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BUSINESS | Page 1

‘Made in the Gulf’ initiative to drive GCC integrated industrial growth, says Qatar Chamber chairman

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Qatar-UAE World Cup qualifying match today

The Ahmad Bin Ali World Cup Stadium will host the Qatar national team's match against the UAE today, at 7pm. This is the first match of Group A in the third and final stage of the qualifiers for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, which will be hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The stadium, which gained global acclaim during the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar, has a seating capacity of over 40,000. **Sport Page 1**

Ooredoo tests Wi-Fi 7 on FTTR devices

Ooredoo Qatar announced the successful completion of its trial of revolutionary Wi-Fi 7 technology. The trial was completed on Fibre-To-The-Room (FTTR) devices for the first time in the region, with plans to launch it commercially in 2024. Ooredoo anticipated that as per several industry benchmarks, Wi-Fi 7 is set to redefine the Internet landscape by enhancing the Wi-Fi speed by 4x, wider coverage, more reliability, and reducing latency. **Page 6**

Meta clears use of ‘From the River to the Sea’ slogan

Meta's Oversight Board ruled yesterday that the standalone use of the phrase “From the River to the Sea,” a slogan popular with pro-Palestinian users, does not violate the company's content policies. The phrase “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free,” has been used as a rallying cry for many since the outbreak of the war in Gaza, with Israel accusing those who use it of anti-Semitism. The board found that the content did not break Meta's rules on hate speech, violence and incitement, or dangerous organisations and individuals, and should not lead to post removal on its platforms.

Four dead in Georgia high school shooting

At least four people were killed in a shooting at a Georgia high school yesterday, CNN reported. In addition to the four killed, dozens of people were injured in the shooting at Apalachee High School in Winder, Georgia. Not all injuries appeared to be gunshot wounds, but rather also people hurt while fleeing. One suspect was in custody, the Barrow County Sheriff's Office said. **Page 11**



Amir, Norwegian PM discuss ways to strengthen ties

Qatar, Norway sign two MoUs

QNA Oslo

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway Jonas Gahr Store held yesterday a session of official talks at the Government Guest House in Oslo. At the outset of the session, the prime minister welcomed His Highness the Amir and the accompanying delegation, praising the friendly and co-operative relations between the two countries. He voiced his hope that His Highness the Amir's visit to the Kingdom of Norway would contribute to consolidating and strengthening co-operation between the two countries across various fields. In turn, His Highness the Amir thanked the prime minister of Norway for the warm reception accorded to him and the accom-

panying delegation. His Highness the Amir stressed his aspiration to work with the prime minister to advance bilateral co-operation to broader horizons in light of the diplomatic relations that have tied the two countries for more than 50 years and to enhance bilateral partnerships between the two countries across various fields. During the session, they discussed bilateral relations and ways to enhance and develop them, especially in the fields of investment, economy, energy, and international co-operation. They also discussed key regional and international developments, especially developments in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories. The session was attended by HE the Chief of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Saoud bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi, HE the Minister of Com-

Amir attends luncheon banquet hosted by Norway's king, queen



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani attended yesterday the luncheon banquet hosted by King Harald V of Norway and Queen Sonja at the Royal Palace in Oslo. Crown Prince Haakon Magnus of the Kingdom of Norway attended the luncheon banquet. The banquet was also attended by members of the official delegation accompanying His Highness the Amir. On Norway's side, it was attended by a number of ministers and senior officials. **(QNA)**

Qatar aspires to promote ties with Norway: Amir

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani stressed yesterday Qatar's aspiration to invest in its distinguished relationship with Norway, promoting it to the desired level that meets the common aspirations of both countries. In a post on his official X account, His Highness the Amir said that he held fruitful talks in Norway with King Harald V and Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store. His Highness the Amir said that they discussed prospects for cementing the economic and trade relations and co-operation in the diplomatic and development fields, in light of the good capabilities and potential of the two countries. His Highness added that the two countries look forward to raising the relations to the desired level that meets the common aspirations of the two countries, now and in the future. **(QNA)**

Urgent need for Gaza truce: Norwegian PM Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway Jonas Gahr Store appreciated the good exchange of views with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani regarding the urgent need for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. The prime minister of Norway yesterday posted on his X account saying, “Honoured to host HH the Amir of the State of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani. Appreciate good exchange on the urgent need for a ceasefire in Gaza, the fragile situation in the Middle East, and Afghanistan and Ukraine. Qatar is a valued partner on peace and reconciliation.” **(QNA)**

merce and Industry Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Qassim al-Thani, HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater, and a number of senior officials. On Norway's side, the session was attended by Minister of International Development Anne Beathe Tvin-nerheim, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Espen Barth Eide, Minister of Energy Terje Aasland, State Secretary for Defence Affairs Anne Marie Aanerud, State Secretary at the Ministry of Trade and Industry Vegard Grosli Wennesland, and a number of senior officials. Earlier, His Highness the Amir and the prime minister of Norway held a bilateral meeting, where they discussed a number of issues

and topics of common interest. On the sidelines of the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to the friendly Kingdom of Norway, two memoranda of understanding (MoUs) and additional clauses in the fields of avoiding double taxation and preventing fiscal evasion between the two countries were signed yesterday. **Page 4**

Qatar, Finland to broaden co-operation



QNA Helsinki

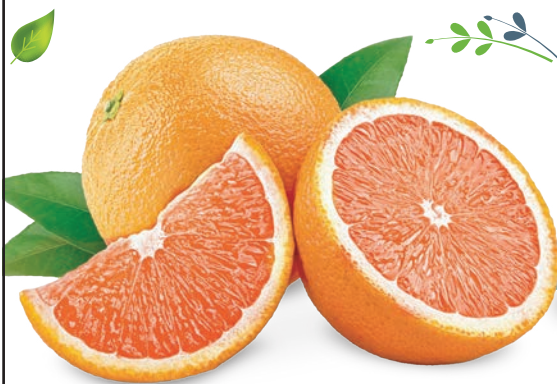
His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and President of the Republic of Finland Alexander Stubb held an official talks session at the Presidential Palace in the Finnish capital, Helsinki, yesterday. At the beginning of the session, the Finnish president welcomed His Highness the Amir and the accompanying delegation, noting that the Amir's first official visit to Finland reflects the depth of bilat-

eral relations, with this year marking the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. He voiced hopes to collaborate with His Highness the Amir to boost mutual co-operation and push relations to broader levels. Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir expressed his deep thanks to the Finnish president for the warm reception and generous hospitality, highlighting the outstanding relations between the two countries. His Highness expressed aspirations that the visit would contribute to consolidating bilateral co-operation relations across various fields to the benefit of the two countries and

their friendly peoples. The two sides discussed aspects of co-operation and ways to enhance and develop them, especially in the areas of investment, economy, energy, education and international co-operation. They also tackled the key regional and international issues of common concern, especially the latest developments in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territories. The session was attended at Qatar's side by HE the Chief of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Saoud bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi, HE the Minister of Commerce

and Industry Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Qassim al-Thani, HE the Minister of Education and Higher Education Buthaina bint Ali al-Jabr al-Nuaimi, HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater, along with senior officials and members of the official delegation accompanying His Highness the Amir. In attendance from the Finnish side where Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Ville Tavio, Chief of Staff, Office of the President of the Republic Lauri Tierala, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Security Policy,

Outi Holopainen, and a number of senior officials. His Highness the Amir and the Finnish president held a bilateral meeting during which they discussed ways to enhance co-operation between the two friendly countries and a number of issues of mutual interest. The Finnish president also hosted an official dinner banquet in honour of His Highness the Amir and the accompanying delegation at the Presidential Palace. His Highness the Amir was accorded an official reception ceremony upon his arrival at the presidential palace. **Pages 4 & 11**



برتقال أحمر (كارا كارا)
استرالي ١ كيلو
Orange Red Australia
(Caracara) 1kg
QAR 7.75
QAR 5.00



رمان مصري
١ كيلو
Pomegranate
Egypt 1kg
QAR 6.50
QAR 4.75



بطيخ عماني
١ كيلو
Watermelon
Oman 1kg
QAR 3.00
QAR 2.25



تندلي هندي
١ كيلو
Tindly
India 1kg
QAR 12.00
QAR 8.75



سلمون متوسط كامل
نرويجي ١ كيلو
Salmon Whole Medium
Norway 1kg (size: 2/3)
QAR 46.75
QAR 35.75



فيلية سمك قشور
بياض اوغندي ١ كيلو
Nile Perch Fillet
Uganda 1kg
QAR 49.75
QAR 38.75



لحم ماعز هندي
مقطع ١ كيلو
Mutton Cuts
India 1kg
QAR 44.75
QAR 37.50



برياني دجاج 0-500 غرام
Chicken Biryani
500gm
QAR 9.75



بلدنا جبنة عكاوي طازجة
١ كيلو
Baladna Fresh Akkawi
Cheese 1kg
QAR 48.00
QAR 34.00



النعمة صدر ديك رومي مدخن
١ كيلو
Al Nameh Smoked Turkey
Breast 1kg
QAR 49.50
QAR 32.00



QAR 19.00
QAR 11.75
ساديا دجاج
١.٣ كيلو
Sadia
Chicken 1.3kg



QAR 5.75
QAR 4.00
لندن بيكيزي خبز الطيب
٦٢٠ غرام
London Bakery Milk
Bread 620gm



ألفا زيت دوار الشمس
٥ لتر
Alfa Pure
Sunflower Oil 5Ltr.
QAR 22.00



بلوسوم أرز بالياسمين
٥ كيلو
Blossom
Jasmine Rice 5kg
QAR 24.50
QAR 15.50



QAR 90.50
QAR 69.00
نيدو حليب مجفف
٢.٥ كيلو
Nido Milk Powder
Tin 25kg



مارس سيليبيريشن
شوكولاتة ٣٨٥ جرام
Mars Celebrations
Chocolate 385gm
QAR 19.75



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QAR 9.50



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منوع ٤.٨ لتر
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Power Gel Asstd 4.8Ltr
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Asstd. 400ml X 2pcs
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(City Center, Villaggio, Landmark, Mall of Qatar & Ezdan Al Wakrah)



/KG
كغ/ **1.75 QR**
بطاطا، الصين
Potato, China



/KG
كغ/ **2.25 QR**
بصل أحمر، عمان
Onion red, Oman



/PACK
بالتعبئة/ **5.75 QR**
طماطم ٢٥٠ غم المغرب
Tomato plum shaker
250g, Morocco



/KG
كغ/ **2.75 QR**
برتقال فالنسيا
مصر/جنوب أفريقيا
Orange valencia,
Egypt/South Africa



/PACK
بالتعبئة/ **2.75 QR**
صمون x1
Samoon x6



/KG
كغ/ **23.75 QR**
مرتديلا دجاج، محلية
Plain chicken
mortadella, Local



/KG
كغ/ **23.75 QR**
جبنه رومي، مصر
Young roomy
cheese, Egypt



/KG
كغ/ **34.75 QR**
جبنه جودا فريكو. هولندا
Frico gouda young
cheese. Netherland



/KG
كغ/ **19.75 QR**
مكعبات لحم بقر
البرازيل
Beef cubes,
Brazil



/KG
كغ/ **19.75 QR**
لحم بقر مفروم
البرازيل
Beef mince,
Brazil



/KG
كغ/ **29.50 QR**
قاروص، تونس
Sea bass, Tunisia



/KG
كغ/ **36.50 QR**
سلمون ٣/٢ كغ، النرويج
Salmon 2/3 kg,
Norway



3L

23.75 QR
11.75 QR
زيت دوار الشمس
٣ لتر متنوع
Sunflower oil
3L assorted

5
Pieces



17.00 QR
6.75 QR
مناديل وجه
4 Star facial tissue
200x2ply

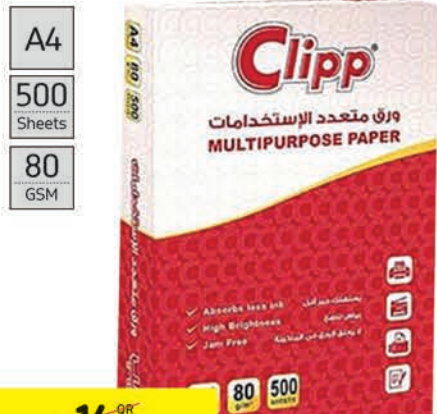
MyChoice
ماي تشويس



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129.00 QR
99.00 QR
طقم طهي ماي تشويس
My Choice non stick pressed alu-
minium cooking set



2 Pieces
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أرز باسمين ه كغ
Jasmine rice
5kg assorted



A4
500
Sheets
80
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Amir arrives in Helsinki; Finnish president welcomes Qatar delegation on X platform

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani arrived yesterday in Helsinki on an official visit to Finland. The Amir was accompanied by an official delegation. Finnish President Alexander Stubb welcomed the visit of His Highness the Amir, noting that this year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Finland and Qatar. In a post on his official X account, the president wrote: "I warmly welcome HH the Amir of the State of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to Finland. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our countries. "A close dialogue between our two countries is important, especially because of the security situation in Europe and the Middle East," he added. (QNA)



Amir accorded official reception, attends dinner banquet hosted by Finnish president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani was accorded an official reception ceremony upon his arrival at the Presidential Palace in Helsinki. Finnish President Alexander Stubb also hosted an official dinner banquet in honour of His Highness and the accompanying delegation at the Presidential Palace.



Amir, Norwegian PM hold official talks



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway Jonas Gahr Store held a session of official talks at the Government Guest House in Oslo.



Qatar, Norway sign two MoUs



On the sidelines of the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's visit to Norway, two memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and additional clauses in the fields of avoiding double taxation and preventing fiscal evasion between the two countries were signed yesterday. The two sides signed an MoU/declaration of intent for military co-operation between Qatar and Norway and an MoU in the field of peace and reconciliation between the two countries. They also signed additional clauses to the agreement on avoiding double taxation and preventing fiscal evasion that was signed in 2010.



PRIO director: Qatar makes positive, great efforts to build peace

Director of the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) Henrik Urdal has praised the great positive efforts made by Qatar to build peace, indicating that the country has succeeded in finding solutions to many prominent issues in the Middle East and the world. In an interview with Qatar News Agency, Urdal affirmed the importance of finding solutions to deep-rooted conflicts in the Middle East, especially the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, highlighting Qatar's role in ensuring mediation efforts. He expressed deep concern about the current situation in the

Gaza Strip, where the UN said that the actions taken by Israeli forces in Gaza may amount to genocide. He emphasised the need to reach a ceasefire agreement and find political solutions. Urdal added that political solutions must include all Palestinian territories and a commitment by the Israelis to withdraw from the areas they currently occupy and provide security and political guarantees from neighbouring countries, including Qatar, which plays an important positive role in this conflict. PRIO Director pointed out the importance of ensuring the provision of political solutions

that give people the right to manage and direct their political entities, as this is the reason behind the new momentum for the two-state solution, indicating that Norway recognised the State of Palestine as an important first step towards finding a political solution. Urdal said that Qatar and Norway bear a significant responsibility and have a clear policy to work towards building peace, emphasising the importance for countries like Qatar and Norway to assume this role, given the current huge investment in armament, calling at the same time for investment in diplomacy and mediation to contribute to re-

solving conflicts instead of weapons. Urdal underlined the diplomatic successes achieved by Qatar over the past years in the Middle East and the world, highlighting the mediation efforts in areas such as Afghanistan and Darfur in the past and now in Ukraine. He pointed out that Qatar and Norway have many things in common, as the two countries follow the same approach in speaking to all parties to facilitate dialogue between them and encourage them to sit at the negotiating table, in addition to the great bilateral international relations enjoyed by the two countries.

Cabinet applauds MoEHE's strategic roadmap for 2030

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jas-sim al-Thani chaired the Cabinet's regular meeting at the Amiri Diwan yesterday. HE the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali al-Mohannadi issued the following statement: At

the outset of the meeting, the Cabinet commended the agenda of the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Qatari-Saudi Co-ordination Council, which embodied the two countries' keenness to strengthen and deepen bilateral relations and advance them to broader horizons in various areas of mutual interest, in a way that achieves the interests of the countries' brotherly peoples. The Cabinet also commended the Ministry of Education and Higher Education's (MoEHE) comprehensive strategy 2024-2030, which was launched on Monday by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, under the slogan 'Igniting the Spark of Learning.' MoEHE'S comprehensive strategy aims to develop the education sector in Qatar by improving high-quality education, ensuring equal opportunities, and continuously developing teachers' skills, while preparing a resilient generation capable of confronting future challenges and enhancing sustainability and innovation in the educational system, within the framework of achieving the goals and aspirations of the 3rd National Development Strategy and Qatar National Vision 2030. The Cabinet was also briefed on

MoEHE's preparations alongside the relevant authorities for the new academic year 2024-2025, which began on Sunday after having provided all the elements of its success to ensure a smooth educational process. Afterwards, the Cabinet considered the topics on its agenda as follows: First - Approval of a draft law amending some provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code issued by Law No. 23 of 2004, and referring it to the Shura Council. This draft is being prepared within the framework of the National Justice Systems Development Initiative, which aims to achieve prompt justice by developing litigation procedures, enhancing digital transformation, and using modern electronic means in the judicial and justice fields. Second - Approval of the draft Cabinet resolution to form a committee to host the Web Summit 'Qatar 2024-2028.' Third - Approval of the Civil Services and Government Development Bureau's proposal regarding working hours during the week and mechanisms for organising them, as well as the remote work system and flexible working hours. The proposal aims to adopt flexible systems that suit the needs of competencies in the government sector with-

out compromising work requirements, within the framework of Qatar National Vision 2030, which is based on human and social development, and the 3rd National Development Strategy 2024-2030. Fourth - Taking appropriate measures to ratify: 1- Framework partnership agreement between Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD) and the UN Children's Fund (Unicef) for 2024-2028. 2- Agreement on the establishment of bilateral strategic partnership relations between the governments of Qatar and Uzbekistan. 3- A memorandum of understanding (MoU) on mutual recognition of seafarers' certificates between the governments of Qatar and the Philippines. 4- An MoU on co-operation in the field of ports between Qatar Ports Management Company and Chittagong Port Authority in Bangladesh. 5- Agreement on co-operation and news exchange between Qatar News Agency and Nepal's National News Agency. Fifth - Approval of: 1- A draft MoU between the Ministry of Interior of Qatar and the Ministry of Interior of Saudi Arabia in scientific, training and research activities.

2- A draft MoU between the Public Works Authority 'Ashghal' in Qatar and the Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Science and Technology in the Swiss Confederation. Sixth - The Cabinet reviewed the following topics and took the appropriate measures in their regard: 1- A report on the outcomes of evaluating the experience of celebrating the International Day of Education in Qatar 2024. 2- A report on the outcomes of the participation of Qatar's delegation, led by HE the Minister of Commerce and Industry, in the Economic and Investment Conference of the GCC countries and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), and the GCC-Central Asian Investment Forum. 3- A report on the outcomes of the Ministerial Meetings of GCC Committees for Commercial Co-operation, Industrial Co-operation, and Standardisation Affairs, and the accompanying consultative meetings, which were held in Doha. 4- A report on the outcomes of the participation of the State of Qatar's delegation, led by HE the Minister of Municipality, in the 9th World Cities Summit (WCS) and the 4th Asia Infrastructure Forum (AIF). (QNA)

LIQUIDATION ANNOUNCEMENT
"1"

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ACCORD PITCH DOHA TOURISM L.L.C.
(Voluntary Liquidation)
Liquidator / Naresh Dasari
Announce the commencement of liquidation of
ACCORD PITCH DOHA TOURISM L.L.C.
Commercial Registration No. 132444
Any party who has any claims from this Company
should send a registered letter including all supporting
documents to **P.O. Box 30653, Doha – Qatar**, within
75 days from the date of this publication
Email: naresh@aksaa.qa,
M: +974 6603 9427 / T: +974 4417 2674

Al-Marri meets Saudi minister



HE the Minister of Labour Dr Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri met yesterday with Saudi Minister of Human Resources and Social Development Engineer Ahmad bin Sulaiman al-Rajhi, on the sidelines of the GCC Ministerial Meetings on Civil Service, Labour, and Social Development Affairs, which are being held in Qatar. They discussed ways to enhance bilateral labour ties, particularly in terms of the national workforce. **(QNA)**

PM meets GCC ministers of civil service, labour and social affairs



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met yesterday with the ministers participating in the Ministerial Meetings of Civil Service, Labour, Social Affairs and Development of the GCC, which were held in Doha. HE Sheikh Mohamed welcomed the guests, expressing his hope that the outcomes of the meetings would contribute to enhancing the performance of the ministries of civil service, labour and social development in the GCC countries. **(QNA)**

Qatar chairs meeting of Gulf labour ministers

The GCC Labour Ministers Committee held its 10th meeting in Doha under the chairmanship of HE the Minister of Labour Dr Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri and in the presence of GCC Secretary-General Jassem Mohamed Albudaiwi.

The ministers explored ways to enhance collaboration in the Gulf labour market, learn from the successful practices of GCC countries, and discuss various issues of common interest to the GCC countries. In his speech during the meeting, HE Dr al-Marri highlighted the impact of the unique circumstances in the Arab region on labour markets, employment, occupational safety, and health, as well as the influ-

ence of the digital revolution on the workforce. He also focused on challenges such as forced labour, human trafficking, and child labour. He emphasised the importance of implementing policies to enhance social protection programmes and preserve workers' rights in the private sector. He underlined the need to update laws to make the job market more efficient and appealing to both national and international talent.

He added that Arab Gulf countries have similar labour laws, wage protection, and occupational safety, which helps to ensure the success of effective decisions and initiatives. He said that the GCC countries require legislative updates in



response to quick labour market shifts. He highlighted the GCC's focus on promoting sustainability and environmental preservation in workplaces through recycling and renewable energy use to mitigate

climate change impacts and protect the environment.

GCC Secretary-General Albudaiwi noted that the directives of the leaders of the GCC countries, had a significant impact in advanc-

ing the track to achieve the desired goals, which culminated in the GCC countries achieving great successes in various economic, social, and political fields over the past years. In this context, he pointed to the remarkable progress of the GCC countries in the Global Competitiveness Index for 2023, as well as in the Youth Progress Index.

He said that the GCC countries are among the top 30 countries out of 150 countries covered by this index, and other international indicators that confirm the success of the strategic solutions and initiatives adopted by the GCC countries within their visions and development plans, which requires strengthening these gains and

building on them, guided by the directives of the GCC leaders.

The meeting discussed various topics that would enhance joint Gulf action in the labour market. The key topics that the meeting also addressed were the Gulf framework for combating human trafficking and forced labour, as well as legislation related to women's employment and maternity leave across the GCC. On Tuesday night, on the sidelines of the meetings, Doha witnessed a ceremony honouring a distinguished elite of administrative competencies, personalities, institutions, and leading companies in the fields of labour and social development in the GCC countries. **(QNA) Page 12**

Iranian envoy visits Qatar Cancer Society

Iranian ambassador Dr Ali Saleh-Abadi has visited Qatar Cancer Society (QCS), underscoring the mutual interest in developing effective strategies to tackle cancer and support those living with the disease.

The ambassador and his accompanying delegation were welcomed by Sheikh Dr Khalid bin Jabr al-Thani, chairman of QCS. Sheikh Dr Khalid expressed his appreciation for the visit and praised the joint efforts of both sides in combating cancer and improving

There were discussions on developing future partnerships between the QCS and Iranian health institutions

the quality of life for patients. The discussions focused on enhancing co-operation and exchanging knowledge and expertise, which would contribute to improving healthcare standards and providing necessary support to patients and their families.

The delegation was introduced

to QCS' programmes and initiatives aimed at cancer prevention and support for those living with the disease. The tour also included insights into the latest research projects and awareness initiatives undertaken by QCS, as well as the psychological and social support services offered to patients.

There were discussions on developing future partnerships between the QCS and Iranian health institutions.

The talks focused on enhancing scientific research collaboration

and sharing knowledge about the latest treatment methods, and advanced medical technologies.

In a statement, the Iranian ambassador emphasised the importance of international co-operation in the fight against cancer, noting that his visit represents a significant step towards strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries. He expressed his country's readiness to support joint efforts in this vital field and expand co-operation to effectively address health challenges.



Dr Ali Saleh-Abadi and Sheikh Dr Khalid bin Jabr al-Thani.

Msheireb Museums, Sidra host 4th Science Cafe event

Msheireb Museums, in collaboration with Sidra Medicine, hosted the fourth session of the Science Cafe series on September 2 at Bin Jelmood House. Titled 'Hope for Little Heroes: Revolutionising Paediatric Cancer Therapies', the event provided an overview of the latest developments within paediatric oncology, highlighting pioneering innovations.

In a press statement, Msheireb Museums general manager Abdullah al-Naama said: "This series of events highlights the vital connection between culture and medicine, both of which are integral pillars in our lives. By creating a space where these two worlds can converge, we foster a dialogue that not only enlightens but also empowers our community."

Sidra Medicine research manager Dr Sahar Da'as, who is leading the Science Café initiative, said: "Through collaborative efforts like this series with Msheireb Museums, we aim to create greater awareness and support for paediatric cancer care, ultimately leading to brighter tomorrows for our young patients and their families."



The session hosted a series of presentations by experts in paediatric oncology from Sidra Medicine. Dr Ata Ur Maaz discussed the latest clinical advances in cancer treatments and their impact on survival rates. Claire May-Ann Ryman from Child Life, pointed out the need for parents to explain to their child about his or her condition and its implications, and what could be expected from it.

Dr Chiara Cugno, director of the Advanced Cell Therapy Core, emphasised that research in paediatric cancer was critical and ever changing: "Sidra Medicine is one of the few hospitals in the region, that has a synergetic ap-

proach between our research and clinical services where diagnosis, care, treatment and finding the best therapies are initiated at the same time. This approach enables us to offer personalised medicine strategies for children and young people with cancer.

The audience was equally moved when a patient family shared their child's personal journey that proved how life-altering newest treatments can be. Fahad al-Turky, manager of Exhibitions and Programmes at Msheireb Museums, said: "Together, we have created a platform that not only educates but also motivates action and instills hope."



Record-breaking summer visitors at MDD



Msheireb Properties announced the successful conclusion of the Msheireb Downtown Doha (MDD) Summer Season, which firmly established it as 'Qatar's premier family destination'. The season, running from June to August, saw unprecedented footfall and visitor engagement, setting new benchmarks for urban entertainment in Qatar. Dr Hafiz Ali Abdulla, senior director of Corporate Communication at Msheireb Properties, said: "This summer season has been a testament to MDD's role as a cultural and social hub for Qatar. The remarkable increase in visitors reflects not just the appeal of our events, but the growing appreciation for the sustainable urban living model we've created. It's particularly gratifying to see how our educational and cultural initiatives have resonated with families, reinforcing MDD's position as a place where heritage and modernity coexist harmoniously." Overall footfall reached an impressive 2,388,809 visitors from June 16 to August 31, marking a substantial 73.2% increase compared to the same period in 2023. Msheireb Galleria, a key attraction within MDD, welcomed 802,407 visitors during this period. The eco-friendly tram service saw ridership soar to 64,807 passengers, a 44% increase compared to the previous year.





WISH announces theme for seventh global conference

World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH) has announced ‘Humanising Health: Conflict, Equity and Resilience’ as the theme for its upcoming global conference.

The 7th conference of the global health initiative of Qatar Foundation will take place in Doha on November 13 and 14 and highlight the need for innovation in health to support everyone, especially among vulnerable societies and in areas of armed conflict.

Lord Ara Darzi, executive chair of WISH and director of the Institute of Global Health Innovation at Imperial College London, said: “This year’s WISH comes at a time of great suffering and inadequate

health provision for vulnerable populations, such as civilians in Gaza. It is of the utmost importance that we consider the cost of inaction at a systematic and a human level.

“At WISH 7 in November, it is vital that we make the most of a precious opportunity to look for solutions to pressing global health challenges. The solutions that the global WISH community seek must be equitable and foster resilience; they must humanise health.”

This year, WISH has entered a strategic partnership with the World Health Organisation (WHO), involving collaboration in the development of a series of evidence-based reports and policy



Lord Ara Darzi

papers, as well as the support of WHO in a post-summit implementation strategy.



Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

With an evidence-based approach to developing innovative, practical solutions to some of glo-

bal health’s most pressing challenges, the reports aim to provide policy recommendations that deal with how best to provide care at an individual, human level.

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director-general at WHO, said: “WHO is deeply grateful to Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation, WISH, and Qatar’s Ministry of Public Health for bringing partners together to discuss conflict, equity, resilience and other pressing global health challenges, and to identify evidence-based solutions to promote, provide and protect the right to health.

“As disturbing as the number of conflicts in our troubled world is the

increasing frequency of attacks on healthcare. These attacks deprive people of lifesaving health services at the time they need them most.”

Within the overall theme, November’s global gathering will feature four ‘tracks’, categorising sessions into sub-themes: Health and armed conflict, covering pain management, disability, hunger and mental health; Health of vulnerable and minority populations, considering TB in refugees and migrants and palliative care; System level innovation and change, such as antimicrobial resistance and the ethics of AI in health and community-led engagement and interventions, including obesity and women’s cancers in the region.

QC’s flood relief efforts in Yemen receive praise

The humanitarian efforts by Qatar Charity (QC) to assist flash flood victims in Yemen have been well-received by local authorities and beneficiaries alike, a statement said.

The recipients expressed their gratitude to the people of Qatar for their ongoing support, which has significantly helped ease their suffering.

Recently, QC distributed 650 food packages and 650 shelter kits to affected families in Hays and Al Khawkah, two of the districts most severely affected by floods, as part of the ongoing humanitarian campaign ‘Aid for Flood Victims’.

This campaign previously distributed 500 food packages and 500 shelter kits in Marib Governorate, targeting displaced persons camps affected by the floods.

The shelter kits include blankets, mattresses, mats, and kitchen utensils, while the food packages contain essential supplies sufficient for a month for the beneficiary families.

The director of Hays District, Mutahar Qadhi, expressed his gratitude for the efforts made by the benefactors from Qatar.

He praised the effective role that QC played in distributing food packages and shelter kits to the beneficiaries.

He also extended his appreciation to all the supporters and im-



plementers from the Humanitarian Development Programme, QC’s local partner, who contributed to the remarkable charitable efforts.

In a related note, 70-year-old Fatima Taher, shared the pain she experienced after the floods washed away her home and all her belongings. She confirmed that the food package and shelter kit came at a time when she and her family were in desperate need of assistance. She expressed her gratitude to the people of Qatar for their support.

Salma Awad Jbeili described the

hardship she faced after the floods destroyed her home and swept away her agricultural land. She noted that the assistance has restored hope to those affected during these critical times.

QC seeks to distribute 3,500 food packages and 3,500 personal hygiene kits soon, followed by an additional 1,100 food packages and 1,100 hygiene kits through another project supported by Start Fund. It also aims to renovate the Khalifa Health Center in the Al Marawi’ah district, which was damaged by floods.

Ooredoo completes Wi-Fi 7 test within FTTR services

Ooredoo Qatar has completed its trial of the ‘revolutionary’ Wi-Fi 7 technology on Fibre-To-The-Room (FTTR) devices for the first time in the region, with plans to launch it commercially in 2024, it was announced yesterday.

Ooredoo Qatar has always supported innovation, from pioneering the deployment of 5G and 50GPON connectivity to introducing state-of-the-art solutions like Fibre-To-The-Room, a statement said.

As per several industry benchmarks, Wi-Fi 7 is set to redefine the Internet landscape by enhancing the Wi-Fi speed by four times, wider coverage, more reliability, and reducing latency. These improvements are critical for supporting next-generation home applications, such as 8K video streaming, immersive augmented reality and virtual reality experiences, and high-definition interactive gaming.

Beyond home use, Wi-Fi 7 will drive substantial innovation across various industrial sectors, including telemedicine, cloud computing, and Industrial IoT, catalysing Qatar’s ongoing digital transformation.

Sheikh Ali bin Jabor al-Thani, CEO of Ooredoo Qatar, stated: “At Ooredoo, we pride ourselves



on being at the forefront of adopting and introducing new technologies. Testing Wi-Fi 7 on FTTR services underscores our dedication not just to keeping up with global technological progress, but to being at the vanguard of these developments.

“We remain committed to delivering solutions that are specifically tailored to the unique demands of our market that addresses home connectivity challenges efficiently and innovatively using the Wi-Fi 7, which is the most advanced Wi-Fi technology.”

The initial commercial launch of Wi-Fi 7 will be with Ooredoo’s innovative FTTR solution, designed to enhance connectivity across larger homes.

QCB issues AI guidelines for Qatar financial institutions

By harnessing Artificial Intelligence, Qatar’s financial institutions can innovate, develop cutting-edge products and services that satisfy customers’ needs

Qatar Central Bank (QCB) has issued Artificial Intelligence (AI) guidelines for financial institutions in the country.

This is in line with the Third Financial Sector Strategy and the FinTech Strategy, QCB said yesterday.

This initiative reflects the QCB’s commitment to advancing and regulating the financial sector within the country.

“The introduction of AI technologies represents a pivotal opportunity for financial institutions in Qatar. By harnessing AI, these institutions can innovate and develop cutting-edge products and services that satisfy the customers’ needs and align with global standards and



best practices,” Qatar Central Bank noted.

AI offers many other benefits and advantages as it promises to improve operational efficiency, expedite service delivery, and deliver a superior customer experience, thereby increasing overall satisfaction with financial services.

Additionally, AI contributes to reducing operational costs and

bolstering transaction transparency. Its ability to detect fraudulent activities enhances security and fortifies the competitiveness of Qatar’s financial markets on both regional and global levels.

This, in turn, supports the development of the sector, attracts investment, and ensures sustainable growth.

Qatar Central Bank said it “remains dedicated” to providing valuable initiatives aimed at driving the growth of the Fintech sector in the country, elevating operational efficiency, and inspiring innovation in financial and banking services, all in line with Qatar National Vision 2030.

The guidelines can be viewed on Qatar Central Bank’s official website.

Baladna starts phase 1 of powdered milk production project in Algeria

QNA
Doha

Baladna has announced the commencement of the first phase of its powdered milk production project in Algeria.

In a statement, the company stated it has initiated the early stages of the project by drilling exploratory water wells in various areas of the allocated land to support the cultivation of grains and fodder necessary for raising cattle.

The project was signed on April 24 last year between the Algerian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and Baladna for the production of powdered milk, with a value of \$3.5bn.

The ceremony marking the start of the project was attended by Qatar’s ambassador to Algeria Abdulaziz Ali al-Naama along with several senior officials in Algeria and representatives from the Baladna Food Industries.

The company mentioned that the drilling of the wells aims to study the nature of the groundwater and to reach the optimal design, with the goal of ensuring the sustainability of water resources for the project and future generations.

The company confirmed that it intends to use the best techniques to monitor and enhance the efficiency of groundwater usage by integrating data from weather stations and satellite imagery.

Governor of the Adrar Province in Algeria Al Arabi Bahloul said the project would represent a true launch for vital food sectors and dairy products, making it a pivotal step toward achieving food



security.

Additionally, the project is expected to contribute to lowering the prices of locally manufactured food products, thus aiding in the development of the Algerian economy and reducing import costs.

Ali al-Ali, a representative of Baladna, expressed his happiness with the commencement of the preliminary work for the project, adding that what is now a desert will transform into a beacon of excellence and innovation, housing the world’s largest integrated vertical farm, with more than 270,000 head of cattle, producing approximately 1.7bn litres of milk annually. He said the company will use the latest technologies, agricultural automation, and cattle breeding and dairy production methods, adhering to the highest standards of quality and environmental sustainability.

He pointed out that Baladna will implement the best irrigation methods to minimise excessive water use during all phases of the project. As part of its efforts to develop integrated mechanisms for water conservation, Baladna will use sensors to measure soil moisture and salinity to determine the exact amount of water needed for each crop.

Ramez al-Khayyat, a member of Baladna’s board of directors, emphasised the importance of this strategic project, saying the pioneering project is a new link that strengthens the bonds of co-operation between the two countries. He added that today sees the launch of the project’s preliminary steps, highlighting its strategic importance to the company given that it allows it to transfer its expertise and leadership in the dairy production sector to fulfil the Algerian government’s vision of achieving self-sufficiency.

Earlier this year, Baladna announced the signing of an agreement with the Algerian government, represented by the National Investment Fund, to implement the project, which is expected to cover 50% of Algeria’s powdered milk needs. The project, consisting of three phases, begins with the reclamation of fodder farms, followed by the establishment of a cattle breeding farm, and finally the construction of a powdered milk production facility. The project aims to reduce Algeria’s reliance on powdered milk imports, create over 5,000 job opportunities, increase local red meat production, and localise milk production to achieve self-sufficiency. (QNA)

Ministry organises open field day on drying dates

The Ministry of Municipality’s Agricultural Research Department organised an instructive field day at the Rawdat Al-Faras Research Station on Tuesday on the topic “Drying of Dates in Modified and Advanced Drying Rooms”.

Suwaid al-Maliki, head of the Plant Research Section, alongside several palm farm owners, engineers, agricultural advisors from farms and private companies, and date farmers were present.

Engineer Amer Fayyad al-Kehais, from the Agricultural Research Department, gave an explanation of the most important pre-harvest, harvest, and post-harvest practices. He reviewed all the stages that have been studied on drying methods from 2006 until now, and how the drying process has evolved to the use



of drying rooms covered with a polycarbonate material.

He further discussed the development of drying rooms, starting from the regular drying room and the multi-purpose drying room (which can be used as a nursery for vegetable crops), to

the advanced drying room (with increased capacity for drying dates), and finally to the mobile solar dryer powered by solar energy (clean energy). The event included a field visit to the drying rooms to observe the different rooms and the mobile dryer.

HEC Paris in Qatar welcomes new faculty

HEC Paris in Qatar, has announced the appointment of Prof Seungah Sarah Lee (Pictured) as assistant professor of Entrepreneurship and Organisations from September 1. She holds a PhD in Organisation Studies and International Comparative Education from Stanford University and has previously served as a visiting senior lecturer at New York University Abu Dhabi. Her work in the Middle East -



leading organisational strategy, programme design, and impact evaluation for emerging education nonprofits and startups along with her policy research and advisory roles, aligns with HEC Paris in Qatar’s mission to nurture leadership and innovation.

Dr Pablo Martin de Holan, dean of HEC Paris in Qatar said: “Prof Seungah Sarah Lee’s unique background and expertise will not only strengthen our academic offerings but also contribute to the diversity of perspectives within our team.”

QPC Press Club backs Al-Annabi for qualifying for 2026 World Cup

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

The Qatar Press Center (QPC) launched on Tuesday the activities of the “Press Club” with a session titled “Al Annabi’s Path to Qualifying for the 2026 World Cup”, in the presence of Sheikh Khalid bin Abdulaziz al-Thani, director of the Media Development Department at the Qatar Media Corporation (QMC), Sheikh Hamad bin Abdulaziz al-Thani, head of the Media Department at the Qatar Olympic Committee, and a number of the public.

During the session, which was presented by media professional Ali Issa, Abdulaziz al-Maarefi, Editor-in-Chief of *Al-Sharq* Newspaper, and Khalid al-Kuwari, Director of Marketing and Communications at the Qatar Football Association, spoke.

Sadiq Mohamad al-Amari, Director General of the QPC, welcomed the attendees at the launch of the first activities of the Press Club seminar that seeks to combine all media efforts to support our national team in the challenge of qualifying for the 2026 World Cup.

Khalid al-Kuwari spoke about the national team’s preparations for the 2026 World Cup qualifiers, which will be held in America, Canada and Mexico. He said: “The Qatar Football Association has always supported the national team’s progress since it took over the presidency of the association, and there is no doubt that the efforts made



during the past period contributed to qualifying this team and our winning the 2019 and 2023 Asian Cups, in addition to the tremendous efforts made by officials, sports media and the sports community.”

He added: “We at the Qatar Football Association, through the Marketing Department, have made great efforts during the past period through a media, marketing and promotional campaign to support the national team through social media platforms and with the support of local media and also public platforms; to achieve the goal of the team reaching the 2026 World Cup after we hosted the last edition of the tournament.”

He said: “Our national team’s new jersey was launched, whether in maroon or white, in co-operation with Adidas, after the previous co-operation with Nike. In the coming days, the jerseys will be sold in many stores.”

Regarding ticket sales for the match between the Qatari national team and the UAE national team, al-Kuwari said: “More than 75% of the tickets have been sold, and we hope that there will not

be just 40,000 spectators, but 40,000 fans within 90 minutes.”

Regarding the Al-Annabi’s journey in the World Cup qualifiers, Abdulaziz al-Ma’ari spoke about the tournaments in which the national team participated before 1977 to recent qualifiers.

Sheikh Hamad bin Abdulaziz al-Thani, Head of the Media Department at the Qatar Olympic Committee, praised the formation of the Press Club Committee, and said: “It is a pioneering initiative that warms my heart. As a specialist in the field of sports media, we have seen a reluctance in Qatar to engage in sports journalism, especially with the emergence of social media. We hope that this initiative will support sports journalism in the country, and that we will see a new generation of journalists in this field.”

Regarding the qualifiers that the national team is facing, he said: “We have recently noticed an increase in awareness of the culture of cheering among the public, and we noticed this with the organisation of the Arab Cup in Qatar, followed by the World Cup, and then the Asian Cup.”



Snoonu signs five-year deal with Web Summit

Snoonu, a leading Qatari technology company, has signed a strategic five-year partnership agreement with Web Summit, the largest technology conference globally, a statement said.

Snoonu’s engagement in the previous Web Summit was a resounding success, marked by extensive participation from its team of over 80 engineers and product experts who led more than seven workshops.

Apart from showcasing Snoonu’s cutting-edge technological solutions, the participation also facilitated significant interactions with global tech leaders and innovators.

Hamad Mubarak al-Hajri, founder and CEO of Snoonu, said: “We are excited to continue our journey with Web Summit over the next five years. This partnership is not just an investment in Snoonu’s future but also a commitment to Qatar’s tech ecosystem. We look forward to contributing to and benefiting from the vibrant discussions and innovations that Web Summit brings to our region.”

Adam Connon, country manager at Web Summit Qatar, said: “We are thrilled to welcome Snoonu

as a long-term partner for Web Summit Qatar. This partnership reflects both Web Summit’s and Snoonu’s dedication to advancing the tech ecosystem in Qatar and the broader region. In 2024, Web Summit Qatar gathered more than 15,000 entrepreneurs and investors from over 118 countries for our first-ever event in the Middle East.”

“Next year, we anticipate thousands more attendees to join us in forging partnerships that will propel their businesses forward,” he added.

Central to this vision is the enhancement of Qatar’s technological infrastructure and capabilities, positioning it as a hub for innovation and digital transformation. The collaboration between Snoonu and Web Summit exemplifies this objective, aiming to foster an environment of technological exchange and development in Qatar.

Qatar’s strategic initiatives under the National Vision 2030 emphasise digital transformation as a core objective for achieving sustainable development and enhancing the quality of life for its citizens. The state has made significant strides in expanding broadband access, implementing

5G, and promoting Internet usage across its population.

Snoonu is also set to make a notable appearance at Web Summit Lisbon from November 11-14, 2024, underscoring the importance of Qatari companies engaging on international platforms to drive global recognition and partnerships.

Web Summit Lisbon is renowned for drawing influential figures from the tech world, providing a critical network for companies like Snoonu to showcase their innovations and align with global tech trends.

In addition to its international engagements, Snoonu will also be a key player at Web Summit Qatar in February 2025. This event is part of a broader strategy to integrate the Middle East’s burgeoning tech scene with global markets. Web Summit Qatar aims to attract founders, investors and tech enthusiasts, facilitating a new level of exposure for local startups and established companies alike.

By participating in both Lisbon and Doha, Snoonu is not only advancing its corporate interests but also contributing to Qatar’s broader economic diversification and technological advancement goals, the statement added.

QPC takes part in Omani Press Forum



Saad al-Rumaihi (second left), the QPC president attends the forum.

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

A series of press forum meetings organised by the Omani Journalists Association began on September 3 (Tuesday), in Salalah, Oman, with the participation of the President of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the French journalist and trade unionist Dominique Pradalié, Gulf press leaders and a number of Arab and international press personalities.

The president of the Qatari Press Center (QPC), Saad al-Rumaihi participated in the forum. It included a representative of the

President of the Bahrain Journalists Association as well as President of the Kuwaiti Journalists Association Adnan al-Rashed, President of the Saudi Journalists Association Adwan al-Ahmari, President of the UAE Journalists Association Fadhila al-Muaini and Dr Mohamed al-Arimi, president of the Omani Journalists Association.

The meeting approved important decisions, the formation of four committees: the Freedoms and Dispute Resolution Committee headed by Adnan al-Rashed, a Digital Media Committee headed by Saudi Arabia, a Women Journalists Committee headed by Fadhila al-Muaini, and a Photography Committee headed by Omani

Talib al-Dajali. The meeting set the date for its next meeting as a guest of the United Arab Emirates as next January.

The meeting affirmed its absolute support and endorsement of the Gulf National Media Campaign to enhance Gulf security, support freedoms and for stability in the region.

In a related context, the Executive Office of the West Asia and Pacific Group held a meeting with the participation of the Vice-President of the International Federation of Journalists, Nasser Abu Bakr, the Federation’s Financial Secretary, Jim Bou Melha from Britain, and press representatives from a number of Asian countries.

EU delegation ends summer camp

The European Union Delegation to Qatar and Zula Wellness Resort announced the successful conclusion of the 2nd edition of the second part of the (eunited) Summer Camp, held from August 14-25.

This year’s camp at Zula hosted Palestinian children from Gaza, who are currently guests of Qatar, and it was facilitated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Social Development and Family.

The summer camp provided children, aged 12 to 15, with a unique opportunity to engage in a wide range of activities designed to promote personal development and sports-manship.

In a press statement, EU ambassador Dr Cristian Tudor said: “I am very proud and pleased about the successful conclusion of the second edition of the (eunited) Summer Camp for underprivileged children and that this year was special in hosting Palestinian children from Gaza.”

Holger Glaser, resort manager of Zula Wellness Resort, said: “We are honoured to have played a part in this remarkable collaboration, providing a nurturing environment for the children to explore their potential.”



QRCS takes part in Red Cross and Red Crescent Mena conference in Jordan

An official delegation from Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) has participated in the two-day 11th Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference for the Middle East and North Africa, held by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

Hosted by Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS) in Amman, Jordan, the conference is part of the preparations for the 2024 Constitutional Meetings in October.

The delegation comprised Faisal Mohamed al-Emadi, secretary-general; Dr Alham Ismail al-Sukhni, head of International Relations; and Abdul-Aziz al-Mahmoud, head of Public Relations. The delegation was accompanied by the team of QRCS’ representation office in Jordan.

The conference addressed many key agenda items, including the humanitarian situation in Palestine, impact of complex crises on humanitarian needs, transformative role of the movement



regarding humanitarian issues, stronger youth and volunteer empowerment, alignment of National Societies’ resources with ongoing developments, keeping pace with global humanitarian transformations through transformative partnerships, and regional strategic plan 2024-2028.

On the second day, al-Emadi chaired a general session on “National Societies’ Preparedness for the Future”. The participants discussed ways to enhance collaborative efforts, develop integrated



response strategies that address the complex and interconnected nature of current humanitarian challenges, and to build frameworks that enable more co-ordinated and effective crisis responses.

The conference concluded with the issuance of the “Amman Declaration 2024: A unified call for future-prepared Mena humanitarian action”, which included a number of commit-

ments and recommendations for Mena National Societies.

On the sidelines of the conference, al-Emadi received a special honouring from Kate Forbes, president of IFRC, in recognition of QRCS’ active contributions to humanitarian response globally. He held co-ordination meetings with Red Crescent and Red Cross senior officials/leaders, including Dr Hossam al-Sharkawi, regional director of IFRC – Mena, to discuss

mechanisms of joint action and to review the humanitarian situation, especially in Gaza.

Prior to the conference, Tahani Saleh al-Feaidi, head of Community Development at QRCS, participated in the online meeting of youths and volunteers from 11 Mena National Societies, who shared insights as leaders and partners in shaping the future of the region’s humanitarian action.

Al-Emadi attended the emer-

gency plenary session of the Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Organisation (ARCO), during which Dr Abdullah bin Suhail al-Muhaidli was elected as secretary-general of ARCO, succeeding Dr Saleh bin Hamad al-Tuwajri.

Al-Emadi congratulated Dr al-Muhaidli for his new position, wished him good luck, and promised full co-operation on all issues and understandings that serve the shared humanitarian goals.



Polio vaccines give Gaza families all too brief respite from war

Reuters
Gaza

Anxious parents lining up with their children for a polio vaccine in central Gaza were counting down the hours until a pause in fighting ends in the area yesterday, threatening more death and destruction in the 11-month-old war.

As health officials administered the doses, Gazan mother Huda Sheikh Ali wondered what good the polio vaccination campaign could do when her children would soon face more Israeli air strikes and shelling.

“There is no protection for them, in just a short few hours the ceasefire will end and we will return to seeing children bombed and killed. There is no protection from these things,” she said.

“We managed to take a breather for a few hours, for our child...imagine what it would be like with a

permanent ceasefire. The children are dying every single day and they are giving us some vaccines for polio?” The campaign was prompted by the discovery of a case of polio in a baby boy last month, the first in the Gaza Strip for 25 years. Israel and Hamas fighters agreed to daily pauses of eight hours in the fighting in pre-specified areas to allow the vaccination programme. No violations have been reported.

But a permanent end to the war is not in sight. Diplomatic efforts to secure a ceasefire, release hostages held in Gaza and return many Palestinians jailed by Israel have faltered.

Most of Gaza’s 2.3mn people have been uprooted from their homes and many families have moved repeatedly up and down the Gaza Strip in search of safe shelter.

The UN agency for Palestinian refugees said yesterday it was making good progress in rolling out a polio vaccine, but called for

a permanent ceasefire to ease humanitarian suffering.

UNRWA said that three days into the campaign in areas of central Gaza, around 187,000 children had received the vaccine. The campaign will move to other areas of the territory in the second stage.

Palestinians say a key reason for the return of polio is the collapse of Gaza’s health system and the destruction of most of its hospitals during the war. Israel accuses Hamas of using hospitals for military purposes, something the group denies.

Hadeel Darbiyeh, who brought her infant daughter for the polio vaccination, said she shared the pessimism of other parents in Gaza.

“Instead of bringing the vaccines, bring us a solution to stop the war,” she said. “Bring us a solution for the oppressed people who have all been forced to flee their homes and into tents.”



A Palestinian child is vaccinated against polio, amid the Israel-Hamas conflict, in Deir Al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip, yesterday.

Teen musician sings for children who endure the horrors of conflict

Reuters
Gaza

Baving the constant threat of air strikes and bombings, 15-year-old Youssef Saad, a Gazan oud player, rides his bicycle through the war-ravaged streets of northern Gaza’s Jabalia refugee camp, his instrument strapped to his back.

Saad sings for children who have endured daily horrors in 11 months of conflict, trying to offer them a little joy or distraction. “The homes in my city were once full of dreams,” Saad said, gazing at the rubble of the decades-old urban refugee camp, which before the war was built-up and heavily populated.

“Now, they’re gone,” he says.

Saad was studying at the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music in nearby Gaza City before it was reduced to ruins in the war that has devastated much of the enclave.

Now, living with relatives after his own home was destroyed, he is one of five siblings whose futures have been upended.

His father, a government employee with the Palestinian Authority, always supported Saad’s dream of becoming a musician.

But now, Saad’s focus has shifted. He spends his days at a Jabalia day centre, playing his oud and singing for children traumatised by war.

The latest bloodshed in the



Palestinian teenager Youssef Saad plays oud to bring joy to people, amid the Israel-Hamas conflict, in Jabalia refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip.

decades-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict was triggered in the first week of October when Palestinian Hamas group stormed Israel.

Israel’s subsequent assault on Hamas-governed Gaza has since killed more than 40,800 Palestinians, according to the Hamas-run health ministry, displaced almost the entire population and laid the besieged enclave to waste.

“Every house holds a tragedy,” Saad said. “Some have lost their mother, others their father, their neighbour, or their friend.”

Despite the danger, Saad is determined to continue his mission. “We try to help improve their mental health, even if it means putting myself at risk,” he said. “This is my duty to the children.”

And he refuses to give up on his dreams for the future: “We, the children of Palestine, strive to stay resilient, even in the face of genocide.”

Saad says he lives by a saying that carries him through the darkest days: “If you live, live free, or die standing like trees.”

Sisi makes first presidential visit to Türkiye in 12 years

Reuters
Ankara

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan and Egyptian counterpart Abdel Fattah al-Sisi discussed the Gaza war and ways to further repair the long-frozen ties between the regional powers during talks in Ankara, in the first such presidential visit in 12 years.

Relations between Ankara and Cairo collapsed in 2013.

Ties between the two countries began thawing in 2020 when Ankara launched a diplomatic drive to ease tensions with its estranged regional rivals.

Last year, Ankara and Cairo mutually reappointed ambassadors and Türkiye said it would also provide Cairo with armed drones. Erdogan travelled to Cairo in February for his first trip to Egypt since 2012. He met al-Sisi at Ankara airport yesterday and the two then travelled in the same car to the presidential palace for around two hours of talks.

“With a win-win mindset, we will carry our multi-dimensional ties forward,” Erdogan said, adding



This handout photograph taken and released by Turkish Presidency Press Office yesterday shows Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi posing after signing an agreement and before a joint press conference at the Presidential Complex in Ankara.

ing Ankara particularly wanted to deepen ties with Egypt on natural gas and nuclear energy.

Ministers from the two countries signed 18 memorandum of understanding on co-operation in energy, defence, tourism, health, agriculture, finance, culture, education, and transport.

Speaking at a joint press conference, Erdogan reiterated that Türkiye and Egypt wanted to boost annual trade by \$5bn to \$15bn in the next five years.

He added that Ankara and Cairo shared a “common stance” on the Palestinian cause, while al-Sisi said they were both calling for a ceasefire in Gaza and an end to violence in the West Bank.

Türkiye, which has condemned Israel for its war against Hamas in Gaza, has sent thousands of tonnes of aid to Egypt for Palestinians and praised Cairo’s humanitarian efforts and role as negotiator in the talks on a ceasefire and hostage deal.

Tunisia presidential candidate Zammel remanded: reports

AFP
Tunis

A Tunisian court yesterday remanded in custody presidential candidate Ayachi Zammel pending an investigation into suspicions of forging ballot signatures, his lawyers said.

Zammel, 43, is one of only two candidates approved by the electoral authority, ISIE, to challenge President Kais Saied in the October 6 poll.

He was heard “in a number of cases related to

charges involving presidential endorsements” that were “brought before the public prosecution”, which ordered his remand, his lawyers said.

Zammel was arrested Monday and is set to appear in court today, according to media reports. A little-known businessman and former parliamentarian, he headed Azimoun, a small liberal party, until late August, when he stepped down to run for the top post as an independent candidate. His arrest came hours before ISIE gave a final list of presidential hopefuls including himself, Saied, and former parliamentarian Zouhair Maghzaoui.

POLITICS

Wounded Ugandan opposition leader out of hospital

Ugandan opposition leader Bobi Wine was discharged from hospital yesterday after undergoing surgery for a leg wound suffered during a confrontation with police, AFP reported from Kampala. The outspoken critic of President Yoweri Museveni was injured in the fracas on Tuesday in the town of Bulindo, around 20 kilometres north of the capital Kampala. Initially, Wine’s National Unity Platform (NUP) said the 42-year-old, whose real name is Robert Kyagulanyi, had been shot in the leg by police and described it as “another attempt on the life” of the party leader. But the NUP later said Wine had been hit by a tear gas canister and he was taken to a hospital in Kampala. “He underwent a surgery where the fragments of a canister were removed from his leg and he has stabilised and is on the way out of hospital now,” Kampala mayor Erias Lukwago told AFP.

Images posted on social media showed Wine, wrapped in a cream blanket with a bandage on his leg, being pushed in a wheelchair by hospital staff. Wine and his NUP have long been a thorn in the side of Museveni, who has ruled Uganda for nearly 40 years.

Xi hosts two dozen African leaders at China’s biggest summit in years

AFP
Beijing

Chinese leader Xi Jinping will host over two dozen African leaders at a lavish dinner in Beijing, kicking off the city’s biggest summit in years with promises of co-operation in infrastructure, energy and education.

China, the world’s number two economy, is Africa’s largest trading partner and has sought to tap continent’s vast troves of natural resources including copper, gold, lithium and rare earth minerals. It has also furnished African countries with billions in loans that have helped build much-needed infrastructure but also sometimes stoked controversy by saddling governments with huge debts.

Twenty-five African leaders have arrived in Beijing or confirmed attendance at this week’s China-Africa forum, according to an AFP tally, including some



China’s President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan (front third left) pose for a group photograph with leaders from African nations ahead of a dinner reception during the Forum on China-Africa Co-operation at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, yesterday.

whose countries face a rising risk of debt distress.

The forum kicked off yesterday evening with a family photo and a lavish dinner in the Great Hall of the People – followed by an opening ceremony at which Xi will deliver a speech the next day. Chinese state media has this week lauded Xi as a “true friend of Africa”, claiming Beijing’s ties were reaching “new heights” under his stewardship.

As of yesterday, the Chinese

leader had held talks with over a dozen African counterparts in Beijing, a tally of state media reporting showed.

Meeting Tuesday with Bola Tinubu, president of Nigeria – one of China’s biggest borrowers on the continent – Xi called for great co-operation in the “development of infrastructure, energy and mineral resources”, state news agency Xinhua said.

And in talks with Zimbabwean President Emmerson

Mnangagwa that same day, he promised co-operation in “investment, trade, infrastructure, mineral resources” and others.

He also backed Zimbabwe in its struggle against “illegal sanctions” – imposed by the United States in response to corruption and human rights abuses by the country’s leadership.

Analysts say that Beijing’s largesse towards the continent is being recalibrated in the face of economic trouble at home.

HEALTH

First mpox vaccines due in DR Congo today

The first delivery of almost 100,000 doses of mpox vaccines will arrive in the Democratic Republic of Congo today, the African Union’s health watchdog said, AFP reported from Kinshasa. The vast central Africa country of around 100mn people is at the epicentre of the mpox outbreak, with cases and deaths rising. “We are very pleased with the arrival of this first batch of vaccines in the DRC,” Jean Kaseya, head of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, told AFP, adding that more than 99,000 doses were expected. More than 17,500 cases and 629 deaths have been reported in the country since the start of the year, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO). The vaccine doses will be transported onboard an aeroplane leaving the Danish capital Copenhagen on Wednesday evening and are due to arrive at Kinshasa’s international airport on Thursday at 1100 GMT. The Congolese National Institute of Public Health, which is in charge of managing the country’s mpox response, indicated that it was still waiting for details on the origin of the vaccines contained in the first delivery.

TRAGEDY

20 missing after boat mishap on Myanmar-Laos border

At least 20 people are missing, feared dead, following a boat mishap on the Mekong river in the “Golden Triangle” area between Laos, Myanmar and Thailand, officials said yesterday. The incident happened late Monday during “strong currents” on the river that divides the three countries, Manop Senakul, the police chief in Thailand’s northern Chiang Rai province, said. “At least 20 people are missing,” he said, adding that a further 16 Myanmar nationals had been rescued. Myanmar media reported the boat had been carrying people to Myanmar from Laos when it got into difficulties after its engine failed.

POLITICS

Ex-minister Patel eliminated from UK Tory leadership race

Former UK interior minister Priti Patel was eliminated from the Conservative leadership contest yesterday after registering the fewest votes of the six candidates vying to succeed ex-premier Rishi Sunak. The leadership race is seen as crucial in determining the future direction of the party. Former immigration minister Robert Jenrick won the first round, picking up 28 votes of fellow Tory MPs. The bookmakers’ favourite and right-winger Kemi Badenoch was second on 22. Shadow ministers James Cleverly, Tom Tugendhat and Mel Stride made it through to the next week’s second round of voting but Patel dropped out after securing only 14 votes.

OBSERVATION

No suicidal thoughts link to diabetes, obesity drugs: UK

Britain’s health regulator said the available data does not establish a link between a popular class of diabetes and obesity drugs, including Novo Nordisk’s Wegovy, and suicidal thoughts. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency began a review of safety data for the class of drugs more than a year ago after some patients reported suicidal or self-harming thoughts. “We conclude that the available data does not support a causal association between GLP-1 receptor agonists and suicide, suicidal ideation, self-injury and depression, and therefore no updates to the product information is warranted at this time,” it said .

WILDLIFE

Japanese island eradicates rabbit-killing mongoose

Japan has wiped out all mongooses on a subtropical island, officials said, after the animals ignored the venomous snakes they were brought in to hunt and preyed on endangered local rabbits instead. About 30 of the venom-resistant predators were released on Amami Oshima, a Unesco World Heritage site, in the late 1970s to keep down the population of habu, a pit viper whose bite can be deadly to humans. However, the snakes are mostly active at night when mongooses prefer to sleep and the toothy mammals turned their ravenous appetites to local Amami rabbits, drastically reducing their numbers.

UK Grenfell Tower fire inquiry blames avoidable deaths on incompetence, greed

Reuters
London

A public inquiry into the devastating 2017 London Grenfell Tower blaze that killed 72 people blamed the disaster on failings by the government, construction industry and, most of all, the firms involved in fitting the exterior with flammable cladding.

The fire ripped through the 23-storey social housing block in one of London’s richest areas during the early hours of June 14, 2017. It was Britain’s deadliest blaze in a residential building since World War II.

“The simple truth is that the deaths that occurred were all avoidable,” said inquiry chair Martin Moore-Bick.

In its long-awaited final report, the inquiry laid most responsibility for the disaster on the companies involved in the maintenance and refit of the apartment tower, failings by local and national authorities as well as companies which had dishonestly marketed combustible cladding materials as safe.

There was also widespread criticism and blame levelled at the then-government, the local authority of Kensington and Chelsea, the industry, regulatory groups, specific individuals and an ill-prepared fire brigade for years of inaction over fire safety in high-rise blocks.

“Not all of them bear the same

degree of responsibility for the eventual disaster, but as our reports show, all contributed to it in one way or another, in most cases, through incompetence, but in some cases, through dishonesty and greed,” Moore-Bick said.

The inquiry report, which ran to almost 1,700 pages, said the inferno was the culmination of “decades of failure”, with profits put before people.

“The duty of government should be to safeguard life, whilst protecting us from corporate greed,” said Grenfell United, a group representing some survivors and bereaved families. “But for too long, they have aided corporations, facilitating them to profit and dictate regulation.” While British police have said 58 people and 19 firms and organisations are under investigation, prosecutions - including for corporate manslaughter and fraud - remain years away because of the complexity and need to consider the inquiry’s report. Prime Minister Keir Starmer apologised to the relatives of victims and survivors on behalf of the British state, saying they had been failed for years.

“It should never have happened. The country failed to discharge its most fundamental duty, to protect you and your loved ones,” he said in parliament where some bereaved relatives watched on. “Today is a long awaited day of truth, but it must now lead to a day of justice.”

An earlier report by the inquiry team in 2019, which focused on the events of the night, found an electrical fault in a refrigerator in a fourth floor apartment started the fire.

Flames then spread uncontrollably, mainly because the tower had been covered during a 2016 refurbishment with cladding - exterior panels designed to improve appearance and add insulation - made of flammable aluminium composite material that acted as a source of fuel.

The harrowing accounts, including recordings from those who perished while awaiting rescuers and having followed official guidance to stay put, prompted fury and national soul-searching over building standards and the treatment of low-income communities.

The inquiry, headed by retired judge Martin Moore-Bick, found a litany of failings; lessons had not been learned from past high-rise tower blazes and testing systems were inadequate.

The most overt blame was laid at the feet of those involved in the refurbishment of the tower with the flammable cladding. The inquiry said architect Studio E, principal contractor Rydon, and cladding sub-contractor Harley all bore considerable responsibility for disaster.

Fire safety inspectors Exova were also blamed for the building being left “in a dangerous condition on completion of the refurbishment”

London firefighters tackle tower blaze



The London Fire Brigade tackled a blaze at a residential tower block in the south east of the capital yesterday. There were no reports of any injuries. “Ten fire engines and around 70 firefighters tackled a fire at a block of flats on Rosenthal Road in Catford. Two flats were alight. There are currently no reports of any injuries,” the fire brigade said in a statement. The cause of the fire was under investigation.

World Bank hikes India’s economic growth forecast

Reuters
New Delhi

India should focus on labour-intensive exports to boost employment, the World Bank said, noting that the country’s manufacturing industry has not fully seized opportunities from China’s exit from these sectors.

“India should also try to conquer less advanced markets,” said Auguste Tano Kouame, World

Bank country director, during the release of the “India Development Update” report.

He said there was a lot of untapped demand for Indian goods, such as textiles and footwear in Africa and Latin America.

India’s high-tech exports, including mobiles and services, have grown significantly over the past decade but the country has lost ground in low-skilled sectors like apparel, leather, and textiles to Bangladesh and Vietnam, which

benefited from China’s withdrawal from labour-intensive manufacturing, the report said.

“With rising costs of production and declining productivity, India’s share in global apparel exports has declined from 4% in 2018 to 3% in 2022,” the report said. The World Bank also raised its economic growth forecast for India to 7% for the current fiscal year, from an earlier estimate of 6.6%, helped by government spending on infrastructure.

India supports policy of development, not expansionism: Modi

India supports a policy of development and not expansionism, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in Brunei yesterday, though he did not name any country. Brunei is located south of the South China Sea, which is claimed almost entirely by Beijing. Ties between India and China have been strained since 20 Indian and four Chinese troops were killed in a border clash on their Himalayan frontier in 2020. Modi also said India supports freedom of navigation and overflight under international laws similar to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which provides a framework for global maritime navigation and regulates use of marine resources. Modi later arrived in Singapore to “deepen strategic partnership” at the invitation of his Singaporean counterpart Lawrence Wong after wrapping his visit to Brunei. Modi was slated to meet Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam and ex-prime ministers Lee Hsien Loong and Goh Chok Tong during the trip, his fifth to Singapore.

Heavy rains in Vijayawada



People wade through waterlogged roads following heavy rains in Vijayawada, in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh, India, yesterday.

Bangladesh factories close after protests, say police

Reuters
Dhaka

More than 80 factories in Bangladesh closed yesterday, including in the key garment sector, over security fears as protests hit industrial areas near the capital Dhaka, police said.

The closures come as the new interim government seeks to reassure investors after mass student-led protests that toppled ex-premier Sheikh Hasina last month.

Bangladesh’s 3,500 garment factories account for around 85% of its \$55bn in annual exports but the unrest last month resulted in significant disruption to the linchpin industry.

Maintaining supply chains for the garment trade is one of the major challenges faced by Mohamed Yunus, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate asked to lead an interim government after Hasina fled to India on August 5.

Hundreds of people protested in front of factories yesterday morning demanding jobs and better pay, prompting several other factories in the industrial districts of Savar, Ashulia and Gazipur to shut for security reasons.

“Workers of some factories... started protesting and calling fellow workers from other factories to join the protest,” said Sarwar Alam, a senior officer in the industrial police unit in Ashulia and Savar, told AFP.

Alam said “around 80 factories” then told workers to take a day off.

Union leader Taslima Akhter said some demands made by the workers were “just” but also said elements were seeking to stir up trouble to “utilise the opportunity of discontent”.

Protesters made a range of demands including better overtime pay, as well as for more men to be hired in a female-dominated industry.

Indonesia to deport to Philippines fugitive ex-mayor

Reuters
Manila/Jakarta

Indonesia will deport to the Philippines a fugitive former mayor accused of ties to Chinese criminal syndicates and money-laundering to the tune of more than 100mn pesos (\$1.8mn), Jakarta’s law minister said yesterday.

Alice Guo, also known as Chinese national Guo Hua Ping, is wanted by the Philippine senate for refusing to appear before a congressional investigation into

the alleged criminal ties.

Guo, who says she is a natural-born Philippine citizen, has denied the accusations, calling them “malicious”.

The Indonesian minister said Guo would be deported to the Philippines, but the timing of her return had yet to be fixed.

“(The timing) depends on the police investigation results,” the minister, Supratman Andi Agtas, said.

Guo was arrested along with a Chinese monk and was helped by a former Chinese police officer

during her escape from the Philippines, Supratman said, but gave no details.

Her lawyer of record, Stephen David, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The case comes at a time of growing suspicion in the Philippines about China’s activities, amid increasingly tense disputes over their claims in the busy waterway of the South China Sea.

Authorities in Manila, including justice and immigration officials, had earlier confirmed Guo’s arrest in Tangerang, near the Indonesian

capital of Jakarta.

“The close co-operation between our two governments has made this arrest possible,” Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said in a statement, adding that Guo’s return was being finalised yesterday.

“The arm of the law is long and it will reach you,” he said, warning that wrongdoers’ efforts to escape justice would prove futile.

After her return, Guo, who cut her hair short in an attempt at disguise, will be handed to law enforcement and then the senate,

Jaime Santiago, director of the National Bureau of Investigation, told a press conference.

Philippine law enforcement agencies, including the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC), last month jointly filed multiple counts of money laundering against Guo and 35 others to the justice department.

They accused Guo and her co-conspirators of having laundered criminal proceeds amounting to more than 100mn pesos (\$1.8mn).

Guo ran for office as a Philippine citizen but her fingerprints

were later found to match those of a Chinese national, Guo Hua Ping.

Removed from office as mayor of Bamban town in the province of Tarlac, Guo fled the country in July, travelling on her Philippine passport to neighbouring Malaysia and Singapore, before going to Indonesia in August, the anti-crime agency says.

The senate launched an investigation in May after a casino raid in Bamban in March uncovered what law enforcement officials said were scams run from a facility built on land she partly owned.

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GULF TIMES

Inside ‘golden age’ of alien hunting

Nestled between mountains in a secluded corner of West Virginia, a giant awakens: the Green Bank Telescope begins its nightly vigil, scanning the cosmos for secrets. If intelligent life exists beyond Earth, there’s a good chance the teams analysing the data from the world’s largest, fully steerable radio astronomy facility will be the first to know.

“People have been asking themselves the question, ‘Are we alone in the universe?’ ever since they first gazed up at the night sky and wondered if there were other worlds out there,” says Steve Croft, project scientist for the Breakthrough Listen initiative.

For the past decade, this groundbreaking scientific endeavour has partnered with a pioneering, US government-funded site built in the 1950s to search for “technosignatures” — traces of technology that originate far beyond our own solar system.

The search for extraterrestrial intelligence, or “SETI,” was long dismissed as the realm of eccentrics and was even cut off from federal funding by Congress thirty years ago. But today, the field is experiencing a renaissance and seeing an influx of graduates, bolstered by advances in artificial intelligence and machine learning, as well as recent discoveries showing that nearly every star in the night sky hosts planets, many of which are Earth-like.

“It feels to me like this is something of a golden age,” says Croft, an Oxford-trained radio astronomer who began his career studying astrophysical phenomena, from supermassive black holes to the emissions of exploding stars. The story of the “National Radio Quiet Zone” dates back to 1958, when the US federal government designated a region in West Virginia to help astronomers shield their sensitive equipment from interference. This means no radio signals, no cellphone coverage, and limited Wi-Fi for the surrounding community. Even the vehicles transporting staff to and from the telescope must run on diesel, as gas cars’ spark plugs generate electrical interference.

“I think the community takes a certain pride in having a premier scientific facility right here,” says Paul Vosteen, who has worked at the observatory for the past eight years.

The search for extraterrestrial intelligence was long dismissed as the realm of eccentrics

Since then, it has allowed astronomers to peer beyond the planets, stars, and dust visible through optical telescopes.

From discovering pulsars to conducting sensitive observations of atomic hydrogen that shed new light on galaxy formation — and more recently, detecting fast radio bursts — radio astronomy has been key to numerous advances. There’s also a long-standing theory that if other civilisations exist, they might emit radio waves, just as ours has since the dawn of radio communication in the 19th century.

In Carl Sagan’s novel *Contact*, humanity is first alerted to extraterrestrial presence by a retransmission of Adolf Hitler’s opening speech at the 1936 Summer Olympics — the first TV signal strong enough to escape Earth’s ionosphere.

A framework for estimating the number of detectable civilisations scattered across the galaxy is found in the *Drake Equation*, devised by the legendary astronomer Frank Drake. Now one of the most recognised formulas in science, it’s even a popular tattoo and T-shirt choice among alien enthusiasts. Each year, for a week in late spring, Breakthrough Listen’s team from the University of California, Berkeley, makes a pilgrimage to the telescope during a period of track maintenance for the 17-million-pound structure.

“It’s a relaxing time; every time I’m here, it’s nice being in the National Radio Quiet Zone because there’s no cellphone, no television — it’s a kind of focused environment,” says Matt Lebofsky, lead system administrator.

“Sometimes we need to metaphorically kick the tires, do things ourselves to get a ground truth about how our servers are behaving.”

Inside the server room, the sound of 6,000 whirring hard drives holding 40 petabytes of data-equivalent to 40,000 laptops-makes it impossible to speak without shouting.

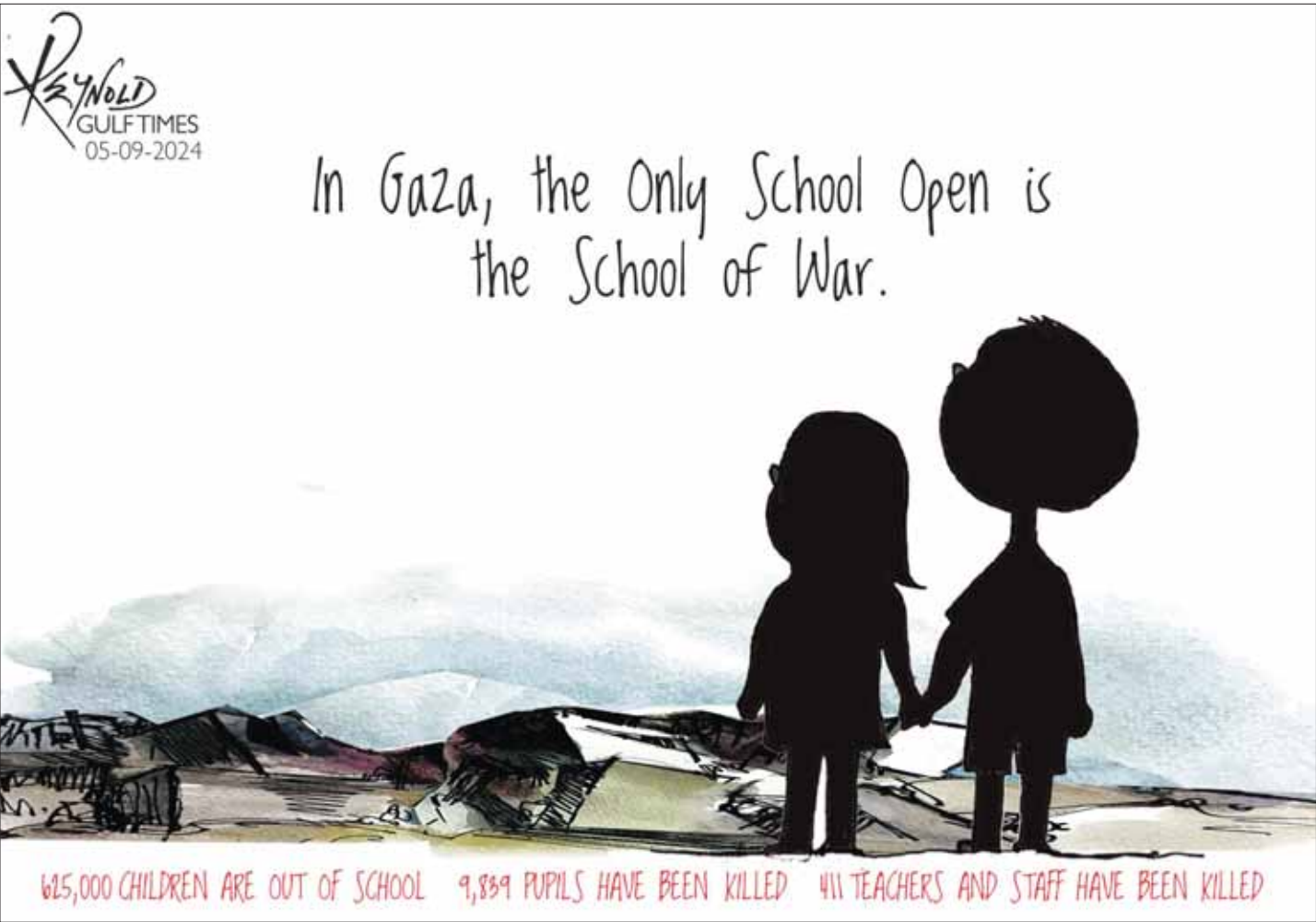
“We’re essentially looking for ‘weird things’ in the data,” Croft explains, something that suggests life forms might be trying to reach out, or that scientists are picking up their accidental transmissions.

There have been a few moments of heightened excitement in the SETI community, including the 1977 detection of the so-called “Wow!” signal from the constellation Sagittarius, which remains unexplained.

More recently, in 2020, the team identified Breakthrough Listen Candidate 1 from the nearest star system, Proxima Centauri, but after extensive analysis, it was concluded to be human radio interference.

“It’s not deflating at all,” insists Lebofsky. On the contrary, he feels more optimistic than ever, given the vast amounts of data now being collected and processed compared to the early days. “I feel like the chances are improving exponentially every year.”

Standing on the highest platform of the 100m giant dish, Vosteen gestures toward the Allegheny Mountains, which act as a natural barrier for radio signals in this bowl-shaped valley. Radio astronomy began by happy accident when American physicist Karl Jansky discovered radio waves coming from the centre of our galaxy, the Milky Way, in 1933.



US finds probable launch site of new N-powered Russia missile

By Jonathan Landay
Washington

Two US researchers say they have identified the probable deployment site in Russia of the 9M370 Burevestnik, a new nuclear-powered, nuclear-armed cruise missile touted by President Vladimir Putin as “invincible”. Putin has said the weapon - dubbed the SSC-X-9 Skyfall by Nato - has an almost unlimited range and can evade US missile defences. But some Western experts dispute his claims and the Burevestnik’s strategic value, saying it will not add capabilities that Moscow does not already have and risks a radiation-spewing mishap.

Using images taken on July 26 by Planet Labs, a commercial satellite firm, the two researchers identified a construction project abutting a nuclear warhead storage facility known by two names By Jonathan Landay Washington Vologda-20 and Chebsara - as the new missile’s potential deployment site. The facility is 295 miles north of Moscow.

Reuters is the first to report this development.

Decker Eveleth, an analyst with the CNA research and analysis organisation, found the satellite imagery and identified what he assessed are nine horizontal launch pads under construction. They are located in three groups inside high berms to shield them from attack or to prevent an accidental blast in one from detonating missiles in the others, he said.

The berms are linked by roads to what Eveleth concluded are likely buildings where the missiles and their components would be serviced, and to the existing complex of five nuclear warhead storage bunkers.

The site is “for a large, fixed missile system and the only large,

fixed missile system that they’re (Russia) currently developing is the Skyfall,” said Eveleth.

Russia’s defence ministry and Washington embassy did not respond to a request to comment on his assessment, Burevestnik’s strategic value, its test record and the risks it poses.

A Kremlin spokesman said these were questions for the defence ministry and declined further comment.

The US State Department, the CIA, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the US Air Force National Air and Space Intelligence Center declined to comment.

The identification of the missile’s probable launch site suggests that Russia is proceeding with its deployment after a series of tests in recent years marred by problems, said Eveleth and the second researcher, Jeffery Lewis, of the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey.

Lewis agreed with Eveleth’s assessment after reviewing the imagery at his request. The imagery “suggests something very unique, very different. And obviously, we know that Russia is developing this nuclear-powered missile,” he said.

Hans Kristensen of the Federation of American Scientists, who also studied the Vologda imagery at Eveleth’s request, said that it appears to show launch pads and other features “possibly” related to Burevestnik. But he said he could not make a definitive assessment because Moscow does not typically place missile launchers next to nuclear warhead storage.

Eveleth, Lewis, Kristensen and three other experts said Moscow’s normal practice has been stockpiling nuclear payloads for land-based missiles far from launch sites - except for those on its deployed Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) force.

But deploying the Burevestnik at Vologda would allow the Russian military to stockpile the nuclear-armed missiles in its bunkers, making them available to launch quickly, said Lewis and Eveleth.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said Russia will make changes to its guidelines on the use of nuclear weapons in response to what it regards as Western escalation in the war in Ukraine, state news agency TASS reported on Sunday.

A 2020 report by the United States Air Force’s National Air and Space Intelligence Center said that if Russia successfully brought the Burevestnik into service, it would give Moscow a “unique weapon with intercontinental-range capability”.

But the weapon’s chequered past and design limitations raised doubts among eight experts interviewed by Reuters about whether its deployment would change the nuclear stakes for the West and other Russian foes.

The Burevestnik has a poor test record of at least 13 known tests, with only two partial successes, since 2016, according to the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), an advocacy group focused on reducing nuclear, biological and emergent technology risks.

The setbacks include a 2019 blast during the botched recovery of an unshielded nuclear reactor allowed to “smolder” on the White Sea floor for a year following a prototype crash, according to State Department reports.

Russia’s state nuclear agency Rosatom said five staff members died during the testing of a rocket on August 8. Putin presented their widows with top state awards, saying the weapon they were developing was without equal in the world, without naming the Burevestnik.

Pavel Podvig, a Geneva-based expert on Russia’s nuclear forces,

Lewis, Eveleth, and other experts said it will not add capabilities that Moscow’s nuclear forces already do not have, including the ability to overwhelm US missile defences.

Moreover, its nuclear-powered engine threatens to disgorge radiation along its flight path and its deployment risks an accident that could contaminate the surrounding region, said Cheryl Rofer, a former US nuclear weapons scientist and other experts.

“The Skyfall is a uniquely stupid weapon system, a flying Chernobyl that poses more threat to Russia than it does to other countries,” agreed Thomas Countryman, a former top State Department official with the Arms Control Association, referring to the 1986 nuclear plant disaster.

NATO did not respond to questions about how the alliance would respond to the weapon’s deployment.

Little publicly is known about the Burevestnik’s technical details.

Experts assess that it would be sent aloft by a small solid-fuel rocket to drive air into an engine containing a miniature nuclear reactor. Superheated and possibly radioactive air would be blasted out, providing forward thrust.

Putin unveiled it in March 2018, saying the missile would be “low flying,” with nearly unlimited range, an unpredictable flight path and “invincible” to current and future defences.

Many experts are sceptical of Putin’s claims.

The Burevestnik, they say, could have a range of some 15,000 miles - compared to more than 11,000 miles for the Sarmat, Russia’s newest ICBM - while its subsonic speed would make it detectable.

“It’s going to be as vulnerable as any cruise missile,” said Kristensen. “The longer it flies, the more vulnerable it becomes because there is more time to track it. I don’t understand Putin’s motive here.”

The Burevestnik’s deployment is not banned by New START, the last US-Russian accord limiting strategic nuclear weapon deployments, which expires in February 2026.

A provision allows Washington to request negotiations with Moscow on bringing the Burevestnik under the caps but a State Department spokesperson said no such talks had been sought.

Citing the war in Ukraine, Russia has spurned US calls for unconditional talks on replacing New START, stoking fears of an all-out nuclear arms race when it expires.

Podvig said Moscow might use the missile as a bargaining chip if talks ever resume.

He called the Burevestnik a “political weapon” that Putin used to bolster his strongman image before his 2018 re-election and to telegraph to Washington that it cannot dismiss his concerns over US missile defences and other issues.

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A satellite image shows what is believed to be a deployment site for a Russian nuclear-powered cruise missile, including 5 nuclear warhead storage bunkers (right) and bermed launch positions (lower left), in Vologda, Russia, in this handout image obtained by Reuters on August 27, 2024. (Reuters)

Promising prospects for Qatari-Finnish relations

Amid efforts to enhance international co-operation and expand bilateral relations, Qatar and Finland stand on the threshold of a new phase of prosperity and fruitful collaboration through their commitment to develop a strong partnership that contributes to economic growth and expand trade activities, reflecting a common will to achieve promising future aspirations for both countries.

The visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to Helsinki is expected to constitute an important and historic turning point in the course of Qatari-Finnish relations toward strengthening the strategic dimension between the two countries in light of the rapid development of their relations in various aspects of co-operation over the past years, paving the way for a new phase of fruitful bilateral co-operation.

Qatari-Finnish relations have always been described as distinguished and growing, with the leaderships of both countries making great efforts to advance these relations to the level they aspire to through a series of mutual visits and meetings, which demonstrates Doha and Helsinki's commitment to developing co-operation between them, and the common desire to enhance effective diplomatic communication and deepen bilateral relations in various fields.

On Nov 30, 2019, Qatar and Finland signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to establish political consultations between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the two countries, and the first round of political consultations was then held in the Finnish capital, Helsinki, and included many aspects of co-operation between the two countries.

In May 2024, the Qatari-Finnish sides held the second round of political consultations between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the two countries, during which they reviewed co-operation relations and ways to support and strengthen them, according to a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In October 2016, Qatari-Finnish relations witnessed significant economic development across various fields. The Finnish capital welcomed the first Qatar Airways flight from Doha, marking the inauguration of its new daily flights connecting Helsinki to more than 150 global destinations within Qatar Airways' global network. At that time, Qatar Airways also announced a codeshare agreement with Finnair, expanding its presence in the Baltic and Nordic countries while simultaneously enhancing Finnair's network in the Middle East and the world.

Regarding the volume of bilateral trade exchange, it grew by 4% in 2021, reaching about QR395mn compared to QR381mn in 2020 and about QR314mn in the first nine months of 2022.

In turn, Finnish officials praised the role played by Qatar in promoting the gas industry globally and in providing clean

energy to consumers around the world. In this context, Finland's Minister of Development Co-operation and Foreign Trade Ville Skinnari said that renewable energy is a fertile field for enhancing bilateral co-operation, especially with the private sector, just as tourism and other fields are growing in both countries.

Sectors such as telecommunications, energy, navigation, aviation, and tourism represent promising investment opportunities in Finland. Forests are an important economic resource in the country, as they are a source of wood, paper, and chemical industries. Wood plays a significant role in Finnish exports. Agriculture is prevalent in the southern region, where wheat and beets are grown. Finland has excellent mineral resources, including copper, sulphur, iron, nickel, and zinc, where the Finnish industry rose after World War II.

To enhance the exploration of investment opportunities available in both countries, the Qatari Businessmen Association (QBA) met with Skinnari, who visited Doha to attend the official opening of the embassy of Finland in February 2023.

During the meeting, Skinnari called on Qatari businessmen to invest in Finland, pointing to many promising investment opportunities in various sectors, such as oil and gas, advanced technology, smart cities, maritime industries, and other fields.

He also pointed to the great co-operation in the air transport field between Qatar Airways and its Finnish counterpart, which enhances Doha's position as a regional air hub between the region's countries and the Scandinavian countries.

In turn, HE QBA Chairman Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim al-Thani said the bilateral relations, especially in the commercial fields, indicating that the Qatari private sector is interested in enhancing co-operation with its Finnish counterpart, specifically in fields that rely on advanced technology, pointing out that there is a desire among Qatari businessman to visit Finland and learn about direct investment opportunities.

According to the available economic indicators, the diverse and distinguished investment areas in Qatar and Finland constitute real opportunities for the exchange of interests in many areas ranging from green technology (environmentally friendly) to transition models to innovative solutions and just as the investment climate in Qatar opens up horizons for Finland to enter the Gulf market, the Finnish market represents and enjoys a stable regulatory environment that helps Qatari businessman to launch projects there and facilitates the access of Qatari products to European markets.

Thanks to the growing Qatari-finish relations at various levels, the transition to a new and significant stage in bilateral and economic co-operation is evident and reinforced by the strength of the bilateral relations. **(QNA)**

Finnish FM: Ties with Qatar have deepened over time

QNA
Helsinki

Finnish Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen (**pictured**) has underlined that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's visit to Finland reflects the remarkable development in relations between the two countries in recent years.

Speaking to Qatar News Agency (QNA), Valtonen welcomed the Amir's visit to Helsinki which constitutes an important opportunity to highlight the many potentials that can be built upon between the two sides.

She noted that Qatar-Finland relations have become deeper and stronger over the past decades, and believed that the future is up to the people of both countries to have more interaction in trade and investment, and to discuss ideas and common solutions to various issues and challenges.

Valtonen pointed to Finland's interest in Qatar as a future political partner in effectively resolving the Middle East crises, and finding common ground on the Palestinian issue to realise the two-state solution, thus achieving a peaceful future in the region and the world. She indicated that Finland defends the international order based on the rules of democracy and freedom.



The foreign minister said that Finland has a lot to offer in the areas of business and economic affairs, including investment and trade; noting the importance of close co-operation between Qatar and Finland and its role in solving many regional and geopolitical problems, such as climate change.

She noted the significance of the six-hour direct flight between Doha and Helsinki in promoting business and investment, and cultural exchange between the peoples through tourism in both directions, noting that the two countries have very advanced companies.

Regarding the second round of political consultations between the foreign ministries of Qatar and Finland held in the capital Helsinki last May, Valtonen

said the consultations were well received by both sides, and revealed many commonalities that can be built upon, indicating that the consultations will be "permanent and regular."

The Finnish foreign minister highlighted the important role of Qatar at the regional and international levels, through resolving crises in the Middle East and the world, expressing her country's appreciation for the Qatari role in the Russian-Ukrainian crisis, and the success of the Qatari mediation in reuniting Ukrainian children with their families.

She also praised the role of Qatar and its mediation to reach a ceasefire agreement in the Gaza Strip, noting Finland's aspiration to co-operate with Qatar in this regard, and to ensure the resumption of negotiations related to the two-state solution to end the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

She affirmed her country's support for the work of the UN and its aspiration to resolve all the issues raised, noting: "Without the UN, we will not live in a rules-based international order, which we need and look forward to improving." Valtonen noted that the UN can have very important roles, particularly the Security Council, emphasising everyone's commitment to the UN Charter and the principles of the rules-based international order.

Qatar ambassador: Amir's visit has opened aspects of co-operation

QNA
Helsinki

Qatar's ambassador in Helsinki Mohamed bin Abdullah al-Jaber emphasised that the keenness of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to build bridges of co-operation and enhance communication with friendly countries is welcomed by the international community, as the Amir's visit to Finland gains significance from the fact that it is His Highness' first visit to Helsinki at the head of a high-level delegation, to enhance governmental and public communication between the two countries.

In his remarks to Qatar News Agency (QNA), the ambassador said the relationship between Qatar and Finland is characterised by co-operation and co-ordination, and it is a strong relationship, as the two countries share various foreign policy files. Given the potential and aspirations of the two countries, there is room for increasing trade exchange and exchange of expertise between the two countries in several fields.

The ambassador added that the visit represents a push to increase co-operation in many areas such as political co-ordination at the bilateral and multilateral levels, co-operation in the field of scientific research and innovation, and discuss investment opportunities between Qatar and Finland. He pointed out

that the two countries' foreign policy is characterised by the interest they give to mediation processes, resolving disputes through peaceful means, and respecting international law.

He indicated that Qatar views the relationship with Finland with great interest as the two countries celebrate the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, as well as the first anniversary of the opening of the Qatari embassy in Helsinki. He noted that the agreements and memorandums of understanding are among the most important frameworks that facilitate the process of co-operation, exchange of expertise, and removing obstacles for the private sector to invest in the areas in which both countries excel, such as innovation, quality of education, scientific research, sustainability solutions, and tourism.

The ambassador pointed out that the trade volume in 2023 between Qatar and Finland reached \$110mn. He noted the existence of various Finnish companies operating in the Qatari market, whether with Finnish capital or joint capital, as these companies are active in the fields of educational and tourism services.

Regarding the prospects for future investments between Qatar and Finland, he said that given the potential and opportunities available in both countries, there is a great opportunity to increase mutual investments between the two countries. He added that Qatar, thanks to the advanced infrastructure represented in the

transportation sector, in addition to the work environment provided by the Qatar Free Zones Authority, the regulatory environment for the business sector in Qatar, and the strength and stability of the financial and banking system, all constitute important incentives and an attractive environment for foreign investments.

He pointed out that Finland is full of many investment opportunities, as it is considered one of the advanced countries in advanced industries, logistics solutions, and various types of technology, including communications technology, health, and sustainability.

The ambassador pointed out the convergence of the foreign policies between the two countries through their adoption of preventive diplomacy, their activity in the field of mediation, and their efforts to resolve disputes peacefully. In that regard, he said that Finland has a governmental and public legacy in this field, and this policy is consistent with the mediation efforts made by Qatar to stop the war in the Gaza Strip, and the good offices it exerts in many international and regional conflicts.

He noted Finland's appreciation and support for Qatar's efforts and praising the role it plays as an honest mediator in resolving international disputes. He indicated that this appreciation stems from the Finnish legacy in the field of mediation, as the government works with many Finnish civil society organisations in this field in different regions of Africa and Asia. **(QNA)**

4 dead in US school shooting in Georgia

AFP
Winder

At least four people died and nine were wounded in a high school shooting in the US state of Georgia yesterday, law enforcement authorities said, with a suspect taken into custody.

After the latest chapter of America's gun violence crisis — nearly 400 mass shootings this year alone, by one tally — people gathered at a sports field outside Apalachee High School, some forming a circle with their arms linked.

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation said four people had been killed. There was no immediate word on a motive.

"An additional nine taken to various hospitals with injuries. Suspect in custody and alive. Reports that the suspect has been 'neutralised' are inaccurate," the bureau said in a social media post.

Earlier, school authorities were reported to have sent a message to parents saying they were enforcing a "hard lockdown after reports of gunfire."

After the all-clear was given, parents were invited to the school to be reunited with their children, with long lines of vehicles visible outside.

A student told local media that he saw blood on the floors and a body as he was led out of the building by authorities.

"I heard gunshots go off... I thought it was fake until I heard more gunshots and screaming," said the student, whose name was not given by the Fox 5 News channel.

The school is near the town of Winder, about 45 miles northeast of Atlanta, the state capital.

US President Joe Biden said he was mourning the dead.

"Students across the country are learning how to duck and cover instead of how to read and write. We cannot continue to accept this as normal," he said, referring to the frequen-



Parents arrive to pick up their children after a shooting took place at Apalachee High School in Winder, Georgia. **(AFP)**

cy of such attacks across the country.

School shootings have become a sadly regular occurrence in the United States, where about a third of adults own a firearm and regulations on purchasing even powerful military-style rifles are lax.

Polls show a majority of voters favour stricter controls on the use and purchase of firearms, but the powerful gun ownership lobby is opposed to additional restrictions and lawmakers have repeatedly failed to act.

Speaking at a campaign event in New Hampshire after the shooting, Vice-President Kamala Harris said it was time to end the "epidemic of gun violence."

Local television footage showed ambulances driving across a school field about two hours after the attack was first reported, and scores of vehicles parked around the school.

A crowd of people was visible on the football field, with some gathered in a circle with their arms linked.

Finnish ambassador says Amir's visit important milestone in bilateral ties

Finnish ambassador to Qatar Pekka Voutilainen has stressed that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's visit to Finland is a very important milestone in the excellent bilateral relations, especially this year, as both countries celebrate 50 years of diplomatic relations.

In a statement to Qatar News Agency, the ambassador said that 10-20 MoUs are expected to be signed during the visit, which reflects the two countries' efforts to deepen their co-operation in various fields. Most notable MoUs are on peace mediation, investments, economic and commercial co-operation in multitude of sectors such as technology, education, food security, tourism, statics and health, the ambassador added.

He pointed to the high-level visits between the two countries, noting the increase in number of tourists, as Finnair currently flies to Doha three times a day from Nordic countries, highlighting the political and economic partnerships between Doha and Helsinki.

He expressed appreciation for peace mediation work Qatar has done in the last decades, adding that one of the key take-aways from the visit would be to enhance co-operation in this field.

He also pointed out that the regular political consultations this May in Helsinki were held to cement many joint activities.

Ambassador Voutilainen explained that many Finnish companies are operating in Qatar in the services sector. He expressed hope that Qatari investments in Finland will increase as he sees significant opportunities to offer high-value propositions that will open doors and wide avenues for further co-operation in various fields.

He pointed out that there are 300



Finnish professionals currently working in Qatar in various fields, expressing ap-

preciation for the support received by the Finnish community in Qatar. **(QNA)**

Qatar supports GCC social development strategies

Qatar chaired the 10th meeting of the Committee of GCC Ministers of Social Affairs and Development in Doha yesterday.

The meeting was chaired by HE the Minister of Social Development and Family Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad, the chairperson of the current session of the meeting, with the participation of the GCC ministers and GCC Secretary-General Jassem Mohamed Albudaiwi.

During her speech at the meeting, HE al-Misnad said that the meeting is of great importance as it carries the aspirations and hopes of the GCC peoples for social development in accordance with a comprehensive vision for a Gulf society united behind its identity and its sustainable moral and value-based legacy. She considered the adoption of the GCC Social Development Strategy (2021-2025) a big step and a leap within the joint efforts to achieve comprehensive social development for the peoples of the region and to implement the innovative initiatives.

Stressing the importance of considering the issue of adopting poli-



cies that support the cohesion and stability of the Gulf society and enhance the spirit of citizenship and Arab and Islamic identity as well as co-operation between Gulf brothers to deepen co-operation and joint work, she said that the family was and still is the true wealth of the nations, pointing to the identity and the uniqueness of our Gulf, Arab and Islamic history, which is rich in the ethics of human advancement, tolerance and integration. Today

Gulf countries and societies are united in facing the dangers of diluting national identities, including the identity of the family, she added.

Highlighting the great importance attached by Qatar to supporting pioneering community projects within social protection policies, including empowering productive families and enhancing community awareness of the concepts of family cohesion and building families based on Islam, justice and benevo-

lence, she stressed that Qatar will continue to support these social development projects at the national, regional and international levels and express its welcome to the recommendations concerned with building development partnerships between various sectors in which social and technical innovation is employed to advance the societies of the GCC countries.

She pointed out that Qatar supports Gulf brothers and stands to-

gether with them to achieve more co-operation, in addition to implementing the committee's decision taken at the previous meeting on the joint Gulf action strategy for women's affairs in the GCC countries (2024-2030) and following up on what has been achieved in this regard to enhance the role of motherhood in society and achieve harmony between the roles of men and women and enhance the concept of partnership and integration of roles between men and women within the family and marriage to strengthen the bonds and ties within the system of the Gulf families.

She affirmed Qatar's determination to continue its efforts to complete the implementation of social development strategies and plans in the GCC, noting the hosting of the International Family Conference to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the International Year of the Family from October 29 to 31.

She said Qatar will host the 7th Gulf Theatre Festival for Persons with Disabilities from November 27 to December 3.

On the sidelines of the meeting, the Ministry of Social Development and Family signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Kuwait's Ministry of Social Affairs to enhance and strengthen their fraternal relations and achieve mutual goals regarding social affairs.

Furthermore, the Regulatory Authority for Charitable Activities also signed an MoU with Kuwait's Ministry of Social Affairs to promote co-operation in the development, support, and encouragement of charitable and humanitarian work, as well as regulating and supervising these activities in both countries. (QNA)

VCUarts Qatar welcomes new academic year

Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar (VCUarts Qatar) welcomed new and returning students, staff, and faculty to the 2024-2025 academic year earlier this week.

This year, 97 new students joined the country's only university dedicated to art and design, established in 1998. Of these, 91 students joined the undergraduate programmes, and six joined the postgraduate MFA in Design programme.

The first week started with an orientation programme for new students, who were welcomed by dean Amir Berbi and the team.

Interior Design Class of 2023

alumna Shaikha Darwish delivered the opening keynote speech at the new student Convocation ceremony. The new students were then introduced to the directors, heads, and chairs of the various academic and non-academic departments, who gave them an overview of VCUarts Qatar's BFA, BA and MFA programmes.

The orientation programme for new students was a three-day activity-driven introduction to VCUarts Qatar. Students from the senior, junior, and sophomore years, along with the Student Government Association, and the University's Student Affairs department were involved in or-

ganising the programme. The introductions, brainstorming, and team-building activities gave the latest cohort a taste of the academic pathways and served as an ice-breaker between the new students and the rest of the community.

During the same week, the University's Department of Human Resources held a one-day off-campus gathering for new and returning faculty and staff, where the leadership team shared priorities and strategic developments for the upcoming year. Awards for outstanding teaching and services were handed out to deserving faculty and staff, during the one-day event.



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