirations of the leaderships and peoples of the two brotherly countries, and pushes relations towards broader horizons.

Prince Faisal said that the leaderships of the two countries view the co-ordination council as a platform that works to frame work in all fields and consolidate fraternal relations in a way that achieves the 2030 visions of both Saudi Arabia and Qatar, which positively reflects on the interests of the two countries and their peoples.

For his part, HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, in his speech before the meeting, praised the distinguished efforts made by the council's committees in updating the list of initiatives, creating and innovating new initiatives, and introducing measurable and implementable milestones, in addition to setting a time-frame for all milestones of the initiatives, which ensures that the General Secretariat's observations contained in the council's performance report for the first quarter of 2024 are reflected.

HE Sheikh Mohamed stressed that this meeting is a milestone in the process of developing and deepening bilateral relations, and an affirmation of the two countries' commitment to working diligently under the directives of the leaderships to invest, exchange views, and review the council's achievements and qualitative initiatives, expressing his aspiration to accomplish and implement everything planned.

He added that the two countries witness the fruits of the great efforts made by the heads of the committees, their working teams, liaison officers and the General Secretariat team since the beginning of the eighth session of the Qatari-Saudi Co-ordination Council.

After that, the General Secretariat of the council's working team reviewed the preparatory work outcomes of the subcommittees and their working teams.

HE Sheikh Mohamed and Prince Faisal also signed the minutes of the meeting. (QNA)

World-scale plant at Mesaieed to double Qatar's urea output

From Page 1

HE al-Kaabi said: "We have been producing ammonia and urea in Qatar for over 50 years. Today, we are expanding our experience and further solidifying our position by this unprecedented mega project that will make the State of Qatar the world's largest urea producer, playing a crucial role in ensuring food security for hundreds of millions of people around the globe, day after day."

Minister HE al-Kaabi added: "Developing this project in Mesaieed Industrial City will ensure the optimum utilisation of the excellent existing infrastructure for the petrochemical and fertiliser industries, including the city's export port, which is one of the largest fertiliser and petrochemical export facilities in the Mena region. It will also establish Mesaieed as the urea production capital of the world."

HE al-Kaabi who is also the President and CEO of QatarEnergy, stressed, "Today's announcement is another concrete step in our efforts and everlasting commitment to supply the world with the energy products needed to achieve continued economic growth and enhanced energy and food security of people around the globe through a balanced approach to meeting ever-growing demand and the sound management of our natural resources."

Minister HE al-Kaabi concluded his announcement by expressing sincere thanks and gratitude to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani for his wise leadership and the continued support of Qatar's energy sector.



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Education ministry organises third orientation for Qatari scholarship students

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) organised the third orientation meeting for Qatari students on scholarship to study in universities in the United Kingdom, Ireland and Europe for the academic year 2024-25.

During the meeting, Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Higher Education Affairs at MoEHE Dr Harib Mohamed al-Jabri congratulated the students on their acceptance into the government scholarship programme, saying that their success is the result of years of perseverance, dedication and hard work.

Dr al-Jabri offered the students a number of tips and guidelines, stressed the importance of hard work and commitment, and encouraged students to set ambitious goals for themselves.

The Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Higher Education Affairs at MoEHE called on them to hold on to their religious values and national identity, being Qatar's representatives abroad.

He also advised them to strike a balance between self development on the one hand and their priorities and responsibilities on the other, to dedicate time for studying, participate in university activities, join student clubs and events, engage in sports and volunteer work, and to connect to their classmates and professors.

During the opening speech, Acting Director of the Scholarships Department at MoEHE Noura al-Ansari focused on scholarship procedures, financial and academic matters, and the rights and responsibilities of scholarship students. She stressed the importance of maintaining strong communication channels between students, MoEHE's Scholarships Department, and the Cultural Attache.

Al-Ansari said that the students should maintain their religious and national identity, comply with host country laws and host university rules, in addition to overcoming challenges to excel academically.

In turn, Cultural Attache at Qatar's embassy in the United Kingdom Fahad al-Kuwari provided a detailed explanation of the attache's role in supporting students during their studies, including the types of services offered, including guidance, counselling, and academic supervision until graduation.

Al-Kuwari discussed the role of the attache towards scholarship students, and offered valuable advice on the importance of staying in touch with their families and the attache, along with behaving in an exemplary manner, understanding the laws of the host country, and adhering to rules and guidelines during their studies. He also informed the students of the incentives the attache awards to outstanding students.

Salama al-Kuwari of the Scholarships Department at MoEHE reviewed the procedures for activating the scholarship, including procedures before travel and those upon arrival, as well as those relating to changing universities, freezing or extending the scholarship, or withdrawing from it altogether.

Furthermore, a Qatar Airways representative informed the students of the benefits they are entitled to as scholarship students.

Dr Abdulsalam al-Hanash of the Ministry of Interior highlighted the importance of adhering to the laws of the host country as well as exercising caution when moving around and interacting with strangers from diverse backgrounds. He also called on the students to be good representatives of their families and country, stressing that they should remain true to their religious values.(QNA)



Qatar Airways hosts hands-on learning experience for 'promising' local students



Qatar Airways' initiative is part of the strategy to ensure that quality and competent nationals are well-prepared to take on permanent and influential roles within the organisation.

As part of its ongoing commitment to nurturing a highly skilled Qatari workforce, the national airline recently hosted a pioneering hands-on learning experience for nine 'promising' students.

This initiative is part of the airline's broader strategy to ensure that quality and competent nationals are well-prepared to take on permanent and influential roles within the organisation and the wider aviation industry, a statement said.

Qatar Airways said it continues to lead the way in fostering national talent and advancing the Qatar National Vision 2030 through its forward-thinking Nationalisation Al Darb Programme.

The 10-day immersive experience, held from August 18-29, took place at the Qatar Airways Operations Centre (QROC) within the Flight Operations division. During this period, the selected students were given the opportunity to explore the intricate and dynamic workings of the aviation industry.

The rotation provided a comprehensive overview of critical operational areas, enabling the students to gain invaluable insights into various facets of the airline's operations.

Captain Khalid al-Hamadi, senior vice-president (Flight Operations) at Qatar Airways said: "This initiative is in perfect alignment with Qatar National Vision 2030, which aims to shape

the future leaders of our country. By investing in our national talents today, we are ensuring the sustained growth and leadership of Qatar's aviation sector on the global stage."

The Al Darb Programme is designed not only to inspire youth to pursue careers in aviation but also to attract and retain top national talent within Qatar Airways. Through such initiatives, the airline aims to raise awareness among the younger generation about the diverse career opportunities available in the aviation sector. Whether their ambitions lie in becoming pilots, engineers, or any other critical roles within the airline, these students are given a first-hand look at what a future at Qatar Airways could hold.

CRA decision on mobile service providers focuses on enhancing consumers' experience

The Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA) has issued a decision to mobile service providers, Ooredoo Qatar and Vodafone Qatar, ordering them to switch to the high-speed Time Division Duplex (TDD) technique in the 2.6GHz frequency band, to improve the performance of the public mobile networks in Qatar.

CRA's decision facilitates the achievement of the optimal use of the vital available frequency band, ensures harmonised usage across the Gulf region, and in the future, and will lead to enhancing the telecom consumers' experience in Qatar through the use of the latest Fourth Generation (4G) and Fifth Generation (5G) network technologies.

This approach adopted by CRA to switch to using the TDD technique is in line with the recommendations of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the standards of international standardisation bodies and organisations to support both 4G and 5G technologies. The new technique provides more efficiency in terms of using the spectrum and greater flexibility in terms of spectrum assignment, which contributes to enhancing the ability of mobile Service Providers to offer faster services with higher quality to meet the increasing demands for telecommunications services in Qatar.

Under CRA's decision, mobile service providers are required to cease all operations using the current Frequency Division Duplex (FDD) technique and



migrate to the new technique by March 31, 2025, and ensure that their networks are ready for this transition to maintain providing distinctive high-speed data services in Qatar. Each service provider will work to minimise the impact of this transition on the quality of service with noticeable improvements expected once the transition is complete. Consumers can contact their service provider if they encounter any issues with mobile telecommunications services.

Through these measures, the CRA reaffirms its commitment to ensuring consumers have access to advanced, innovative and reliable telecommunications services, supporting the Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Third Qatar National Development Strategy 2024-2030, which prioritises improving residents' quality of life and delivering services that meet global standards.

Additionally, the decision issued by CRA included additional bandwidth to mobile service providers in response to the continuous increase in demand for high-speed mobile services due to significant growth in digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), 5G applications, cloud and edge computing, and the Internet of Things (IoT).

Al Daayen PEC to relocate to Aisha Bint Hamad Al Attiyah Hospital

Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) has announced the relocation of its Paediatric Emergency Centre (PEC) from PHCC Al Daayen to Aisha Bint Hamad Al Attiyah Hospital (AAH), from September 8.

Al Daayen PEC was established in 2011 to cater to the local community in the north region of Qatar. In 2023, the service treated almost 58,000 patients and with the continued growing demand for paediatric care and the need to expand services, it was decided to transfer to HMC's nearby Aisha Bint Hamad Al Attiyah Hospital opened in 2022. The move will leverage Aisha Bint Hamad Al Attiyah Hospital's state-of-the-art facilities and specialised medical expertise and resources, improving access to high-quality paediatric care and delivering a streamlined

process for patients. Dr Mohamed Alamri, chairman of Paediatric Departments at HMC and director of PECs said the move is focused on improved patient care and delivering a more integrated healthcare experience. "We aim to create a more effective and patient-centred healthcare environment that prioritises excellence in care delivery and positive outcomes for all patients." Dr Ibrahim Fawzy, medical director and acting CEO of AAH added: "The transfer of paediatric services to Aisha Bint Hamad Al Attiyah Hospital represents a significant step towards improving healthcare delivery, enhancing patient outcomes and advancing medical excellence. The service will continue to operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week and caters to the paediatric population aged 0-14 years old with emergency medical conditions."



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Amir congratulates
Uzbekistan and
Slovakia presidents

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent yesterday cables of congratulations to Uzbekistan's President Dr Shavkat Mirziyoyev on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day.

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent a similar cable of congratulations to Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov.

■ His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Deputy Amir also sent yesterday cables of congratulations to Slovak President Peter Pellegrini on the anniversary of his country's Constitution Day.

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs sent a similar cable of congratulations to Prime Minister Robert Fico. - **QNA**

Amir appoints
ambassadors to
Moldova, Ghana

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani issued yesterday the Amiri decision No 63 of 2024, appointing Dr Turki Abdullah Zaid al-Mahmoud as ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Moldova.

His Highness the Amir also issued the Amiri decision No 64 of 2024, appointing Khalid Jabr Saif Jasser al-Mosallam as ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Ghana.

The two decisions are effective starting from their date of issue, and are to be published in the official gazette. - **QNA**

Amir begins tour of Sweden, Norway and Finland today

From Page 1

Qatari Businessmen Association (QBA) Chairman HE Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim al-Thani told the Qatar News Agency (QNA) that the visit of His Highness the Amir to Sweden, Norway, and Finland will open new horizons for co-operation, especially in the fields of energy, technology, tourism, trade, artificial intelligence (AI) and other economic sectors.

He stressed the importance of diversifying markets for Qatari business sectors with the aim of raising the pace of economic, trade and investment co-operation.

HE Sheikh Faisal noted the significant growth in the volume of trade between Qatar and Norway, Sweden and Finland in recent years, and pointed out that there are dozens of Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish companies operating in the Qatar market, both 100% and with local partnership.

HE the Deputy Chairman of the QBA Sheikh Dr Khalid bin Thani al-Thani highlighted the importance of His Highness the Amir's tour in paving the way for the private sector to explore investment opportunities in Sweden, Norway, and Finland.

He told the QNA that amid global developments, Qatar is working on diversifying its markets with all countries and economic blocs, adding that the Northern European countries are important for the Qatari market, particularly with regards to technology.

HE Sheikh Dr Khalid said that with dozens of weekly flights between Doha and European capitals, trade exchange is continuously rising and could develop further.

He added that economic relations between Qatar, Sweden, Norway, and Finland have grown significantly in recent

Amir's tour 'will enhance Qatar's global standing'

Shura Council member and chairperson of its Internal and External Affairs Committee, Yousef bin Ali al-Khater, highlighted the importance of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's official tour to Sweden, Norway and Finland in enhancing bilateral relations with them in various fields, as well as discussing regional and international issues, supporting mediation efforts and encouraging dialogue as a means of resolving crises around the globe.

In a statement to the Qatar News Agency (QNA), al-Khater said that His Highness the Amir's visit, which starts today, constitutes a step of great importance towards moving bilateral relations with these countries to an advanced stage of strategic partnership, to achieve the aspired goals and serve common interest, and enhance joint efforts towards international security and peace.

He highlighted the wise leadership's keenness to strengthen Qatar's external relations, pointing out the previous visits and tours of His Highness the Amir to various regions around the globe, including Europe.

These visits, he said, resulted in the signing of many agreements that contributed to strengthening and developing bilateral relations in various fields.

His Highness the Amir's visits, al-Khater pointed out, have also strengthened Qatar's international standing as a major player in resolving international issues and crises.

He commended Qatar's parliamentary relations with Sweden, Norway and Finland, pointing out that, in addition to its legislative and supervisory role, the Shura Council works to consolidate Qatar's foreign relations and strengthen the bonds of friendship and co-operation between the state and all countries and peoples, through its practice of parliamentary diplomacy.

Al-Khater expressed his confidence that His Highness the Amir's tour will enhance and develop co-operation between the Shura Council and the parliaments of these countries and advance them to higher levels and broader horizons. - **QNA**

years, with dozens of major companies from these countries operating in the Qatari market and investments exceeding \$11bn.

Professor of Contemporary Politics and History of the Middle East at Qatar University, Dr Mahjoob Zweiri, said that His Highness the Amir's tour is of great importance given current global circumstances, as it aims to strengthen co-operation between Qatar and these countries, maintaining regional and international peace and security.

He told the QNA that Sweden and Norway are globally known for their efforts in striving for peace and stability, and have precedents in negotiation and conflict resolution, which aligns with Qatar's role as a key player in resolving many global disputes through diplomatic means.

Dr Zweiri expected the visit to give a new impetus to co-operation among the four countries in supporting the Palestinian cause, especially after more than ten months of the ongoing aggression against the Gaza Strip.

Qatar records QR8.16bn in
real estate deals in H1-2024

By Peter Alagos
Business Reporter

The volume of real estate transactions in Qatar stood at QR8.16bn in the first six months (H1) of 2024, an official of the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (Aqarat) announced yesterday.

Aqarat president Khalid bin Ahmad al-Obaidli emphasised in a press conference that this milestone reflects the increasing strength and attractiveness of the country's real estate sector.

In a speech, he said that the "unprecedented growth" witnessed by Qatar's property sector was driven by several factors, including the QR2.6bn budget surplus achieved in the second quarter of the year, a 1.2% year-on-year increase in Q3-2023, and a 4% increase compared to the second quarter of last year.

According to al-Obaidli, Qatar also topped the 2023 Global Peace Index (GPI) for the fifth consecutive year, indicating that all these factors contributed to the increase

in the volume of real estate transactions during H1-2024.

He stressed Aqarat's responsibility "to maintain this momentum, especially since this thriving sector is an essential element of the economic development scene in the country" and that the authority "seeks to further stimulate this vital sector by encouraging innovation and attracting investments, which lays the foundations for a sustainable and prosperous future".

"Aqarat's vision is clear and revolves around the precise regulation of the sector and the application of the highest standards of governance, and ensuring that all transactions are based on integrity and transparency," al-Obaidli added, noting that the regulations it has developed aim to protect the interests of all parties concerned while promoting sustainable growth in the long term.

The official said that Qatar's position as a "prestigious global investment destination" is a "well-known fact", adding that

the country offers "unparalleled opportunities, world-class infrastructure, and a supportive business environment to attract more global investments".

Highlighting yesterday's event was the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between al-Obaidli and Informa Tharawat vice-president Chris Speller for the launching of the "Qatar Real Estate Forum" and "Cityscape 2024", slated for October 13-15 in Doha.

Al-Obaidli lauded His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani for prioritising Qatar's real estate sector.

He said this visionary approach has driven remarkable progress in recent years through strategic legislation and substantial infrastructure investments.

"These initiatives have provided a significant boost in the real estate sector's contribution to Qatar's economic growth and development," al-Obaidli said. "This MoU represents our commitment to fostering a more dynamic and trans-

parent real estate market, further cementing Qatar's status as a global investment destination."

"It is more than just a commercial agreement - it is an open invitation to investors worldwide to join us in shaping a future brimming with opportunities," he added.

"Signing this MoU with Aqarat comes in response to the growing demand in Qatar's real estate sector," Speller said. "Through this partnership, we aim to create a streamlined pathway for investors to capitalise on the lucrative investment opportunities within real estate projects."

"Qatar's world-class infrastructure is not just a source of inspiration," he continued. "It also elevates the country's standing as a prime destination for investors."

The Qatar Real Estate Forum and Cityscape 2024 will bring together real estate experts and stakeholders from around the world, establishing it as a premier event for knowledge sharing, expertise exchange, and exploring future



Highlighting yesterday's press conference was the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Aqarat president Khalid bin Ahmad al-Obaidli and Informa Tharawat vice-president Chris Speller for the launching of the 'Qatar Real Estate Forum' and 'Cityscape 2024', slated for October 13-15 in Doha. **PICTURE:** Thajudheen


trajectories within the real estate sector, while showcasing various opportunities within this growing industry.

Qatar's real estate sector is a key pillar of the nation's economic landscape, characterised by its sustained growth and promising future.

Built on a foundation of economic stability and supported by an innovative regulatory frame-

work, the sector has helped position the country as a premier destination for investors seeking reliable returns and long-term value creation.

This aligns with the Third National Development Strategy 2024-2030, which aims to cultivate a world-class investment environment conducive to business growth and diversify the national economy.



Dolphin Energy Limited

Invitation to Tender

Tender Number	Description	Tender Bond	Deadline for Submission, 12 Noon (Qatar Time) on
ITT-QC-TSU-1800	Engineering Study for Emulsion Separation and Treatment Technology	-	12 th September 2024

Dolphin Energy Limited (Qatar) is inviting companies to participate in the above Invitation to Tender.

Only companies registered in the State of Qatar with proven experience, the required facilities and technical knowledge as well as a demonstrated track record in the supply of the services required should apply.

How to Tender

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

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

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



Embassy in Seoul
celebrates 50th
anniversary of
Qatar-Korea ties

Qatar's embassy in Korea organised, in collaboration with the Korean Association of Middle Eastern Studies and Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, an event titled "Qatar Day" as part of the embassy's commemoration of the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Qatar's ambassador in Seoul Khalid bin Ebrahim al-Hamar, the head of the Hankuk University's Arabic Language Department, and the president of the Korean Association for Middle Eastern Studies, attended the event, which saw a large turnout of academics and researchers who are interested in Middle



Eastern studies and languages.

The event featured a cultural exhibition showcasing Qatari culture, a photo exhibition highlighting Qatar's heritage and landmarks, as well as a traditional Qatari tent and models of prominent landmarks in the country.

It included a competition for Korean students specialising in Arabic language, translation, and Middle Eastern studies, where they wrote essays about Qatar.

Additionally, there was a presentation competition on topics related to Qatar in the fields of culture, society, and economy.

The students' presentations were diverse, covering subjects such as the na-

ture, geography, and history of Qatar, highlighting Qatari heritage, traditions, and culture, as well as international sporting events organised by Qatar such as the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and the Asian Cup, Qatar's natural gas exports to Korea, and prospects for co-operation between the two countries in the fields of defence industries and technology.

At the end of the event, the ambassador stressed that the relations between the two countries have reached a partnership stage.

He then presented awards to the winners of the essay and presentation competitions. - **QNA**

Prior import permit
a requirement for
agricultural cargo

The Ministry of Municipality's Agriculture Affairs Department has announced that companies importing various agricultural consignments into the country should obtain a permit prior to the shipment of their cargoes from the country of origin. This can be done by submitting an application at the ministry website to avoid any potential delays or rejection, a post on X said.

Kahramaa, EPRI in partnership



The Qatar General Electricity & Water Corporation (Kahramaa) has signed an agreement with the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) during an official ceremony in London, a post on X said. Kahramaa president engineer Essa bin Hilal al-Kuwari and EPRI chief executive Dr Arshad Mansoor were the signatories. The partnership aims to enhance co-operation between Kahramaa and the EPRI in the field of research and development of electrical energy technologies.

QC launches education campaign in 25 nations



Under the slogan ‘Prioritising their Education’, Qatar Charity (QC) has launched a campaign to support educational projects in 25 countries, coinciding with the new academic year.

The campaign aims to assist with and cover educational costs for students. This includes providing school uniforms, covering tuition fees, building and furnishing schools, as well as offering scholarships and sponsoring students.

The campaign’s projects include constructing a preparatory school in Somalia, supporting Al Fajr School in Albania, implementing a scholarship and student sponsorship project in Ghana, building and furnishing a vocational school in Syria, giving scholarships for university students in Palestine, and constructing two classrooms in a school in Niger.

The campaign aims to assist underprivileged families facing significant challenges in meeting their children’s daily needs for food and clothing. It also seeks to support thousands of families who can not afford their children’s education expenses, as students rely on the donations of generous individuals to cover their educational costs.

The campaign targets Palestine, India, Jordan, Yemen, Lebanon, Pakistan, Syria, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Türkiye, Kyrgyzstan, Somalia, Morocco, The Gambia, Chad, Mali, Senegal, Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire, Djibouti, Niger, Bosnia, Albania, Kosovo, and Tunisia.

QC has urged philanthropists and generous individuals in Qatar to donate to the campaign to meet the educational needs of underprivileged students. Donations can be made through QC’s website under the link (<https://qch.qa/EduEn>).

A ‘Home Collector’ can be requested through the app (qch.qa/appen), in addition to dialling 44920000. Benefactors can donate at QC branches, as well as at its collection points in the commercial complexes.

New features for QIB app

Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB) has added innovative features to its mobile app, such as support for international wallet transfers, including UPI transfers to India and Mobile Wallet Payments to Egypt. UPI transfers to India enables real-time account-to-account transfers using UPI ID, allowing QIB customers to send money instantly and easily to any recipient in India.

Mobile Wallet transfers to Egypt facilitates immediate transfers to any wallet in Egypt using the registered local mobile numbers, providing a real-time and secure service.

“These new additions to the QIB mobile app are designed to provide our customers with more control over their financial needs, making their online banking experience easier, more personalised and beneficial,” said D Anand, QIB’s general manager (Personal Banking Group).

The QIB mobile app also includes improved payment management features. The new Autopay feature allows customers to set up automatic payments for their utility bills, including Ooredoo, Vodafone, and Kahramaa.

Furthermore, the app introduces the Edaa NIN (National Investor Number) & IBAN (International Bank Account Number) linking feature, which simplifies the process of receiving dividend payments via the Edaa platform.

Investors in the Qatari Stock Exchange can link their NIN with their QIB IBAN via the app. This ensures dividends are promptly credited to their accounts and prevents unclaimed dividends.

The QIB mobile app now delivers an enhanced transfer experience by combining International SWIFT transfers and direct remit into a single, smooth process. For countries where direct remit is available, transfers are processed instantly and securely at competitive exchange rates. This unified approach eliminates the need to choose between SWIFT and direct remit, as the app automatically selects the most efficient method based on the recipient’s country.

Qatar’s rising yo-yo star sets sights on world glory

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

Qatar’s yo-yo competitor and performer Hamad al-Mansouri has etched his name in history by becoming the first Arab semifinalist at the recently held World Yo-Yo Championship 2024 in the US.

This remarkable feat, along with his 17th-place ranking in the world, propelled al-Mansouri onto the global stage, inspiring a new generation of yo-yo enthusiasts in Qatar and the Arab world.

“One of the highlights of the championship is once I was done with both my quarter-finals and semifinals performances, everyone, I know in that hall has come to compliment, thank, cheer, and congratulate me for the massive success. My friends back home were calling me immediately, my family as well. People were sharing the moments online on the media,” he told *Gulf Times*.

Facing a challenging 2023 season due to a knee injury, he said he returned with renewed focus, dedicating himself to improving his skills and creating a strategic plan for success.

Al-Mansouri attributes his latest

achievement to the support of Qatar’s leadership, specifically highlighting the impact of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani’s vision for a youthful and successful generation.

At the World Yo-Yo Championship, he said he was immersed in a vibrant community of yo-yo lovers. He revelled in the chance to interact with fellow enthusiasts, from seasoned champions to up-and-coming talents.

“In between those supportive crowds was my great friend Tsubasa Takada (two-time Asian champion), Rei Iwakura (seven-times world champion), and Jonathan Sitanggang (Indonesian two-times national champion), all of them gave me the warmest words and supportive sentences to help me continue my growth,” al-Mansouri added.

He pointed out that the supportive atmosphere, especially the cheers of the American audience who were witnessing his skills for the first time, fuelled his determination.

However, al-Mansouri said his journey was not without its challenges. He faced pressure during the quarter-finals, navigating the weight of expectations and the roaring cheers for his opponent. But he overcame these internal struggles,



Qatar’s yo-yo competitor and performer Hamad al-Mansouri at the World Yo-yo Championship 2024 in the US.

displaying a strong performance that secured his place in the semifinals.

With his sights set on the World Yo-Yo Championship 2025 in Prague, Czech Republic, al-Mansouri said: “My goal is

to reach the top 10 and become the first Arab finalist in history. It would be an honour to represent Qatar and the entire Arab world at that level!”

Sharing his preparations for the recent global competition, he cited an even more disciplined and advanced training routine, collaborating with top players and mentors, including former world champions and judges.

“I believe that my journey and achievements can inspire a new generation of yo-yo enthusiasts in Qatar and the Arab world,” al-Mansouri said. “Yo-yoing is a skill accessible to all, and I want to see more young people from our region pursue their passion and represent us on the international stage.”

He said his vision for the future of yo-yoing in Qatar goes beyond personal success, advocating for the establishment of a national yo-yo organisation to support local players and facilitate their participation in international competitions.

“Qatar has a history of hosting prestigious sporting events, and I believe that our country can become a hub for yo-yo enthusiasts in the region,” he said. “With the support of our government and the community, I am confident that we can achieve great things”.

4A Semi-Final		TE	
		total (160)	Yo-yo
1	Ryan CONNOLLY	56.9	9.3
2	Koyo HASHIMOTO	52.4	9.3
3	Kaoru NAKAMURA	52.9	9.8
4	Tsubasa TAKADA	54.5	8.3
5	Shuntao GUOYANG	47.9	9.5
6	Ryo OISHI	49.8	7.8
7	Terrance WANG	47.8	8.8
8	Tomohiko ZANKA	48.7	8.5
9	Jakub DOLEJS	48.4	8.8
10	Chen ZHAO	43.5	7.2
11	Kentaro MUTO	44.2	8.5
12	Yuki UCHIDA	42.3	8.3
13	Hunter FEUERSTEIN	41.8	8.0
14	Myles GREGORY	48.7	7.2
15	Philip WHITE	40.2	7.0
16	Quentin GODET	40.7	8.2
17	Hamad AL-MANSOURI	31.1	6.3
18	Yun SHI	20.9	4.0

4A Prelim		TE	
		total (160)	
1	Ryo OISHI	56.5	
2	Ryan CONNOLLY	56.8	
3	Tsubasa TAKADA	49.0	
4	Chen ZHAO	48.2	
5	Yuki UCHIDA	44.5	
6	Hunter FEUERSTEIN	49.8	
7	Tomohiko ZANKA	44.4	
8	Kentaro MUTO	40.4	
9	Hamad AL-MANSOURI	37.2	
10	Myles GREGORY	38.3	
11	Christopher CHUNN	33.6	
12	Josiah PULSIFER	39.4	
13	Sean DE LOS SANTOS	29.5	
14	Dongyoung KIM	30.6	
15	Congcong WU	26.6	
16	Cheng-Hsun CHUNG	19.8	
17	Daniel GARRETT	18.1	
18	Ian JOHNSON	20.8	
19	Ian SADIO	17.0	

The iconic and adventurous MINI Countryman just got bigger and better



The MINI Countryman has always been the maverick of the MINI family – larger, bolder, and more versatile than its siblings. When the MINI brand, known for its compact and go-kart-like driving experience, decided to venture into the crossover segment with the Countryman in 2010, it marked a significant shift in MINI’s history.

Fast forward to 2024, and the latest Countryman not only embodies innovation; it redefines what a compact crossover can be.

The new MINI Countryman has grown in size, yes, but it hasn’t lost an ounce of that quirky, adventurous spirit that has always defined MINI. If anything, it’s just become more versatile, more technologically advanced, and ready for anything you throw its way.

A design that stands out

MINI has always had a knack for turning heads, and the 2024 Countryman is no exception. The new design language, fittingly named “Charismatic Simplicity,” blends the brand’s iconic look with a modern twist. The first thing you’ll notice is the octagonal front grille, a nod to MINI’s heritage but with a fresh, bold attitude. The wider wheel arches and sculptural bonnet don’t just look good – they give the Countryman a muscular stance that demands attention. And let’s be honest, who wouldn’t want that iconic Black Diamond wrapping around their ride, hinting at the adventurous spirit within?

Despite being 6 cm taller and 13 cm longer than its predecessor, the Countryman doesn’t feel bulky. Instead, it strikes the perfect balance between presence and playfulness. But despite its growth spurt, it retains the characteristic charm that MINI fans love.

Tech-forward interior with a personal touch

Climbing into the MINI Countryman feels a bit like stepping into the future, but with all the charm and warmth of your favourite MINI. The cabin is a delightful mix of high-tech innovation and eco-conscious materials. The



dashboard, adorned with recycled polyester 2D knit surfaces, is as stylish as it is sustainable. It’s the kind of place where you wouldn’t mind spending a few extra minutes, even if you’ve already arrived at your destination.

At the heart of the interior is the new 9.4-inch OLED circular centre screen – a first for MINI. This screen replaces the traditional instrument cluster and is powered by the all-new MINI Operating System 9. It’s as intuitive as it is stylish, offering everything from navigation to entertainment with just a touch or a voice command. And speaking of voice, the new MINI Intelligent Personal Assistant is there to help with anything you need, simply activated with a friendly “Hey MINI.”

But it doesn’t just add tech for the sake of it. MINI has made sure that every feature enhances your driving experience, making the Countryman not just a car, but a smart, connected companion on the road.

On the road: Where fun meets practicality

Let’s be clear: the Countryman may have grown in size, but it hasn’t lost any of that MINI magic on the road. Whether you’re zipping through the bustling city streets of Doha or cruising along the scenic Corniche, the driving experience is pure MINI – agile, responsive, and just plain fun.

The steering is direct, the ride is firm, and the go-kart-like handling that MINI is famous for is very much present, despite the car’s larger size. The all-wheel-drive system, available in the S ALL4 and JCW trims, adds a level of versatility that’s perfect for those who want to take their MINI adventures off the beaten path.

But MINI didn’t stop at making the Countryman bigger and more powerful though. They’ve also packed it with advanced driving aids like Automatic Active Cruise Control, Lane Departure Warning, and even a Parking Assistant Professional that lets you park the car using your smartphone. It shows that MINI is thinking about your comfort and convenience as much as your driving pleasure.

A MINI for all seasons

MINI the Countryman proves that you can have it all – style, practicality, technology, and driving fun – in one compact crossover package. The brand continues its tradition of creating vehicles that are as enjoyable to drive as they are functional.

Whether you’re navigating city streets or exploring the country on a road trip, this new MINI is ready to take on whatever adventure you have in mind, all while keeping that unmistakable MINI vibe. This is a MINI that’s grown up, but hasn’t lost its playful side – the perfect companion for those who want a little more room without sacrificing style or performance.

A rich calendar of entertainment in September

Qatar is gearing up to host a series of multicultural events in September including art exhibitions, musical performances, and sport tournaments, according to Qatar Calendar.

The comprehensive guide for residents and visitors to navigate events across the country, is available through channels including a website and mobile app.

In a press statement, Sheikha Noor Abdulla al-Thani, head of Tourism Events and Festivals Organising Section at Qatar Tourism, said: "Through successful collaborations with our stakeholders, Qatar Calendar provides a diverse range of events that cater to all tastes, ages, and budgets."

Qatar Calendar's September edition unveils a packed roster of events.

'Honour The Past, To Celebrate the Future: Qatar's Educational Vision Exhibition' is running now at Liwan Design Studios and Labs, displaying the journey of female education in Qatar from 1938-2006.

The exhibition highlights the first girls' school in the country, Banat El Doha, founded by Amna Mahmoud al-Jaidah and the Ministry of Education, as well as its impact on multiple generations of women.

'Mohamed Melehi: A Giant of Postcolonial Art in Morocco Exhibition' is showcasing now at Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art.

'In the Footsteps of Ara Güler: Exploring the Photographer's Legacy', underway at the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA), is a special collaboration between the Ara Güler Museum in Istanbul and Qatar Museums, showing the life of the renowned photographer.

The 'Space Art Exhibition: Cosmic Canvas' is on display until September 20 at the Al Thurayya Planetarium, Katara - the Cultural Village. S'hail - Katara International Hunting and Falcons Exhibition returns for its eighth edition from September 10-14 at Katara.

Geekdom at Lusail Boulevard is hosting 'Geekend' from September 12-14 with stage programmes, science-fiction shows, Geekend Market, Geekend Lounge, Board Game Area, Escape Game, and e-Sports tournaments.

ConteQ Expo 2024 will be held at the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC) from September 16-18.

The Doha International Coffee Exhibition 2024 is set to take place from September 26-28 at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC).

With the aim of supporting Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, Al-Markhiya Gallery, in co-operation with Qatar Red Crescent, is organising a fine art exhibition titled 'The Sky Above Gaza... Imagine' from September 17-November 7 at The Fire Station. It will feature the works of more than 50 artists from Qatar,



Palestine, and several other Arab countries.

The Rouda Al Malki Exhibition is running until September 4 at

QNCC. The Lawazim Trade Fair is ongoing until September 7 at the DECC, featuring abayas, jalabiyas, accessories, perfumes, and home and food supplies. The Family Shopping Fair will take place from September 22-October 8 at DECC.

'70 Years of Theatre Gala - The Doha Players' is set to take place at Radisson Blu on September 19 and 20. The 'Hamra Street' comedy musical will be held from September 26-28 at U Venue. The play, 'Hind in the Land of Sindh', will be running from September 26-28 at the Drama Theater at Katara.

'Philharmonic At The Library Arabic Nights from North Africa' will be taking place at Qatar National Library on September 12 as part of the Qatar-Morocco 2024 Year of Culture.

An Evening with R. Strauss: Death, Drama, and Discovery will be taking place at QNCC on September 13 starting 7.30pm. Berlioz' Symphonie Fantastique by Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra will be held on September 17 starting at 7.30pm at QNCC.

The 'Russian Greats: Rachmaninoff and Tchaikovsky' concert will be held on September 22, starting 9.30pm at the Opera House at Katara.

The 'Heroes and Villains' concert will be taking place at QNCC on September 29, from 7.30pm. Conductor Frank Strobel will showcase the journey of cinema's greatest heroes and villains through orchestral performances

of the most iconic film scores.

The 'Family Day: Geometrical Shapes' workshop will be held on September 14 at the MIA Atrium. City Center Doha is hosting a 'Back to School' event until September 28, where children can enjoy an array of activities such as crafts, colouring, balloon twisting, and more.

The 'Diwani Intermediate Workshop' will be led by Hussan Ahmed at MIA from September 7-28. Visitors who have previously learned the beginner ruq'ah script can learn Diwani, one of the most important Arabic scripts.

At Education City Stadium, the monthly ladies' night will be held on September 4, featuring HIIT classes, community sessions, and different sports including boxing, table tennis, and fencing. In addition, the event will also feature a football tournament for women organised by football team Paris Saint Germain.

The Sealine Challenge 2024 is set to take place on September 28 at Sealine Beach, organised by Qatar Sports for All Federation. The running race is expected to feature 400 contestants for various distances.

QTerminals Qatar Classic will be hosted from September 28-October 5 at Khalifa International Tennis and Squash Complex. The 3rd Qatar Asian Junior Tournament for 14 years and under will be held from September 30 till October 5, at the same venue.

Array of QM events in September

Qatar Museums (QM) unveiled its September line-up, featuring workshops, camps, and exhibitions, curated to captivate and inspire audiences of all ages, providing enriching experiences that spark creativity and nurture learning.

The Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) will host storytelling sessions, Family Day activities, and various art workshops for children and adults.

September 14 | 3pm-5pm: The monthly Family Day at MIA Atrium will see visitors learn more about geometric shapes. A workshop, An Artist's Adventure (for ages 5-7) is to be held on September 9-10, 4pm-5.30pm. Storytime for children at MIA Library: "I Can Do Anything That's Everything All On My Own", September 2, 11am-12noon.

Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art has curated a series of workshops and a special storytelling session. The workshop: Art Making in Manara will be held on September 11, 18 and 25, 4pm-6pm. Storytime for family is on September 14, 4pm-5.30pm. The workshop: Art lesson with Ismail



Storytime at MIA Library.



Azzam will be held every Sunday and Tuesday, 4pm-7pm.

The National Museum of Qatar will organise a storytelling session and a tour on the occasion of World Tourism Day. Hayya To Qatar, September 14-28, 1pm-



MIA tour.

2.30pm (English) and 4pm-5.30pm (Arabic). Storytelling: I can be Anything, September 7, 5pm-6pm.

The 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum will organise 2024 Summer Paralympics activities until September 5 (4pm-7pm) and a storytelling programme on the Fastest Woman on Earth on September 28, 4pm-5pm.

Fire Station: Artist in Residence will host a storytelling workshop for teenagers and adults on September 17-18, 5pm-7pm. Tasweer Photo Festival is offering a workshop 'Mixed Media Photography with Nadia Dada' on September 13, 2pm-5pm.

Less than 100 days for Qatar Boat Show

With less than 100 days to go until the Qatar Boat Show kicks off on November 6 at the Old Doha Port, anticipation is building, promising to be a landmark occasion that will further elevate Qatar's status as a premier destination for marine enthusiasts.

Qatar's marine scene has undergone a remarkable transformation, evolving from a focus on traditional fishing to a vibrant hub for leisure and luxury marine activities.

Historically known for its fishing and pearling industry, the nation's strategic location, favourable weather, and world-class marinas have propelled its reputation in the global marine community.

The four-day Qatar Boat Show is a key event that showcases and cements the nation's growing maritime allure. Qatar's marine infrastructure has seen substantial development, with several key marinas leading the

charge, including Ronautica Middle East, Aura Group, Banana Island Resort Doha By Anantara, Resort and Leisure Company WLL, and Old Doha Port.

Old Doha Port, a historical landmark revitalised into a premier marine destination, uniquely blends history, culture, and luxury, featuring Qatar's only superyacht dock, over 250 berths, more than 100 retail outlets, and 50 F&B experiences, making it a vibrant hub for both locals and tourists.

These luxurious marinas, strategically located across Doha, offer exclusive berths, state-of-the-art facilities, and unparalleled access to high-end recreational and commercial spaces, setting a benchmark for luxury marine experiences.

Qatar Boat Show will offer a platform for local, regional, and international marine brands to connect with enthusiasts and showcase their innovations.

Qatar's inbound visitor numbers see 10.2% annual increase in July

The total number of inbound visitors to Qatar recorded an annual increase of 10.2% in July 2024, compared to the same month last year, reaching about 317,000, in addition to a monthly increase of 0.4% over June 2024.

This was disclosed in the 127th issue of the Qatar Monthly Statistical Bulletin for July issued by the National Planning Council, which showed that the highest number of visitors was from the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) at 46%.

As for visitors by type of port, air travellers made up the highest with 59% of the total number of visitors.

Among the notable changes in this issue is the monthly increase in total commercial bank deposits and facilities by 0.1% and 0.9%, respectively (compared to June 2024), and annual increase of 11.3% and 7.4%, respectively (compared to July 2023).

As for the banking sector, total Broad Money Supply (M2) recorded about QR727bn during July 2024, an annual increase of 6.4% compared with July 2023.

With respect to Vital Statistics, 2,501 live births were registered during July 2024. Also, an increase was seen in total Qatari live births by 2.2% compared to last month. On the other hand, 221 deaths were recorded during the same period, an increase of 17.6% compared to June 2024.

Moreover, July 2024 witnessed a monthly decrease of 0.3% of total marriage contracts while it witnessed a monthly increase of 93.7% of total divorce certificates. The total number of marriage contracts reached 348 and the total number of divorce certificates reached 244 cases.

Social Security statements

reached QR77mn in July 2024, for 14,385 beneficiaries, recording a monthly increase of 0.3% for the value of social security and a monthly increase of 0.2% in the number of Social Security beneficiaries.

The data of buildings permits issued shows a total of 741 permits during July 2024, a monthly increase of 36.5% and an annual increase of 16.9%.

A total number of 7,733 new vehicles were registered during July 2024, a monthly increase of 22.1% and an annual increase of 25.8%.

As regards traffic accidents cases without counting those without injuries, a total of 602 cases were recorded during July 2024, a monthly decrease of 7% and an annual increase by 1.2%. Six deaths were recorded, equivalent to only 1% of total traffic accidents cases. - QNA

Hunting season begins with call to abide by regulations

As the hunting season for wild birds and animals started yesterday, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC) has urged hunting fans to strictly abide by the regulations and rules to maintain the local wildlife in the country.

A post on X explained that the hunting season, running until February 15, 2025, is mainly dedicated to hunting migratory birds, mostly through traditional means and falcons.

In particular, the Houbara Bustard birds should only be hunted with falcons. The use of non-traditional, electronic or electric devices, electronic bird caller for instance is completely banned and will be considered as an environmental violation when spotted.

Other regulations include a ban on hunting at the protected areas and natural reserves or within public gardens and parks as well as the boundaries of the cities. The endangered and protected local species should not be hunted.

The ministerial decision no 24 for 2023 regulating the hunting season for some birds and wild animals, bans the hunting or keeping of the endangered animals,

birds and reptiles whether local or migratory species in all areas for two years. These include the wild hare, ostrich, gazelles, honey badger, Jerboa, hedgehog, shrike birds, agama lizard, black-eared wheatear, little grebe, rufous-tailed scrub robin (bird), spiny-tailed lizard and the monitor lizard.

Falconers have made the necessary preparations for the hunting season by training their birds and preparing the tools and equipment. Some have bought new falcons at the falcon market at Souq Waqif. Some of the falcons are imported, either farm hatched in captivity or hunted from the wild, which is more in demand and command higher prices. There are also some from the local supply of farm-bred falcons. The hunting tools and the necessary gear and accessories for falconry are mainly manufactured locally.

Some environmental experts have stressed that sustainable and regulated hunting reflects positively on the environment and its various natural components. It further strengthens the bond between man and his surrounding nature, and fosters the love of nature and maintains it among young people.

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, JUDITH LAUZ MAG UYON

holder of

PHILIPPINES Passport No. P8328110A
QID No. 28360833931

hereby change my name

from

JUDITH LAUZ MAG UYON

to

JUDITH MENDOZA LAUZ

Any objection, please contact
THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR NATIONALITY AFFAIRS
within 15 days from the publication of this notice.

Stars of Science season 16 from September 7

Stars of Science, the edutainment TV show by Qatar Foundation returns for its 16th season, from September 7 on several channels and online, a statement said.

Seven candidates from across the Arab world will be invited to the studios of Stars of Science, hosted at Qatar Science and Technology Park and a hub of tech-based entrepreneurship.

Over the course of 12 weeks, with expert mentorship and support, they will compete to develop, refine, and test their innovations, aiming to win the title of Top Arab Innovator and a share of the Grand Prize. This season promises to feature cutting-edge projects, remarkable contestants, and inspiring stories.

Since its inception in 2009, Stars of Science has inspired a generation of Arab innovators to think creatively and act boldly. The show empowers young minds to address pressing regional and global challenges, turning their ideas into tech-driven solutions. From advancements in healthcare and sustainable technologies to breakthroughs in artificial intelligence and digital transformation, Stars of Science consistently showcases the creativity and success of its participants.

Season 15 of Stars of Science saw the triumph of Mohamed Abbas Al-bumijdad from Saudi Arabia, whose 'Crawler Robot for Vertical Surfaces' has the potential to revolutionise the building industry by improving safety and efficiency.

Ahmad Zahlan, season 10 alumnus, PhD student focusing on AI healthcare startups and visiting researcher at Columbia University (US), revealed: "Stars of Science opened doors to international travels and scholarships, including a Fulbright, and shifted my focus from computer science to innovation and management in my PhD studies."

Khalid Aljumaily, the long-time host of Stars of Science for 16 years, testified: "Though a TV programme and not an accelerator, Stars of Science serves as a turning point for many innovators. The talent and creativity displayed by our alumni never cease to amaze me. I am proud to be part of a show dedicated to advancing the world through remarkable innovations."



Stars of Science season 16 poster featuring a group of participants and the show's logo.

Qatar condemns Israeli onslaught on Jenin

Qatar has strongly condemned the ongoing Israeli onslaught on Jenin and its refugee camps in the occupied West Bank, which led to the martyrdom and injury of dozens.

Qatar considered it an extension of the continuous heinous and horrific crimes of the occupation in the Gaza Strip, and a flagrant violation of international legitimacy resolutions.

In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stressed the need for the international community to urgently provide the Palestinian people

with the necessary protection and to hold Israel accountable for its brutal crimes in the occupied Palestinian territories, along with obliging it to stop its blatant violations of international humanitarian law and to compel it to respect international conventions. The ministry reiterated Qatar's firm position on the justice of the Palestinian cause and the legitimate rights of the brotherly Palestinian people, including establishing their independent state on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. (QNA)

Al-Khulaifi meets Moldova's deputy PM



HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr Mohamed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi met in Prague yesterday with Moldova's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mihail Popsoi, on the sidelines of the GLOBSEC Forum. During the meeting, the two sides discussed co-operation between the countries and ways to support and develop them, in addition to regional and international issues of mutual interest. (QNA)

QNA chief meets Australian envoy

HE the Director-General of Qatar News Agency (QNA) Ahmed bin Saeed al-Rumaihi met yesterday with Australian ambassador to Qatar Shane Flanagan. The meeting discussed aspects of co-operation between the countries in the field of media. (QNA)



Qatar chairs panel meeting of GCC undersecretaries of civil service and administrative development



Doha hosted yesterday the 27th meeting of the Committee of Undersecretaries of Civil Service and Administrative Development bodies in the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries, in preparation for the 20th meeting of the committee of civil service ministers in the GCC countries due to be held tomorrow, under the chairmanship of Qatar.

The meeting was chaired by Acting Director-General of the Civil Service and Government Development Bureau Saif bin Ali al-Kaabi, in the presence of the undersecretaries of civil service and administrative development bodies in the GCC countries, and Assistant Secretary-General for Economic and Development Affairs at the GCC General Secretariat Khalid bin Ali al-Sunaidi.

It discussed a number of topics related to joint co-operation in the fields of civil service, most notably

the progress of the GCC strategy in the field of civil service and human resources development (2021-2025), which was approved in the forty-first session of the Supreme Council, in addition to the initiative of joint training programmes and workshops between the GCC countries that comes within the goal of investing in human capital.

The meeting also reviewed the mechanism for implementing the practical training project and the exchange of experts. The programme also prepared to honour competencies in the civil service sectors of the GCC countries for the year 2024.

It concluded with a number of recommendations that will be presented to the next meeting of the committee of ministers and heads of civil service and human resources bodies in the GCC countries in Doha tomorrow. (QNA)

QNL enriches cultural scene with array of events in September

Qatar National Library (QNL) will host a captivating lineup of free cultural and educational events this month, inviting the community to delve into a world of knowledge and creativity. The events, designed to promote learning, cultural exchange and community engagement, enrich Qatar's dynamic cultural scene, appealing to every interest and age group.

Tomorrow, the library will explore our relationship with the digital world and delve into the concept of digital addiction and the impact of artificial intelligence during a presentation titled "Digital Wellbeing vs. Digital Addiction: Clarifying Technology's Impact". The following day, on Sept 4, the library, in co-operation with the State Audit Bureau, will share insights into the bureau's role in safeguarding public funds and combating corruption.

The third edition of the "Doha Workshop to Combat Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Heritage" begins on Sept 9, bringing together regional and international experts over three days to discuss efforts to strengthen legal and institutional frameworks in the latest bid to protect cultural heritage in the Arab region and the Middle East.

On Sept 12, the QNL Engage Podcast resumes under the theme "The Role of Institutions, Individuals and the Society in Integrating and Supporting Persons with Disabilities". The first episode of the fourth season hosts Aisha al-Sanani from the Mada Assistive Technology Center to discuss the centre's role in empowering people with disabilities through technology.

Later in the evening, the library hosts a magical musical event featuring enchanting music from Qatar and Morocco performed by MAias Alyamani and the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra. This event is one of many that will celebrate cultural exchange during the Qatar-Morocco 2024 Year of Culture.

On Sept 15, the library organises the "Third Forum on Heritage Management: Digital Access and Artificial Intelligence Applications".

The two-day event takes participants on an explorative journey to discuss the role of technology in enhancing archive management, usability and searchability. The forum will familiarise participants with models of digital repositories for documentary heritage in governmental and private institutions

within the cultural sector in Arab countries.

The QNL Engage Podcast resumes on Sept 19, with the second episode, which will discuss "The Role of The Family and Community in Supporting Children with Autism". It will highlight effective ways to raise awareness in the community.

On Sept 21, the focus turns to authors based in Qatar who will have the opportunity to showcase their works and discuss the role of publishers in enhancing the creative scene in Qatar as part of the Books and Authors series.

Concluding the vibrant September schedule, the Library will celebrate the Qatar-Morocco 2024 Year of Culture, with an enlightening lecture and hands-on workshop on the history, anatomy, and use of the astrolabe. The event, which will take place on Sept 30, will spotlight the exquisite craftsmanship of renowned Moroccan astrolabe makers. The session will also provide an opportunity to explore related books, manuscripts, and instruments from the Heritage Library Collection, offering a window into the historical significance of astronomy and instrument-making in Morocco. (QNA)

Qatar committed to global mediation role

■ Al-Khulaifi participates in GLOBSEC Forum in Prague

HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohamed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi yesterday participated in the main session of the GLOBSEC Forum, which is being held in Prague, Czech Republic.

In his speech during the session that was held under the title 'Preventing Broader Conflict in the Middle East', HE Dr al-Khulaifi said Qatar's diplomatic relations with various countries around the globe allow the country to act as a reliable international mediator, adding that Qatar's commitment to hosting peace talks and providing a platform for dialogue for conflicting parties, in addition to its diverse and long experience in the field of mediation, enhances its role as a key facilitator in resolving regional and international conflicts. He pointed out Qatar's commitment to international law and its preference for peaceful means of resolving disputes,



as the most appropriate way to enhance stability and security in the region and around the globe.

In regard to the developments on the situation in the Gaza Strip, HE Dr al-Khulaifi indicated that Qatar has contributed since the early days – in co-operation with its regional and international partners, including the UN, to efforts aimed at de-escalating and calming the situation in Gaza, leading to the humanitarian pause agreement in November 2023.

He also pointed out Qatar's ongoing efforts to reach a permanent ceasefire, in addition to its ongoing humanitarian aid to the brotherly Palestinian people.

Without a comprehensive solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the region will remain in a horrific cycle of violence and instability, he added. He addressed Qatar's efforts to resolve crises in the region, highlighting the state's hosting of a round of indirect talks between the US and Iran to revive the nuclear agreement in 2022, in addition to the agreement for bringing peace to Afghanistan.

HE Dr al-Khulaifi also affirmed Qatar's support for regional and international efforts aimed at achieving stability in Lebanon and sparing the region the risk of slipping into a large-scale regional war. (QNA)

Labour ministry highlights law on private sector job nationalisation

The Ministry of Labour has spotlighted Law No 12 of 2024, pertaining to the nationalisation of jobs in the private sector, which was recently promulgated by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani.

This legislation aligns with Qatar National Vision 2030, particularly within the pillar of human development, by facilitating strategic investments and creating opportunities for employment and training for Qatar citizens.

It also supports the Third National Development Strategy, which aims to effect a fundamental transformation towards a more productive labour market, focusing on high-skill jobs.

This transformation will be achieved by leveraging a highly skilled Qatari talent pool while attracting foreign talents with advanced skills.

The law seeks to significantly increase the effective participation of the national workforce in private sector institutions and companies, opening up new employment and career opportunities for Qataris and the children of Qatari women, thereby maximising the utilisation of qualified national competencies.

In this context, the ministry clarified that the primary objectives of the law include enhancing the attractiveness of the labour market to the national workforce, increasing the ability of companies to attract and integrate citizens, encouraging Qatari participation in the private sector, ensuring job stability for national cadres, developing the professional skills of the national workforce, meeting the labour market demand for qualified personnel, and incentivising private sector companies and establishments to increase the participation of the national workforce.

The ministry further explained that the entities subject to nationalisation under the law include:

- Employers who are natural persons managing private establishments registered in the commercial register.
- Commercial companies operating in the state, whether state-owned, state-participated, or privately owned.
- Private non-profit institutions, sports institutions, associations, and similar entities.

The ministry announced that it will develop a

job nationalisation plan for the private sector by classifying entities based on size, workforce, and job types, with the plan encompassing policies for training, employment, qualification, and university scholarship programmes.

The ministry also emphasised that the provisions of the Job Nationalisation Law address many challenges that have previously hindered nationalisation efforts, establishing the conditions and procedures necessary to make the private sector more attractive to Qataris and the children of Qatari women, thereby fulfilling their professional and career aspirations.

Key provisions of the law include:

- Granting financial incentives to beneficiaries, including Qataris and the children of Qatari women.
- Offering various benefits, facilities, and privileges to entities covered by the nationalisation scheme under the law.
- Employing, training, and qualifying Qataris and the children of Qatari women seeking employment in accordance with the policies, plans, and programmes established by the ministry.

The law also empowers the Ministry of Labour to provide incentives, facilities, and privileges, as well as to sponsor citizens for the completion of their university studies in co-ordination with relevant authorities to prepare them for private sector roles.

To ensure job security for Qatari citizens and provide a stable work environment, the law mandates the issuance of standard employment contract templates for job nationalisation, which will be binding on entities subject to the law's provisions.

The Ministry of Labour underscored its ongoing efforts to enhance the participation of national cadres in the labour market, noting its role in the employment of Qataris and the children of Qatari women across various private sector institutions. In light of the enactment of the Job Nationalisation Law, the ministry will play a pivotal role in qualifying citizens through the development of training and development programmes in partnership with the private sector, aimed at enhancing their skills and preparing them for the labour market, as well as monitoring the extent to which companies comply with nationalisation policies. (QNA)

QRCS delivers emergency aid for flood-affected Yemenis

In response to floods and climate change in Yemen, Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) has launched an emergency intervention to alleviate the suffering of the victims, by meeting the basic shelter and food needs of 1,800 vulnerable and affected families in Marib, Al Hudaydah, Taiz and Hajjah.

To date, the distribution has covered 640 most affected and poorest families at seven camps/villages in three districts of Al Hudaydah.

A number of officials in the targeted Yemeni regions and governorates expressed their thanks to the QRCS for its response to provide relief to those affected, and called on all relief organisations to intervene, stressing that the damage caused by the floods is severe, and that the need is great.

They pointed out that thousands of displaced families have become homeless and without food supplies, as a result of this disaster, and that the aid of the QRCS contributes greatly to meeting part of the needs of the affected families and alleviating their suffering. (QNA)





West Bank city ‘cut off from the world’ as troops’ raid drags on

AFP
Jenin

Concrete slabs and sheet metal were piled high alongside streets in Jenin on Saturday, as residents assessed the damage from Israel’s latest West Bank raid even as explosions persisted nearby.

The scars of ongoing clashes in the occupied Palestinian territory, which began on Wednesday as part of what Israel has described as a counter operation, were everywhere: collapsed walls, uprooted trees, tiled roofs covering mounds of rubble.

Bulldozers rumbled through the streets on the first day of the raid, clearing the way for Israeli soldiers while tearing up the asphalt and piercing underground pipes, residents of one neighbourhood in east Jenin said.

Three days later, with fighting elsewhere in the city continuing, “we are cut off from the world”, Taher al-Saadi said.

“The water is cut off. The electricity is cut off, the sewage system is no longer working. All the infrastructure is destroyed, we no longer have any services that work.”

He added: “The bakeries are at a standstill. We can’t find milk for the children.”

Israel raids are not unusual in Jenin, whose refugee camp is a bastion for armed groups fighting Israel.

But the operation launched on Wednesday was unusually large and long, hitting multiple West



Palestinians walk, as they evacuate their home during an Israeli raid in Jenin camp, in the West Bank.

Bank cities at once and, in Jenin, showing no sign of letting up.

“I think it’s the worst day since the start of the raid,” Wisam Bakr, director of Jenin Government Hospital, said on Saturday.

“We hear from time to time clashes and sometimes there is big bombing.”

Not far from where Faiza Abu Jaafar lives, an 82-year-old man was shot dead on Friday by an Israeli sniper, residents say, bringing to 20 the number of Palestinians killed in the operation so far.

Hamas and its ally Islamic Jihad had said at least 13 of the dead were members of their armed wings. While Israeli military vehicles and bulldozers left the area near her home on Saturday morning, apparently heading for Jenin’s refugee camp, Abu Jaafar said she

and her relatives were still shaken.

“It’s very hard, for the children and for everyone. We are afraid, we are terrified, look at all the damage,” she said, standing amid piles of rubble.

“We are living in dark days.”

Just how dark is still unclear, as Jenin governor Kamal Abu al-Rub said that even he does not know exactly what is happening inside the camp, where the latest fighting appeared to be concentrated.

“The Israelis are besieging the hospitals and cutting off the city from the refugee camp, which has become a military zone with no access,” he said.

“Neither the civil defence, nor the ambulances, nor the journalists can go and see what is happening there.”

The Israeli army has denied



A Palestinian man walks past damaged shops on a street torn up by bulldozers during an Israeli raid in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin, yesterday.



Palestinians walk, as they evacuate their home during an Israeli raid in Jenin camp, in the occupied West Bank.

cutting off access to hospitals, saying it has positioned its forces to prevent fighters from gathering in them while allowing ambulances to come and go.

Violence has surged in the West Bank since Hamas’s unprecedented October first week storming of

southern Israel. The United Nations said on Wednesday that at least 637 Palestinians had been killed in the territory by Israeli troops or settlers since the Gaza war began.

Abu al-Rub, the Jenin governor, said the latest operation made him

think of a notorious 2002 battle in Jenin that left dozens of Palestinians and Israelis dead.

Earlier this week, Shoshani explicitly rejected the comparison, saying the ongoing operation in the West Bank was not “extremely different” from regular activity.

Torrential rains in Niger kill 15 more people

AFP
Niamey

Torrential rains in Niger have killed at least 15 more people, regional authorities said yesterday, the latest casualties of the downpours lashing the African nation.

Heavy rains have been drenching Africa’s Sahel region since June and the latest victims in Niger come on top of at least 217 people who have died across the country in that time, according to authorities.

More than 350,000 people have

been affected and last week rising floodwaters nearly cut off the capital Niamey from the rest of the country before retreating.

The latest deaths occurred on Friday in the city of Maradi, the country’s economic capital whose eponymous region that has been one of the areas most affected by the rains.

“We have registered 15 human lives lost, we have also registered injured and heavy material damage”, regional governor Issoufou Mamane told public television.

Friday saw 150 millimetres of water fall on the city in the space of 90 minutes, local television

said. Images broadcast on television showed water racing through the streets, touching off landslides and collapsing homes as it carried off cars, motorcycles and trees.

Drinking water and electricity supplies have been affected in some areas, according to broadcasters.

The downpours have also disturbed traffic on the main route linking Maradi to the city of Zinder.

Niger’s rainy season normally lasts from June to September and consistently brings a heavy death toll. In 2022 there were 195 deaths and 400,000 people affected.

Adetshina wins Miss Universe Nigeria after rejection in SA

Reuters
Abuja

Chidimma Adetshina has been crowned Miss Universe Nigeria after a contentious attempt to compete in Miss South Africa last month.

Adetshina, 23, born to a Nigerian father and South African mother in South Africa and of South African citizenship found herself the subject of a national row after some South Africans, including a government minister, opposed her participation because of her roots. She later withdrew.

“I just want everyone to know that this crown is not just a crown of beauty, it is going to unite us as one. I am really proud and grateful that I am going to represent Nigeria at the Miss Universe, and I know we are going to win,” an elated Adetshina told the audience.

The row over Adetshina brought into view the xenophobia experienced by Nigerians in South



Chidimma Adetshina, the winner of the Miss Universe Nigeria 2024, reacts at the Eko Hotel Convention Centre.

Africa which has sometimes descended into violence and attacks against Nigerian businesses in the country.

Adetshina will represent Nigeria at the global Miss Universe pageant in Mexico in November.

China to pitch green tech exports to African leaders as Western curbs loom

Reuters
Beijing/Nairobi

China will urge a summit of 50 African nations in Beijing this week to take more of its goods, before Western curbs kick in on its exports such as electric vehicles and solar panels, in exchange for more pledges of loans and investment.

But the dozens of African leaders arriving in the Chinese capital for the three-yearly event may not be easy bait. They will want to hear how China plans to meet an unfulfilled pledge from the previous summit in 2021 to buy \$300bn of goods. They will also seek assurances on the progress of incomplete Chinese-funded infrastructure projects, such as a railway designed to link the greater East African region.

“The prize is going to go to those countries who have carefully studied the changes in China and align their proposals with China’s new slimmed-down priorities,” said Eric Olander, co-founder of the China-Global South Project.

“That’s a big ask for a continent that generally has very poor China literacy.” Africa’s biggest two-way



Mali’s interim president Assimi Goita arrives at Beijing Capital International Airport, yesterday. **Right:** Members of the Chinese honour guard walk past as Interim President of Mali, Goita, arrives ahead of the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Co-operation (FOCAC) in Beijing.

lender, investor and trade partner is moving away from funding big-ticket projects in the resource-rich continent, preferring instead to sell it the advanced and green technologies Chinese firms have invested in heavily.

As Western curbs on Chinese exports loom, Beijing’s top priority will be finding buyers for its EVs and solar panels, areas where the US and European Union say it has overcapacity, and building overseas production bases for emerging markets. China has al-

ready started tweaking conditions for its loans to Africa, setting aside more for solar farms, EV plants and 5G Wi-Fi facilities, while cutting back on bridges, ports and railways.

Last year, China offered 13 loans of just \$4.2bn to eight African states and two regional banks, data from Boston University’s Global Development Policy Centre showed, with about \$500mn for hydropower and solar projects.

GEOPOLITICAL JOSTLING
When President Xi Jinping

opens the ninth Forum on China-Africa Co-operation Summit on Thursday, he is expected to pitch plugging into China’s burgeoning green energy industry to leaders from Gambia, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.

In attendance will also be delegates from every African state except Eswatini, with which Beijing has no ties.

To avoid losing market share, China’s geopolitical rival, the US, has started to host African leaders. Britain, Italy, Russia and South

Korea have also held Africa summits in recent years, recognising the potential of the region’s young people and its 54 UN seats.

China’s outsized role as a financial and trade partner makes its meetings a far bigger deal, however. “There is no other development partner that does that much,” said Hannah Ryder, founder of Development Reimagined, an African-owned consultancy.

“But are African leaders able to push China to really dig in so that the balance of the ‘win’ is way

more towards the African side?”

China will want to talk up boosting trade and access to minerals like copper, cobalt and lithium in countries such as Botswana, Namibia, and Zimbabwe.

But it could be cautious about more funding commitments following debt restructuring bids in economies such as Chad, Ethiopia, Ghana and Zambia, since the 2021 summit.

“We are likely to see a continued prudence in terms of financing mega projects,” said Lina Benabdallah, of the Centre for African Studies at Harvard University, adding that Beijing would push for technology transfers instead.

“I am most certainly keen to understand how many new finance commitments may come out of this, and how they’re going to deal with existing debt to African countries,” said Yvette Babb, portfolio manager at asset management firm William Blair.

But China’s enthusiasm to lend might be dampened by security concerns, such as a spat between Niger and Benin that killed six Nigerian soldiers guarding a PetroChina-backed pipeline, or deadly protests in Kenya over tax hikes.



Fears of waterborne disease rise in Bangladesh

Reuters
Dhaka

Authorities in Bangladesh are bracing for the spread of waterborne diseases and racing to get drinking water to people after devastating floods last week that left at least 54 people

dead and millions stranded. As floodwaters recede slowly, many people remain stranded and in urgent need of food, clean water, medicine and dry clothes, especially in remote areas where blocked roads have hindered rescue and relief efforts. The Bangladesh Meteorological Department said that flood conditions could persist if the monsoon

rains continued, as water levels were receding very slowly. Around 470,000 people have taken refuge in 3,300 shelters across 11 flood-hit districts, where around 600 medical teams are helping provide treatment, with the army, air force, navy, and the border guard assisting in rescue operations, authorities said. A disaster manage-

ment ministry official warned that as floodwaters recede, there is a risk of an epidemic, adding that the outbreak of waterborne diseases is likely if clean water is not provided soon. "Our top priority is to ensure the availability of safe drinking water," the official said. Around 3,000 people have been hospitalised due to waterborne dis-

eases in flood-hit areas, according to the directorate general of health services. Many areas remained submerged, preventing stranded people from accessing healthcare facilities. "Water is everywhere but there is no clean water to drink. People are getting sick," said Farid Ahmed, a resident of one of the worst-hit districts, Lakshmipur. Vast areas of

land are submerged, posing a significant threat to crops, agriculture ministry officials said. The UN children's agency has warned that 2mn children were at risk as the worst floods in three decades sweep through eastern Bangladesh. The organisation is urgently appealing for \$35mn to provide life-saving supplies.

EU 'condemns dangerous actions' by China against Philippine ship

AFP
Brussels, Belgium

The European Union yesterday accused China of taking "dangerous actions" against the Philippines, as Beijing and Manila blamed each other of deliberately ramming their coast guard ships.

The collision marks the latest in a spate of similar incidents in recent weeks in the South China Sea, where Beijing claims almost all of the economically vital body of water despite competing claims from other countries and an international court ruling that its assertion has no legal basis.

"The EU condemns the dangerous action by Chinese Coast Guard vessels against lawful Philippine maritime operations in the area of the Sabina Shoa," said Nabila Mass-rali, spokesperson for the EU's top diplomat Josep Borrell, in a statement.

A Chinese coast guard spokesperson had said Saturday's incident took place off the disputed Sabina Shoal, which has emerged as a new hotspot in the long-running maritime confrontations between the two countries.

The incidents "endanger the safety of life at sea, and violate the

right to freedom of navigation to which all nations are entitled under international law," the EU statement said.

"The EU condemns all unlawful, escalatory and coercive actions that undermine these principles of international law and threaten peace and stability in the region."

Since taking office in 2022, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos, Manila has more firmly asserted its claim to sovereignty over disputed reefs despite Beijing showing no intention of backing down on its own claims.

Earlier the US too condemned China's action as "dangerous and escalatory" against what Washington called lawful Philippine maritime operations in the South China Sea.

US state department spokesman Matthew Miller said "a China Coast Guard vessel deliberately collided three times with a Philippine Coast Guard vessel exercising its freedom of navigation in the Philippines' exclusive economic zone (EEZ), causing damage to the vessel and jeopardising the safety of the crew onboard."

Washington called on China to "comport its claims and actions with international law and to desist from dangerous and destabilising conduct", Miller said in a statement.

Sabina Shoal is located 140kms west of the Philippine island of Palawan and about 1,200kms from Hainan island, the nearest major Chinese landmass.

The US, a strong ally of Manila that had raised the South China Sea in high-level bilateral talks this week in Beijing.

Philippines National Maritime Council spokesperson Alexander Lopez said a report about the latest clash would be sent to the department of foreign affairs for review and appropriate action.

"We take this with serious concern," Lopez told a news conference.

"We are there on a legal basis because that is ours, we don't need to ask for permission in our own territory. Let us be very clear about it," he said.

Philippine and Chinese vessels have collided near Sabina Shoal at least twice this month, and analysts say Beijing is trying to move deeper into Manila's exclusive economic zone and normalise Chinese control of the area.

The discovery this year of piles of crushed coral at the shoal ignited suspicion in Manila that Beijing was planning to build another permanent base there, which would be its closest outpost to the Philippine archipelago.

Protest march



Social activists and students shout slogans during a protest march yesterday to condemn the rape and murder of a doctor, in Kolkata, India. The discovery of the 31-year-old doctor's bloodied body at a state-run hospital in Kolkata on August 9 stoked nationwide anger at the chronic issue of violence against women, that sparked strikes by medics and rallies backed by thousands of ordinary citizens across India.

Thousands without power as heavy rains lash Tasmania

Reuters
Sydney

Tens of thousands of people in Australia's southern island state of Tasmania were without power yesterday after a cold front brought damaging winds and heavy rains, sparking flood warnings.

"Around 30,000 customers are without power across the state this morning," Tasnetworks, a state-owned power company, said on Facebook yesterday.

The nation's weather forecaster said on its website that a cold front over Tasmania, population around 570,000 people, was moving away, "although bands of showers and thunderstorms continue to pose a risk of damaging wind gusts."

Properties, power lines and infrastructure had been damaged, Tasmania's emergency management minister Felix Ellis said in a televised media conference, adding that "the damage bill is likely to be significant".

Emergency authorities issued warnings for flooding, which they said could leave Tasmanians isolated for several days, as the state prepared for another cold front forecast to hit.

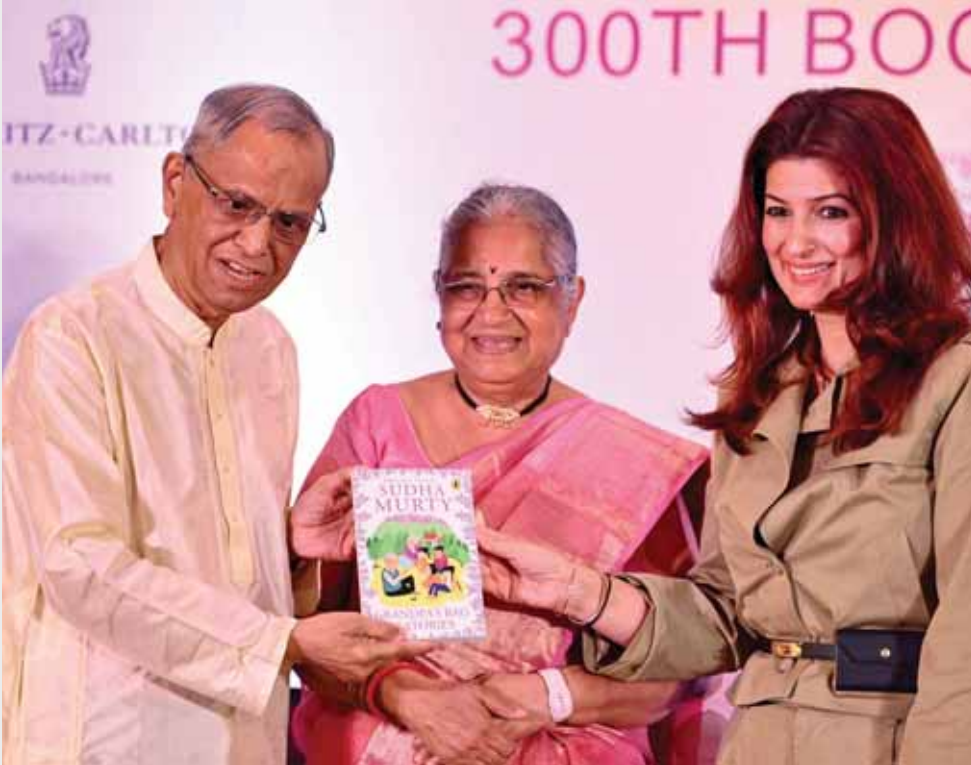
"There is potential for properties to be inundated, and roads may not be accessible," executive director of Tasmania State Emergency Service, Mick Lowe, said in a statement.

Authorities had received 330 requests for assistance in the last 24 hours, according to the agency.

Aviva 'engaging' with authorities over India tax investigation

British insurer Aviva said its India unit is "actively engaging" with local authorities in connection with alleged tax evasion practices. Reuters earlier reported that an Indian tax agency has found that Aviva India breached local regulations capping commissions to sales agents with a system of fake invoices and clandestine cash payments between 2017 and 2023. Aviva's India business paid about \$26mn to entities who purportedly provided marketing and training services, but they did not perform any work and were actually a front for channelling funds to Aviva's agents, the tax agency said in a notice. The fake invoices were alleged to have been used by Aviva to claim tax credits and evade \$5.2mn in taxes in India. The company faces as much as \$11mn in penalties, which is roughly its 2023 profit from selling life insurance in the country. A UK-based spokesperson for Aviva referred to the matter as "an industry wide issue", adding its Indian joint venture was "actively engaging with the relevant authorities".

Book launch



Author and philanthropist Sudha Murty (centre) poses alongside her husband, co-founder and retired chairman of Infosys, N R Narayana Murthy and Bollywood actress and author Twinkle Khanna during the book launch of her 300th title *Grandpa's Bag of Stories*, in Bengaluru, India, yesterday.

UK house prices fall for first time since April

Reuters
London

British house prices unexpectedly fell in August for their first monthly drop since April but the outlook for the property market is likely to strengthen, Nationwide Building Society, a major mortgage lender, said. House prices slipped by 0.2% on the month, Nationwide said. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast prices would rise by 0.2% from July.

In annual terms, prices were 2.4% higher than in August last year, the fastest increase since December 2022 – shortly after the "mini-budget" crisis that pushed up borrowing costs – but a smaller gain than the median forecast of 2.9% in the poll. Robert Gardner, Nationwide's chief economist, said the housing market remained subdued but was coping with the increase in interest rates. "Providing the economy continues

to recover steadily, as we expect, housing market activity is likely to strengthen gradually as affordability constraints ease," Gardner said. The Bank of England cut interest rates on August 1 to 5% from a 16-year high of 5.25%.

Investors are assigning a roughly one-in-four chance of the BoE lowering Bank Rate by another quarter point in September but they are fully pricing a cut at its November meeting. There have been signs of new momentum in the housing market in recent months. A survey published by Lloyds Bank showed confidence in the construction sector – which includes builders of infrastructure and commercial property as well as residential developers – jumped in August by 14 points to 58%. The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors said earlier its measure of expected sales over the next three months was the strongest since January 2020, immediately before the coronavirus pandemic struck Britain.

Pacific leaders remove Taiwan from communique after China complaint

Reuters
Sydney

The Pacific Islands Forum removed references to Taiwan from a group communique after complaints from China – a change Taipei condemned as a "rude intervention" but which a forum official said did not alter the leaders' decisions.

The communique released on Friday from the 18-nation summit included a section headed "Relations with Taiwan/Republic of China", stating "Leaders reaffirmed the 1992 Leaders decision

on relations with Taiwan/Republic of China".

After an angry response from a Chinese envoy, the communique was removed from the forum's website that evening, and a new document was posted on Saturday morning with the references to Taiwan removed.

China says Taiwan is one of its provinces with no right to state-to-state relations, a position the democratically governed island strongly disputes.

Of the forum's members, three have diplomatic ties to Taiwan

while 15 recognise China, a major infrastructure lender to Pacific Islands countries, where Beijing is seeking to increase its security presence.

After the Taiwan references were removed, Taiwan's foreign ministry said in a statement: "Taiwan condemns China's rude and unreasonable intervention and irrational behaviour that undermines regional peace and stability and calls on all like-minded countries to pay close attention to China's actions."

The ministry said, however, that the revised communique did

not undermine Taiwan's status at the forum nor preclude it from participating in the future.

A spokesperson for the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat said yesterday the communique is a "consensus-based document", reflecting the agreed decisions and views of all members.

"The version as finalised does not change nor impact the decisions of the meeting, nor any standing decisions of the forum leaders," she said in a statement.

A development partner to the forum since 1993, Taiwan sent Tien Chung-kwang, its deputy

foreign minister to Tonga, to meet its three Pacific allies, Palau, Tuvalu and Marshall Islands.

When the communique was initially released on Friday, China's special envoy to the Pacific Islands, Sian Bo, told reporters in Tonga the reference to Taiwan "must be a mistake", the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and *Nikkei* reported.

Qian had lobbied during the week for Taiwan to be excluded from the forum's official functions, the Chinese embassy's website showed.

"Any attempt by the Taiwan

authorities to brush up their sense of presence by rubbing shoulders with the forum can only be self-deceptive," China's foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian told reporters at a regular press conference in Beijing on Friday.

Taiwan's diplomatic allies in the Pacific have reduced in recent years as China has increased offers of development funding. Nauru switched ties from Taiwan to Beijing in January, while Kiribati and Solomon Islands, which both now host Chinese police, switched in 2019.

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TIMES

New genetic markers system could transform autism diagnosis

While it is estimated that worldwide about one in 100 children has autism, a new system that detects genetic markers in brain images with 89-95% accuracy, potentially enabling earlier diagnosis and treatment, will be welcomed widely as it could spare families years of uncertainty. The system, which identifies brain structure patterns linked to autism-related genetic variations, offers a personalised approach to autism care. The technique, called transport-based morphometry, or TBM, could transform the understanding and treatment of autism by focusing on genetic markers rather than behavioural cues.

The findings of a multi-university research team, co-led by University of Virginia engineering professor Gustavo K Rohde, suggest doctors may one day see, classify and treat autism and related neurological conditions with this method and result in earlier interventions.

“Autism is traditionally diagnosed behaviourally but has a strong genetic basis. A genetics-first approach could transform understanding and treatment of autism,” the researchers wrote in a paper published June 12 in the journal *Science Advances*.

Rohde, a professor of biomedical and electrical and computer engineering, collaborated with researchers from the University of California San Francisco and the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, including Shinjini Kundu, Rohde’s former PhD student and first author of the paper. It was while working in Rohde’s lab that Kundu – now a physician at the Johns Hopkins Hospital – helped develop a generative computer modelling

“A genetics-first approach could transform understanding and treatment of autism”

structure patterns that predict variations in certain regions of the individual’s genetic code – a phenomenon called “copy number variations (CNV)” in which segments of the code are deleted or duplicated. These variations are linked to autism. “Some CNV are known to be associated with autism, but their link to brain morphology – in other words, how different types of brain tissues such as gray or white matter, are arranged in our brain – is not well known,” Rohde said. Finding out how CNV relates to brain tissue morphology is an important first step in understanding autism’s biological basis.

TBM is different from other machine learning image analysis models because the mathematical models are based on mass transport – the movement of molecules such as proteins, nutrients and gases in and out of cells and tissues. ‘Morphometry’ refers to measuring and quantifying the biological forms created by these processes. Most machine learning methods, Rohde said, have little or no relation to the biophysical processes that generated the data. They rely instead on recognising patterns to identify anomalies. But Rohde’s approach uses mathematical equations to extract the mass transport information from medical images, creating new images for visualisation and further analysis.

The researchers used data from participants in the Simons Variation in Individuals Project, a group of subjects with the autism-linked genetic variation. Control-set subjects were recruited from other clinical settings and matched for age, sex, handedness and non-verbal IQ while excluding those with related neurological disorders or family histories.

“We hope that the findings, the ability to identify localised changes in brain morphology linked to CNV, could point to brain regions and eventually mechanisms that can be leveraged for therapies,” Rohde said.

Additional co-authors are Haris Sair of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and Elliott H Sherr and Pratik Mukherjee of the University of California San Francisco’s Department of Radiology. The research received funding from the National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, Radiological Society of North America and the Simons Variation in Individuals Foundation.

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Why SA’s global role must centre on peace, rights

By Zane Dangor

South Africa’s foreign policy trajectory can be viewed in the context of historical global political cultures. As a nation we have navigated a complex global environment, having emerged from being a global pariah to one of the more prominent actors on the global stage.

Recently, the icon of “realism”, Henry Kissinger, passed away. He had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in the 1970s for helping to negotiate a ceasefire in Vietnam – a war he both helped to escalate and then bring to a messy end. Kissinger’s approach was in keeping with the dominant global political culture which still prevails. The “realism” which Kissinger championed is a fancy diplomatic word for explaining why we need to accept war and injustice as part of the management of relations between countries.

Kissinger, and those who thought like him, supported the idea that the powerful in the world had to use force to shape the world according to their interests. He supported wars, irrespective of whether they were lawful, as long as they achieved some political objective.

Kissinger was a leading advocate for the US not to be a party to the Rome Statute – which established the International Criminal Court (ICC) – on the grounds that the US did not need to be accountable for its actions in the international arena. Kissinger was an eloquent proponent of a centuries-old culture that celebrates violence and warfare.

Sadly, as we are witnessing in Palestine, the tradition that sanctions and glorifies violence, plunder and exploitation is dominant and has subdued the tradition discouraging violence. We need to refocus the locus of international relations on values that prioritise the dignity and equality of people.

Jonathan Schell, in his seminal book *The Unconquerable World*, writes about two competing impulses in humanity. The impulse for war and plunder, and the opposing impulse for peace and serenity. He cites the poetry of Virgil, who glorified the wars of the Roman Empire through his words “Arms and the man I sing”. This edified a martial tradition and indeed a martial system where, at best, people and societies stood up for principles using force, but where generally it exemplified plunders, exploitation and massacres.

Humanity has not learnt lessons from the past. By now we should have learnt over the centuries that the use of force lays the basis for hatred that will only ensure “forever wars”. It is indeed an indictment of humanity that the last three decades have been described as the most peaceful in human history.

Recently, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

was warmly welcomed on Capitol Hill in the US. This is despite a request by the chief prosecutor of the ICC for arrest warrants for him and his minister of defence for crimes against humanity. Netanyahu’s welcome by American public representatives and other so-called responsible states that profess to respect international law and human rights law has created a significant crisis in international governance. Is this disregard of norms and laws because Palestinians are the victims and Israel the perpetrator? These are the same norms and laws that were supposed to frame the discussions at the recent Summit on Peace in Ukraine.

South Africa helped shape those agreements since the so-called Ukraine Peace Formula talks began in Copenhagen. These values that are centred on human rights and international legal norms were negotiated and agreed to at the G20 in New Delhi, India, in September 2023. They included explicit prohibitions on the annexation and acquisition of land through the use of force. Western countries supported this at the time as they largely negotiated in the context of the Russia/Ukraine war.

Not surprisingly, after the events in Palestine following October 7, the default Western diplomatic position was restored. That is, that these laws and norms do not apply to Israel or any actors that are deemed to be part of the West’s sphere of influence. Diplomats from countries of the South have long pushed back against the double standards in the implementation of international norms and laws. The most recent differential approach taken by the West, in which they have been outraged by the military onslaught on Ukraine but far less so about the genocide in Palestine, has been so crude that it has the potential to dismantle international legal order.

At the root of this differential approach to international legal norms is the global martial

culture that is in lockstep with the political traditions of former colonial powers. This was discussed by the South African legal team at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) hearings in The Hague.

In May, Vaughan Lowe KC, acting on behalf of the South African government at the ICJ, said: “We have heard expressions of outrage that anyone could accuse Israel of acting in this way. We have heard sober assurances that Israel was doing and would do everything in its power to avoid civilian deaths as it exercised its claimed right of self-defence. We have heard boasts that Israel’s army is the most moral army in history. We have heard flat denials that there is famine in Gaza. For months people, particularly in the West, have appeared unwilling to accept that the accusations are true. How could people who look like us and sound like us possibly engage in anything like genocide?” This institutionalised impunity for the powerful is steeped in the history of colonialism and indicates that the martial culture referred to by Schell is not only persistent, but also is condoned when the victims are “non-Western” people and countries.

This martial culture poses a danger to all of humanity. Contestation for power, influence, resources and territory through the use of force has the potential to destroy all of humankind and the planet that sustains us. The potential use of nuclear weapons in the current wars in Europe and the Middle East cannot be ignored. There is also an increase in localised violence fuelled by the growth of narrow nationalism and ultranationalist politics. This, together with the resurgence of the global war system, heightens the risk of regional war and even a type of world war which will be existential in nature.

We need a reset towards a global political culture that is based on co-operation, peace and justice, wherein diplomatic actions seek to build global

wellbeing. That is, a world where the use of force is replaced by dialogue and negotiation, and where force is prohibited. This will require changes to the UN Charter. The same UN and its related institutions must be reconfigured so that it is transformed from protecting previous empires to a system that regards all people and countries equally – and is geared towards being the engine for inclusive development. This will assist in dealing with the root causes of conflicts.

This vision is not new. It formed part of the foreign policy vision of the very first post-apartheid administration in South Africa. In 1994, our international relations strategic stance was centred on “progressive internationalism”. This was underpinned by a commitment to South-South co-operation and approaches to peace, security and disarmament that were guided by a commitment to human rights.

We sought to be a country that would act in solidarity with all peoples who face oppression and discrimination. At some point, this idealism in our foreign policy stance was supplanted by an unstated “constructivist” approach – which was code for “realism” – that weakened our normative human rights framework and led to inconsistent actions in the international arena.

Over the last five years we have recalibrated and have reset the normative stance. This has led to some referring to South Africa as the moral superpower. Whether this label is accurate or not, the expectation to fulfil this vision is one that we need to aspire to over the next five years. Perhaps with other middle-power countries we can work to transform the global political landscape to be peace-centred and rights-driven. For South Africa, this will require us to increase our consistency in diplomatic practice to reflect this normative stance.

The values embedded in the South African constitution place a duty on us to aspire to become moral global citizens. The value-based foreign policy stance that we are mandated to execute, given our history, can help us move away from simplistic definitions of being constructivist, realist or idealist.

A diplomatic stance centred on moral global citizenship should also create some momentum towards realising initiatives to create a more inclusive global economic system. This requires that those working in multinational corporations and private businesses become active moral global citizens. This should ideally lead to the development of national and global investment norms that would reward countries that adhere to international legal norms and promote a culture of human rights and peace.

• Zane Dangor is Director-General of the Department of International Relations & Co-operation (DIRCO) of the Republic of South Africa.

Russia repels ‘massive’ Ukraine drone attack

AFP
Moscow,

Russia said yesterday it had repelled a “massive” Ukrainian drone attack on energy and fuel plants in Moscow and 14 regions, one of the largest such strikes since the start of the two and half-year conflict.

Ukraine has repeatedly sent drones to strike Russia’s energy infrastructure in recent months, in retaliation for Moscow’s missile attacks that have hugely damaged its own energy network since the Kremlin first sent troops into the country in February 2022.

“It is entirely justified for Ukrainians to respond to Russian terror by any means necessary to stop it,” President Volodymyr Zelensky wrote on Facebook.

The latest barrage saw 158 drones fired, most of them downed over the regions of Kursk, Bryansk, Voronezh and Belgorod which border Ukraine, Russia’s defence ministry said.

Moscow mayor Sergei Sobyanin said that 10 drones had targeted various areas in and around the capital.

One of them sparked a fire at an oil refinery within the city limits of the sprawling capital, he said, while a coal-fired power plant near the city was also reported to

have been targeted.

The barrage came just days after Russia sent over 200 drones and missiles at Ukraine’s energy infrastructure, in one of the largest such attacks.

It also comes nearly a month since Ukraine went on the offensive in Russia’s Kursk region, crossing the border and capturing Russian territory as Russian troops continued their slow but steady advance in eastern Ukraine.

Sobyanin said yesterday morning that a downed drone had hit a “technical building” at the Moscow oil refinery, owned by the Gazprom energy giant, in the southeast Kapotnya area of the capital.

The mayor later said “the fire at the oil refinery has been localised and there is no threat to people or the plant’s operation”.

In the Tver region northwest of Moscow, five drones targeted the area of Konakovo power plant and caused a fire that was swiftly extinguished, according to governor Igor Rudenya.

A local official in the Moscow region, Mikhail Shuvalov, said on Telegram that three drones had also tried to hit the Kashira coal-firing power station, but that “there were no victims nor damage and it did not catch fire”.

Russian military blogger Rybar, who is followed by more than 1.3



Rescuers carry a wounded person from Sport Place after Russian missiles strike in Kharkiv yesterday. (AFP)

million people, wrote, “the night attack by the Ukrainian armed forces was the most massive since the start of the special military operation” in 2022.

In the city of Belgorod and the surrounding area, governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said 11 were injured in a later Ukrainian attack yesterday afternoon, among them two children and there was widespread damage to blocks of flats

and houses. In the Donetsk region, Russia is advancing towards the city of Pokrovsk and Ukraine’s Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces Oleksandr Syrsky wrote on Facebook that the “situation is difficult in the direction of the enemy’s main offensive”.

At least three people were killed and nine injured by shelling of the Donetsk region near the town of Kurakhove, the regional governor

Vadym Filashkin said.

Russia yesterday claimed control of two new villages in the region: Ptyche near Pokrovsk and Vyyimka further northeast.

Yesterday afternoon, Russia struck Ukraine’s second largest city of Kharkiv with missiles, injuring 47 people including seven children, according to the emergency services.

National police said Russia in-

juring 21 at a shopping centre and 18 at a sports centre, of whom five were children.

The attack caused “large-scale destruction and fires,” the emergency service said and “people could be under the rubble”.

An AFP photographer saw rescuers working in the rubble of the destroyed Sports Palace centre with a dog, looking for survivors and bringing out one of those injured on a stretcher.

Outside the shopping centre, there were burnt-out cars and facades torn off buildings and flames from a damaged gas pipe.

Prosecutors said Russia fired two Iskander-M ballistic missiles at a shopping centre and three at the Sports Palace while three other missiles hit near the sports centre.

The energy ministry said that Russia had attacked an energy facility in the city, without giving details.

Kharkiv also came under attack Friday with an aerial strike killing seven including a teenage girl.

“Russia is once again terrorising Kharkiv, striking civilian infrastructure and the city itself,” Zelensky wrote on Facebook, appealing for more weapons to fend off attacks.

He urged global leaders to show the “courage to give Ukraine everything it needs to defend itself”.

Paris zinc roofers seek elusive Unesco heritage status

The zinc covering the roofs of central Paris has given the French capital’s skyline its distinctive grey hue for almost two centuries. Now the roofs and the workers who create and care for them are aiming to enter a select heritage club to showcase a profession adapting to the challenges of climate change.

The French culture ministry has chosen the zinc roofers as the country’s entry for the Unesco list of Intangible Cultural Heritage to be decided at the UN body’s session in Paraguayan capital Asuncion in December.

The craftsmanship of roofers and other ornamentalists who have sculpted the capital’s skyline will be among 67 candidacies vying to join other iconic heritage sites such as India’s Taj Mahal.

According to the city’s urbanism agency Apur, Paris has 128,000 roofs covering a surface area of 32 million square metres, of which 21.4mn are of the traditional zinc-covered variety.

“Paris seen from above, it’s obvious you’re not in another city,” said an enthused Delphine Burkli, mayor of the capital’s ninth district.

Burkli helped initiate the French bid and first proposed in 2014 to add the roofs to Unesco’s heritage list. But the plan has since changed as it is “very complicated”, said Gilles Mermet, coordinator of the bid.

The campaign to etch the roofs



Romain Florentin (centre), a roofer and zinc worker, flanked by Thierry Gesset-Parment, business manager of ATZ - L’Art du Toit company and president of CAPEB Grand Paris (right), and his apprentice (left), works on the roof of a building in Paris. (AFP)

into the prestigious books of world heritage stumbled when Paris town hall withdrew its support.

Mermet said it was “afraid” of “no longer being able to build in Paris without the agreement of Unesco”.

“In the end, it was more interesting to showcase the profession itself” — which struggles to recruit — more than the roofs as such, to protect the beauty of the urban landscape, he added.

Every morning, Paris faces a shortage of about 500 roofers to complete the work needed, according to Meriadec Aulanier of the trade union bringing together

companies in the plumbing and climate engineering industries. The French candidacy aims to encourage thinking about the future of the city and a craft forced to adapt in the face of climate change, adds Burkli.

The zinc the covers almost 80% of Parisian roofs has come under criticism for its role in overheating buildings.

Darker roofs absorb more energy from sunrays — and that is bad news when summer heatwaves are becoming longer, more frequent and more intense as the planet warms up.

An Apur study in 2022 found that 42% of roofs in Paris had a weak reflection capacity, meaning they absorbed more heat.

These insulate poorly and “contribute to the rise in temperatures in homes”, according to an assessment carried out by the Council of Paris in 2022 titled “Paris at 50C”.

Roofscapes, a French start-up launched at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, put zinc under the spotlight in a test during the summer of 2023.

The experiment used an eight-storey building covered in zinc with a technical void in the attic that acted as a thermic buffer zone.

The study showed that a zinc roof heated the surrounding air during the day, up to 10 degrees Celsius above the home’s temperature and 7C warmer than the day’s weather.

Nightfall brought little relief: the homes under the roofs heated 6C more than the temperatures on the lower floors.

“At night, the zinc at the surface cools down. On the other hand, the heat continues to penetrate inside and that’s where there’s overheating in the homes,” explained Eytan Levi, an architect and co-founder of Roofscapes.

But Mermet is adamant that the zinc itself is not the problem, rather the absence of insulation in old buildings.

Macron to meet Cazeneuve amid search for PM



France’s then-minister of interior Bernard Cazeneuve (left) and economy minister Emmanuel Macron leave the Hotel Matignon on May 28, 2017 in Paris following a meeting with the prime minister and other members of the government and representatives of the oil sector. (AFP file photo)

Reuters
Paris

Emmanuel Macron will meet Bernard Cazeneuve, a former member of the Socialist party and an experienced politician, today, as the French president is close to announcing the new prime minister, two sources close to Macron said.

Macron will also receive his two predecessors, the socialist Francois Hollande and right-wing Nicolas Sarkozy, the sources said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Macron has been under pressure to end weeks of political deadlock after he called a snap election that delivered an unwieldy hung parliament.

Cazeneuve has been increasingly mentioned by politicians and observers as one of the most likely candidates to lead a new government as he is respected by right-wing parties, although he is also close to the left.

He abandoned the Socialist party two years ago to protest against its

tightening links with far-left France Unbowed (LFI) party.

France’s next prime minister will have the daunting task of trying to drive reforms and the 2025 budget through a hung parliament, as France is under pressure from the European Commission and bond markets to reduce its deficit.

As well as a brief stint as prime minister at the end of Hollande’s term, Cazeneuve was a minister three times - for European Affairs, Budget and Interior.

Macron’s gamble to call the snap parliamentary election in June backfired, with his centrist coalition losing dozens of seats and no party winning an absolute majority.

The left’s New Popular Front alliance came first but Macron ruled out asking it to form a government after other parties said they would immediately vote it down. Instead, he waited weeks to make his choice.

Even if the political paralysis continued after the appointment of a new government, Macron could not call a new snap election until July next year under the French constitution.

Harris is more predictable than Trump, says Kremlin

Russia sees US Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris as a more predictable opponent than Republican Donald Trump, though in any case there is no prospect of an improvement in relations with Washington, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

In an interview with Pavel Zarubin, a TV reporter with favoured access to the Kremlin, Peskov also appeared dismissive of Trump’s boast that he could end the Ukraine war within 24 hours if US voters returned him to the White House.

Before Joe Biden announced his withdrawal from November’s election and threw his support behind Harris, Russian President Vladimir Putin had said that Moscow preferred Biden over Trump, describing the former as an

experienced “old school” type of politician. With Biden out of the running, Zarubin asked Peskov, laughing: “Then who is our candidate now?”

Peskov, also laughing, replied: “We have no candidate. But, of course, the Democrats are more predictable. And what Putin said about Biden’s predictability applies to almost all Democrats, including Ms. Harris.”

While stating that the election was an internal US matter, Putin and Peskov have offered a variety of opinions at different times. In February, for example, Putin praised Biden for his predictability but also discussed the sensitive topic of his mental fitness for office in comments that appeared designed to sow mischief. In June, he said Russia did not care who the next US president was, but that the

US court system was clearly being used in a political battle against Trump.

Peskov, in the interview published yesterday, said US steps to “trample on our country’s interests” had exceeded acceptable limits. Bilateral relations were at a historic low point, with “no prospects” at the moment of setting them on a path towards recovery.

The Kremlin spokesman said there was no “magic wand” to resolve the Ukraine crisis overnight in the way that Trump has promised.

He said it was “fantasy” to imagine that the next US president would announce in their inauguration speech that Washington was halting military aid to Ukraine and calling for peace negotiations, and that this would change mindsets in Kyiv.

Clooney, Pitt are lone Wolves at Venice

Hollywood’s two top leading men — George Clooney and Brad Pitt — are ready to set the Venice Film Festival alight with the premiere of their new film *Wolfs*.

The action comedy, pitting one professional “lone wolf” fixer against another, is one of the highlights of the 10-day festival, where it is playing out of competition on the glamorous Lido.

Fans will be sure to await the arrival of the dashing movie stars by water taxi from Venice, with a world premiere scheduled for last evening.

The 81st edition of the world’s oldest film festival has been awash with stars this year, with Clooney and Pitt following on the red carpet Nicole Kidman, Cate Blanchett and Angelina Jolie — Pitt’s ex-wife.

Expected today will be Julianne Moore and Tilda Swinton, starring in a new film from Spain’s Pedro Almodovar, while Lady Gaga and Joaquin Phoenix will dominate



Actors Brad Pitt (right) and George Clooney arrive at the Casino pier during the 81st Venice International Film Festival at Venice Lido yesterday. (AFP)

Wednesday’s festivities with the premiere of the sequel to *Joker*, *Joker: Folie à Deux*.

In the Apple TV+ production from US director Jon Watts, Clooney and Pitt play

professional “lone wolf” fixers forced to work together when both are called in to clean up after a high-profile crime.

More than colleagues, Clooney and Pitt

are accomplices, with an easy rapport and self-deprecating humour that the Coen brothers tapped in 2008’s *Burn After Reading*, or on display in the trilogy of heist films *Ocean’s Eleven* (2001-2007).

With *Wolfs*, the characters “find their night spiralling out of control in ways that neither one of them expected”, explains the production, which has already announced a sequel.

Watts comes to *Wolfs* after directing the *Spider-Man: Homecoming* trilogy starring Tom Holland and Zendaya.

The film will have only a limited theatrical release before going to streaming around the world on Apple TV+ September 27.

Sunday’s offerings also include the premiere of *The Brutalist* from US director Brady Corbet, a three-and-a-half-hour film that sees Adrien Brody play a Hungarian Jewish architect embarking on a life-changing project.

Today, Almodovar returns to the Lido with his first full-length film in English, *The Room Next Door*, with Moore and Swinton, while Daniel Craig is the star of tomorrow’s premiere of *Queer*, an adaptation of the William Burroughs novel set in 1940s Mexico City.

German far-right set to gain in regional vote

The Alternative for Germany (AfD) was on track yesterday to become the first far-right party to win a regional election in Germany since World War Two, projections showed, but was almost certain to be excluded from power by rival parties.

The AfD was set to win 33.1% of the vote in the state of Thuringia, comfortably ahead of the conservatives’ 24.3%, broadcaster ZDF’s projection showed. In the neighbouring state of Saxony, the conservatives led on 31.9%, around half a percentage point ahead of the AfD.

With a year to go until Germany’s national election, the results look punishing for Social Democrat Chancellor Olaf Scholz’s coalition. All three parties lost votes, with junior partners, the Greens and Free Democrats, on the cusp of missing the 5% threshold needed to stay in parliament.



Fanar holds month-long training course for Russian preachers

The Sheikh Abdullah bin Zaid Al Mahmoud Islamic Cultural Centre (Fanar) at the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs has concluded a training course for Russian preachers, held from July 28 to August 26. The course, according to a statement from Awqaf, was held to introduce Islam and teach the Arabic language. There were lessons, lectures and workshops that aimed to provide an integrated programme including linguistic, legal and preaching aspects. Fanar held a ceremony at the end of the course to honour the participants. During the closing ceremony, Sheikh Dr Rushan Abbasov, the deputy chairman of the Religious Administration of Muslims of the Russian Federation and the Muftis Shura Council of Russia, delivered a speech via video conference. He praised Qatar's efforts, its leadership, and its outstanding civilisational and developmental achievements. He appreciated Awqaf for hosting the delegation of the federation in Qatar. Fanar director Dr Saleh Ali al-Akhn al-Marri said the course comes within the framework of achieving the vision and mission of Awqaf. Fanar, through this course, hosted the preachers to enhance their capabilities in the fields of introducing Islam, spreading Islamic culture, teaching the Holy Qur'an and promoting the Arabic language.



Children engaged in football during the camp.

QF concludes summer camp for students

Qatar Foundation (QF) has wrapped up its summer camp, "Mukhayamna 2024", which brought together 568 students from both QF and non-QF schools across the country to take part in fun and engaging activities held across Education City. The seven-week programme was organised by the Student Affairs and Community Engagement division at QF's Pre-University Education. It featured a diverse range of activities aimed at developing skills in quantum computing, performing arts, sports, and leadership, while also fostering Islamic values and Qatari identity. "For the first time, we expanded our camp to run the entire summer, instead of the usual two weeks, and it featured seven diverse programmes," said QF head of Community Engagement Rodha S al-Saadi. "This extension allowed students to fully utilise their summer by acquiring new skills and making the most of their time," she said. "The camp offered a variety of programmes to ensure diversity and cater to different interests," the official said. "Our goal was to help students discover new skills and talents, and we hope they will continue to develop these abilities throughout the year with the programmes provided by Qatar Foundation." The camp utilised several venues in Education City, including Awsaj Academy, the Recreation Centre, Awsaj Academy Recreation Centre and Academyati, and activities like swimming, shooting, football, and chess were conducted in collaboration with local sports federations. Al-Saadi emphasised the interactive nature of the camp. "We prioritised interactive, kinetic, and sports-related activities, steering clear of electronic devices to keep the students actively engaged," she said. This year, the camp also saw the participation of 20 children from Gaza, who were evacuated to Qatar. "This space provided them with a valuable opportunity to interact with other students and integrate into our community," al-Saadi said. "Additionally, we welcomed several students with special abilities, enriching the camp experience for everyone involved." A key objective of the camp was to promote Qatari identity, Islamic values, and the Arabic language. "We integrated these aspects into various activities throughout the camp," the official explained. "For example, students took part in a play called *Me and the Author*, which was specifically designed to reflect and celebrate these core values."

Ceremony held to mark 8th QBRI summer research programme

The Qatar Biomedical Research Institute (QBRI) at Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) has concluded the eighth edition of its Summer Research Programme (SRP) with an appreciation ceremony. The event on August 29 celebrated the achievements of 14 undergraduate students from prominent institutions, including Qatar University, Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar, Weill Cornell Medicine - Qatar, and the University of Calgary in Qatar. Running from May 19 to July 18, the 2024 SRP provided an intensive and immersive research experience, allowing the students to work alongside leading scientists in the QBRI's laboratories. Participants engaged in research projects covering crucial areas such as diabetes, cancer, and neurological disorders. In addition to hands-on laboratory experience, the students benefited from professional development activities and workshops focusing on how to present research data effectively, experimental design, writing scientific papers, reproducibility, and open science. This comprehensive approach ensured a well-rounded and enriching learning experience. Acting QBRI executive director Dr Omar Albagha highlighted the significance of the programme. "The continuing success of the Summer Research Programme underscores the QBRI's dedication to capacity building and attracting the next generation to the research field," he said. "By equipping students with essential skills and hands-on experience, we contribute to their personal and professional growth while also exposing them to the vast possibilities of careers in biomedical science."



Participants with officials of the programme.



MoEHE, Karwa wrap up 'Back To School' campaign

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) and Mowasalat (Karwa) have concluded the "Back To School" campaign for the 2024-25 academic year at Doha Festival City. The campaign was held under the slogan *My School, My Second Home* from August 25-31 with the participation of the General Traffic Department, the Ministry of Municipality, and the Ministry of Transport. This annual campaign, according to a statement from Karwa, targeted students and parents. These included games on how to drive a bus and follow traffic safety and educational guidelines, such as how to prepare for school and participate effectively in classroom activities. Awareness lectures were held on safety guidelines for transportation to and from school, including instructions on school bus etiquette, traffic laws, traffic signals, safe driving controls and road use. There was a workshop for children on recycling consumables and guidelines on general hygiene, drawing and colouring, and a storytelling and puppet theatre, in addition to mental games and sports segments. The campaign was aimed at preparing students to welcome the new academic year that began yesterday (Sunday) and encouraged them to love learning and develop their various skills. The campaign witnessed a wide turnout from visitors. Over 4,000 souvenirs were distributed by the MoEHE and Karwa to children participating in the events. The Public Relations and Communications Department honoured the partners and supporters of the campaign for their efforts in making the campaign a success.