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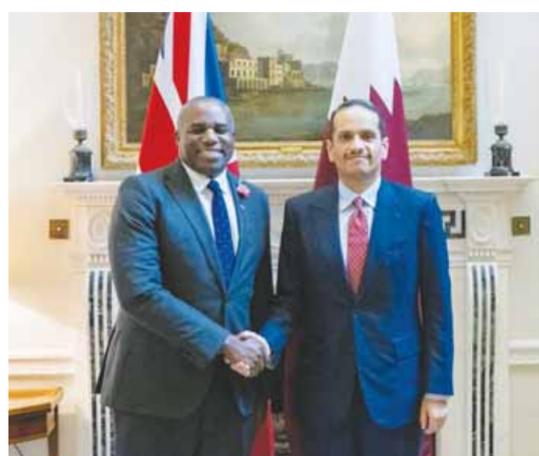
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PM, UK foreign secretary discuss preparations for Amir's visit to London



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani discussed with Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the UK David Lammy the latest preparations for the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to the United Kingdom in December, during a working lunch in London yesterday. The two sides reviewed the relations between the two countries and ways to support and develop them, especially enhancing their joint efforts to end the war on the Gaza Strip and deliver humanitarian aid in a sustainable and unhindered manner to all areas of the Strip, in addition to discussing the latest developments in the region and ways to reduce escalation in Lebanon and a number of issues of joint interest. **(QNA) Page 2**

Phase One of Water Taxi project complete

The Ministry of Transport (MoT) yesterday announced the completion of infrastructure works of the first phase of the Water Taxi project, which consists of the Lusail Ferry Terminal and two ferry stops - Pearl Ferry Stop and Corniche Ferry Stop.

The announcement was made at the Qatar Boat Show, running at the Old Doha Port with participation from over 450 maritime companies and trademarks. The MoT is the strategic partner of the event which concludes tomorrow.

The MoT booth in the show displays a mock-up of the Lusail Ferry Terminal, and a visual presentation of the project's facilities. The Water Taxi project is equipped with cutting-edge eco-friendly electric technologies while enhancing integration with other public transit systems to transport passengers to and from various destinations.

The plan is to connect the Water Taxi project, when it begins operations, with Sila public transit system, in step with MoT's general frameworks that aim to achieve



HE the Minister of Transport Jassim bin Saif al-Sulaiti and other dignitaries viewing a mock-up of the Lusail Ferry Terminal, at the MoT booth at Qatar Boat Show.

the goals of the third Qatar National Development Strategy, which focuses on benefiting from advanced technologies, sustainable development, and economic diversification all the way to achieving the pillars of the Qatar National Vision 2030.

The main Lusail Ferry Terminal, which spans an area of over 2,200sq m, includes a pontoon

with electric chargers for ferry recharging. The pontoon can accommodate four, 24m long ferries. The terminal also includes a waiting area, ticketing facility, and various service facilities such as retailing and offices. The two ferry stops at the Pearl and Corniche also include pontoons, ticketing offices, and customer service offices. **To Page 4**

Defence contracts exceed QR360mn at Qatar Boat Show

The Ministry of Defence revealed at Qatar Boat Show 2024 yesterday contracts exceeding QR60mn for new vessels and maintenance projects, along with plans to finalise additional contracts worth an estimated QR300mn with local companies, showcasing the country's commitment to maritime security and innovation. Performance Marine and Barzan Holding also signed a Memorandum of Understanding at the event, aimed at advancing the localisation of defence equipment production in Qatar. The partnership focuses on the development of Unmanned Surface Vehicles (USVs). **Page 12**

Qatar to host Interpol Gen Assembly in 2027

Members of the International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol) have selected Qatar to host the 95th Interpol General Assembly meetings to be held in 2027. The General Assembly approved, among its resolutions issued during the current session, that Doha will be the host city for the 95th session, due to the international community's confidence in the distinguished role of Qatar and its ability to organise important international events professionally. **Page 4**

Israeli attacks kill 3,103 in Lebanon

Israeli attacks on Lebanon killed at least 53 people and wounded 161 during the last 24 hours, bringing the total to 3,103 deaths and 13,856 injuries since October 2023, the Lebanese health ministry said yesterday. Massad Boulos, a Lebanese-American billionaire who is the father-in-law of Trump's daughter Tiffany, has said he would be Trump's envoy in charge of negotiating with the Lebanese side to reach a deal to end the war.

'Suicidal' to offer Putin concessions

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky yesterday said it would be "suicidal" for Europe to offer the Kremlin concessions to halt its invasion of Ukraine, after Moscow demanded the West enter direct talks on ending the war. Kyiv is scrambling to up the pressure on its allies for more support in its fight against Moscow. **Page 8**

Watan 2024 exercise set to start on Nov 10; 70 agencies to participate

QNA
Doha

Under the auspices of HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya), Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, the security agencies in the country are organising the "Watan Exercise 2024" during the period Nov 10 to 13, with the participation of over 70 military, security and civilian agencies, along with security forces from the friendly Italian Republic.

Chairman of the Standing Committee for Joint Exercises and General Supervisor of the Watan 2024 Exercise, Brigadier Mubarak Sherida al-Kaabi said that conducting the "Watan Exercise 2024" comes in implementation of the directives of the wise leadership with the



Officials announcing the details of the exercise at a press conference yesterday.

aim of strengthening the work and integration system, achieving effective co-ordination between the various military, security and civilian sectors in the country, and employing the logistical and technical capabilities available to the participating agencies, in a way that achieves operational integration and effectiveness in im-

plementing joint tasks, to deal with potential risks efficiently and professionally in various normal and emergency circumstances, and during the organisation of major events in the country, and confronting crises and natural and environmental disasters, to ensure the protection of security and achieve public safety. **To Page 12**

10 die in strike on Gaza school, toll 43,469

QNA
Gaza

Ten Palestinians were killed and others were injured in an Israeli bombardment of Al Shati Elementary School, which houses displaced people in Al Shati Camp, west of Gaza City.

Palestinian medical sources reported that the bombing caused destruction to the school, and resulted in numerous martyrs and wounded, some of whom were in critical condition and were transferred to hospitals.

With the deaths from the Al Shati School massacre, the number of martyrs since the morning has risen to 43, according to medical sources, 22 of them in the northern Gaza Strip, in addition to dozens of wounded.

The death toll from the ongoing Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip for 13 months, has risen to

43,469 martyrs, in addition to 102,561 wounded.

The occupation forces continue to commit the crime of genocide in the Gaza Strip, for the 398th consecutive day, by launching dozens of air strikes and artillery shelling, while committing massacres against civilians, amid a catastrophic humanitarian situation as a result of the siege, the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said.

The Israeli military called for the evacuation of several areas in northern Gaza yesterday, again alleging that Palestinian fighters were launching rockets from there.

"We inform you that the designated area is considered a dangerous combat zone. For your safety, move south immediately," military spokesman Avichay Adraee said in a post on X along with a map of the area in Gaza City's northwest.

The latest call follows a series of evacuation orders for large swathes of the Gaza Strip's north.

New cruise season starts as Resorts World One arrives

Qatar Tourism (QT) has kicked off its 2024/2025 cruise season with the arrival of Resorts World One cruise ship.

This season is set to be Qatar's biggest yet with 95 cruise calls, including 33 turnaround calls, 11 homeporting calls and four maiden calls.

Resorts World One, which marks the first maiden call of the season, is expected to make 23 scheduled visits, with a total of approximately 72,000 visitors.

More than 430,000 passengers are expected between November 2024 and April 2025. This season will welcome notable ships such as Mein Schiff 4, MSC Euribia, AIDAprima, Costa Smeralda, Norwegian Sky, and Celestyal Journey, further solidifying Qatar's growing status as a premier global cruise destination.

Building on the success of the 2023/2024 cruise season, which saw 73 cruise ships and more than 347,000 visitors, the new season represents a significant milestone in Qatar's cruise market. International world-class ships including MSC Virtuosa, Seabourn Encore, AIDAprima, Artania, Mein Schiff 2, Azamara Journey, MS Riviera, MS Hamburg, and Norwegian Dawn have all previously docked in Doha.

In a press statement, QT chairman HE Saad bin Ali al-Kharji said: "The growth of Qatar's cruise sector is pivotal to achieving our National Tourism Strategy 2030. The 2024/2025 season is expected to see a 30% increase in cruise calls and 24.5% increase in visitors compared to the previous season, reflecting the growing demand for cruise vacations in the region.



Resorts World One cruise ship arrives at Old Doha Port.

With new partnerships and an increasing number of high-profile cruise lines visiting our shores, Qatar continues to position itself

as a leading destination for cruise travellers worldwide."

Mwani Qatar CEO Capt Abdullah Mohammed al-Khanji said:

"Following last season's record-breaking visitor numbers, we are thrilled to welcome an even greater influx of visitors from across the globe, solidifying Qatar's position as a leading cruise destination.

"Doha Port is fully prepared to ensure an unforgettable experience for guests on 95 scheduled cruises in the 2024/2025 season. The remarkable increase in visitor numbers and cruise arrivals highlights the growing interest from cruise operators in choosing Doha Port, reflecting Qatar's standing as a key cruise destination in the region.

"We are proud to work closely with Qatar Tourism and stakeholders to drive growth in Qatar's marine tourism sector and to elevate its global presence in the travel industry, in line with the National Tourism Strategy 2030."

Qatar partakes in road to Social Justice Conference in Armenia

Qatar's Ministry of Social Development and Family (MSDF) participated in the 'Road to social justice: decent work' conference in Armenia. MSDF's Assistant Under-Secretary for Social Development Affairs Fahd Mohammed al-Khayarin chaired Qatar's delegation to the conference. Representatives of governments, employers and unions discussed policies and legislation that guarantee labour rights and contribute to achieving social justice including providing better wages, adequate working conditions, and social and health protection for workers. The agenda also included global



obligations to achieve a fair balance between work conditions and the workers' basic rights, as social justice. On the sidelines of the event, panels were held on child labour and education, political responses to labour market

challenges, women's economic empowerment and social justice, social justice and the independent business economy (GIG Economy). The conference also included an awards ceremony for social workers. (QNA)

Qatari aircraft carrying relief for Lebanese people in Beirut



A Qatari Amiri Air Force aircraft arrived yesterday at Rafic Hariri International Airport, carrying relief aid and shelter supplies, within the framework of the co-operation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as part of the air bridge operated by Qatar to support the brotherly Lebanese people as a result of the humanitarian crisis they are currently experiencing. The aid was received by the diplomatic staff of Qatar's embassy and UNHCR representatives. (QNA)

Qatar chairs 26th meeting of GCC committee of transport ministers

QNA
Doha

Chaired by Qatar, the 26th Meeting of the Committee of the Ministers of Transport of the Co-operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC), kicked off yesterday. HE the Minister of Transport Jassim bin Saif al-Sulaiti presided over the meeting, with the participation of GCC ministers of transport and in attendance of Secretary-General of the GCC Jassem Mohamed Albudaiwi.

In his opening speech, HE al-Sulaiti stressed the importance of co-operation and efforts by the ministers of transport to enhance the development process of the GCC countries and their societies. He said that recent years have seen a paradigm shift in the common action in all fields and many positive outcomes and successes considering a balanced approach for comprehensive development to enhance economic and social integration between GCC countries.

He added that the transportation industry attracts great attention from the GCC country leaders, and this helped propel more progress and advancement, given the fact that many other GCC co-

operation areas rely on that sector to achieve their development plans. One of those plans, he said, focuses on connecting GCC countries together with a network of highways, diversifying travel and passenger and cargo transportation options for citizens and beneficiaries of the GCC countries.

Thanks to GCC country leaders' considerable attention to the importance of investing in GCC shared projects, HE the Minister of Transport, said several transportation projects have been launched; on top of them is the GCC Railways Project to connect GCC countries together, given the positive direct impacts on streamlining GCC trade movement and contribution to connecting the logistic facilities and economic and industrial zones to the main ports, thereby enhancing their economic role and helping support the trade exchange with Asia and Europe, let alone providing safe services of passenger and cargo transportation. He said that the common action on that project is advancing significantly, to see the light of the day in 2030.

HE the Minister added that these days we are seeing a major development of GCC ports in terms of capacity, handling, and accommodating all types of vessels and they now occupy high

rankings in terms of efficiency on the World Bank's ports performance indicators. He added that the directives of the GCC leaders have resulted in GCC countries having advanced and eco-friendly transportation infrastructure supported by the latest technology systems that help keep pace with emerging and smart technologies, and they also contribute to activating all the initiatives for reducing carbon emissions to achieve carbon neutrality. The GCC countries' record of achievements in this regard is internationally recognized.

The GCC ministers discussed several topics to further enhance the countries' co-operation in transportation. They also took the necessary decisions on the latest updates on the GCC Railways Authority and Railways Project such as the General Agreement for Connecting the States of the Co-operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf to the Railway Project, the executive regulations of the GCC uniform system for universal land transportation, controls of conventional merchant vessels' access to the waters and harbours of the GCC States, and the uniform conditions and controls for granting driving licenses to the offshore units not subject to international maritime conventions, in addition to several other important topics.



PM discusses preparations for Amir's visit to London with UK state secretary



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani discussed with Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the UK David Lammy the latest preparations for the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to the United Kingdom in December, during a working lunch in London. The two sides reviewed relations between the two countries and ways to support and develop them, especially enhancing their joint efforts to end the war on the Gaza Strip and deliver humanitarian aid in a sustainable and unhindered manner to all areas of the Strip, in addition to discussing the latest developments in the region and ways to reduce escalation in Lebanon and a number of issues of joint interest. (QNA)

Qatar slams blatant Israeli disregard for international agreements

QNA
New York

Qatar has said that the Israeli occupation's disregard for international laws, agreements, and resolutions, its failure to respect the activities and objectives of international organisations, and its persistence in committing crimes of murder and forced displacement against the Palestinian population in Gaza, especially children, women and the elderly, require international solidarity to immediately end the war on the Strip, and to exert all efforts to compel Israel to comply with the efforts to achieve just and sustainable peace in the region.

This came in the statement delivered by HE the Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations Sheikhha Alya Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani before the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on the crisis facing the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), in light of the two requests submitted by the Arab Group and the core group of the "Shared Commitments" supporting UNRWA, to the UNGA President to hold an informal general session on this matter, at the UN Headquarters in New York.

HE the Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations explained that the two Israeli legislations targeting UNRWA contradict General Assembly Resolution 302 issued in 1949, which represents the basis

of UNRWA's mandate, undermine the purposes of the Charter, explaining in this context that the State of Qatar calls on the UNGA to assume its responsibility under its resolution establishing UNRWA.

HE Sheikhha Alya pointed out that the State of Qatar is proud to be the first Arab country to have ever signed a multi-year agreement with UNRWA to support its core resources, in addition to being one of the largest supporting countries to UNRWA, as its financial contribution amounted to more than \$49mn during 2024, explaining that it will continue its political, diplomatic and financial support for the agency.

She affirmed Qatar's firm and historic position in support of the steadfastness of the brotherly Palestinian people and their just cause in accordance with international legitimacy resolutions and within the framework of the Arab Peace Initiative, which guarantees the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

HE Sheikhha Alya expressed Qatar's appreciation to UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini and to the members of his team who are carrying out their humanitarian mission and working to implement UNRWA's mandate in extremely difficult circumstances. She conveyed Qatar's condolences for the victims of the agency's employees, pointing out that at least 237 have been killed since the beginning of the Israeli aggression.

She noted that the number of

Palestinian victims in Gaza exceeded 43,000, adding that this aggression systematically targeted relief workers, killing 322 of them. She also mentioned that at least 137 journalists have been killed since the beginning of the aggression, according to statistics from the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ).

HE Sheikhha Alya reiterated Qatar's condemnation in the strongest terms of the Israeli Knesset's approval of two laws that ban UNRWA's activities in the occupied Palestinian territories, considering this a dangerous precedent towards the UN and multilateral action and systematic targeting of the UN agency and its vital humanitarian activities.

She underlined that Qatar stresses that the Palestinian people besieged inside the Gaza Strip are facing catastrophic humanitarian conditions due to the ongoing Israeli aggression for more than a year, the obstruction of the delivery of necessary aid to the residents of the Strip, and the use of food and medicine as weapons against them.

She warned that banning UNRWA activities would lead to severe humanitarian and political consequences by depriving millions of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank of essential UNRWA services, in addition to its repercussions on the issue of Palestinian refugees and their right to return to their areas and homes, a right guaranteed by international law and relevant UN resolutions, specifically UN General Assembly Resolution 194 and Security Council resolution 237.

Arab ministers to review Qatar's experience in green hydrogen in Egypt meeting

QNA
Cairo

The Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport in the Egyptian city of Alexandria will host the 73rd session of the Executive Office of the Council of Arab Transport Ministers, and the 37th session of the Council, next Tuesday and Wednesday.

The academy said, in a statement, that the Executive Office of the Council will discuss a set of topics in preparation for submitting them to the 37th session of the Council, within the framework of enhancing Arab co-op-

eration in the fields of transport and logistics, supporting efforts aimed at developing the transport infrastructure in the Arab region, and enhancing economic integration among Arab member states, in a way that serves the achievement of sustainable development goals.

The meeting agenda will include, in this regard, a study on establishing an Arab mechanism and database to support the ship repair and construction industry, another study on the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in developing the transport and logistics sector in Arab countries, in addition to a draft agreement to regulate maritime transport

procedures for passengers and goods between Arab countries, and a working paper prepared by the Academy on standardising driving and rest periods for truck and bus drivers, which enhances safety and security in the land transport sector.

It will also address several proposals submitted by Saudi Arabia, including examining the possibility of establishing a special Arab agency for maritime safety, and establishing a regional centre to manage ship traffic in the Bab al-Mandab Strait in the Red Sea, in addition to discussing the amended draft of the agreement on the exchange of exemptions from taxes and customs duties on

Arab air transport activities and equipment, with the aim of enhancing co-operation in the civil aviation sector between Arab countries, in addition to discussing support for Saudi Arabia's proposal to re-nominate some Arab countries for membership in the Executive Council of the International Maritime Organisation, and reviewing the results and recommendations of the technical committee concerned with following up on the status of Arab agreements in the transport sector in all its forms, in implementation of the decisions of the Arab Summit.

In a related context, the Arab Academy for Science, Technol-

ogy and Maritime Transport will hold an Arab-European workshop next Thursday, in co-operation with the European Union and the Transport and Tourism Department of the League of Arab States, on Preparing an integrated study for the project to establish a supply chain for green hydrogen, within the framework of enhancing Arab-European co-operation in the field of clean energy.

The workshop will aim to review the successful experiences of Arab countries in the field of green hydrogen, as it will highlight pioneering experiences in this regard for the State of Qatar, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Mauritania, the UAE, Morocco, and Iraq.

The workshop is being held in implementation of the decision of the 22nd Joint Meeting of the Technical Committees for Transport (Technical Secretariat of the Council of Arab Transport Ministers), which was held last September, within the framework of the commitment of the League of Arab States and the Arab Academy for Maritime Transport to provide innovative solutions to address energy and climate challenges, and to enhance co-operation with the European Union, in a way that contributes to achieving optimal utilisation of clean energy sources and creating a sustainable economic environment in the Arab region.

Al-Hammadi meets Japanese vice-minister for foreign affairs

HE the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi met yesterday with Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan Okano Masataka. During the meeting, they reviewed relations between the two countries and ways to support and develop them as well as a number of topics of common interest. The meeting was attended by ambassador of Qatar to Japan Jaber bin Jarallah al-Marri and the accompanying delegation. (QNA)



Qatar, Japan hold political consultations



The fifth round of political consultations between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar and Japan was held in Tokyo yesterday. The Qatari side was headed by HE the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi, while the Japanese side was headed by Director-General of the Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau at the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Toshihide Ando. The consultations discussed bilateral co-operation and ways to support and enhance it. The round was attended by ambassador of the State of Qatar to Japan Jaber bin Jarallah al-Marri and the accompanying delegation. (QNA)

Qatar's varied heritage showcased at Unesco Arab Cultural Week in Paris

QNA
Paris

HE the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) Dr Nasser bin Hamad al-Hanzab emphasised that Qatar's participation in the Arab Week at Unesco, which concluded in Paris, highlighted the richness of Qatari heritage, customs and traditions rooted in its Arab and Islamic environment and identity, and shed light on the latest developments in civilisation, human advancement and pioneering cultural projects achieved by Qatar, all of which enabled the Qatari people to interact seriously and equally with other human cultures and civilisations.

In special remarks to Qatar News Agency (QNA), HE al-Hanzab said that Qatar participated with the Arab brothers in the Arab Week at Unesco, which gave this initiative the utmost importance, especially with the unification of Arab participation and its endeavour to highlight its rich culture, customs, and authentic traditions to world countries present in the Unesco organisation.

He pointed out that Qatar has always been one of the first Arab countries to seek to enhance the presence of Arab and Islamic culture in Unesco, given that this international cultural organisation represents a gathering and meeting place for all cultures and countries of the world.

He added that Qatar is keen to highlight the importance of Arab culture in its universal and human dimension through international

cultural and sporting events, and the biggest example of this is the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, which Qatar successfully organised and was a great opportunity for the world to get to know Arab culture, its richness, and its human dimension that contributed to building many civilisations through the Arabic language, human sciences, cross-border culture, and tangible and intangible heritage.

He pointed out that Qatar, through its significant presence at Unesco, has contributed to highlighting Arab culture by presenting various exhibitions, events, and cultural proposals that all serve this purpose, and in order to enhance the presence of Arab tangible and intangible heritage at the international level.

He indicated that Qatar believes in the importance of cultural diplo-

macy as an essential part and driver for communication with other cultures and for strengthening platforms for understanding and building bridges of communication with the rest of the peoples of the world.

He recalled that Unesco is the largest global platform for activating the role of cultural diplomacy, and therefore Qatar is working hard with all member states of Unesco to establish this concept and for the goal of promoting stability, peace, tolerance, and human values and principles in the world.

HE the Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to Unesco Dr Nasser bin Hamad al-Hanzab stressed that Qatar today is one of the member states that manages this organisation through its membership in the Executive Board and its presidency of the most important committees of this board,

which is the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations.

He noted that Qatar's access to these advanced positions and decision-making in this international organisation is a reflection of the world's and the international community's confidence in Qatar and its constructive role in creating peace and security and encouraging a culture of dialogue and tolerance throughout the world, through education, upbringing, culture, and values adopted by Unesco, in addition to Qatar's experience in consolidating these values and concepts by providing great capabilities and spreading the principles of Unesco worldwide.

The Arab Week at Unesco was organised by the Arab Group at Unesco, with distinguished Qatari participation and the presence of representatives of the permanent

delegations of Arab countries to the UN organisation, members of the diplomatic corps of Arab and international countries in France, and a group of officials and leaders at Unesco. The week's activities included 22 corners shared by Arab countries to highlight their culture, heritage, history, and aspects of their civilisation.

The Arab Week programme at Unesco included several cultural and artistic events and exhibitions, including a market for Arab cultural products, an exhibition of Arabic calligraphy, and another on images of heritage sites in the Arab world registered with Unesco, in addition to an Arab music pavilion, an Arab cooking event, a pavilion on Arab handicrafts, another on Arab fashion, a symposium on the Arab novel, and another on artificial intelligence.



The plan was announced during the Qatar Infection Prevention and Control Week 2024 scientific conference.

MoPH launches second national antimicrobial resistance strategy

THE Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has launched the second Qatar National Antimicrobial Resistance Action Plan (2024-2030). This was announced during the recent Qatar Infection Prevention and Control Week 2024 scientific conference, under the theme 'Moving the Needle on Infection Prevention'.

The action plan is part of the ministry's ongoing efforts to combat antimicrobial resistance. It was developed in collaboration with members of the National Committee on Antimicrobial Resistance and the technical working groups within the governance framework of the National Antimicrobial Resistance Programme, in addition to a consultant from the Infection Prevention and Control and Antimicrobial Resistance Programme at the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean.

The objectives of the second

National Antimicrobial Resistance Action Plan include preserving the effectiveness of existing antimicrobials, ensuring sustainable potential to treat infections effectively, surveillance through the enhancement of data collection and analysis related to antimicrobial use and resistance patterns, as well as promoting best practices in infection prevention and control within healthcare settings and the community.

The objectives of the plan encompass research and development in evolving new antibiotics, vaccines, and diagnostic tools. The plan aims to enhance education and awareness by increasing public and professional understanding of antimicrobial resistance and promoting responsible usage.

It also employs a 'One Health' approach, achieved through the implementation of the Qatar National Antimicrobial Resistance

Action Plan, which follows the guidelines developed by the World Health Organisation. This approach encourages collaboration and partnerships between various relevant sectors, including public health, animal health, agriculture, and the environment, to comprehensively address antimicrobial resistance.

The second National Antimicrobial Resistance Action Plan focuses on addressing the global health threat of antimicrobial resistance, which poses a significant risk to global health by making infections harder to treat, leading to longer hospital stays, increased medical costs, and higher mortality rates. The plan works on enhancing strategic co-ordination by providing an organised approach to unify efforts across different sectors, ensuring a co-ordinated response to the challenges posed by antimicrobial resistance. By setting

specific objectives and actions, the National Action Plan prioritises resource allocation, guiding funding and research efforts effectively.

Additionally, it establishes clear standards and monitoring systems to assess progress, define responsibilities, and facilitate co-operation between stakeholders and decision-makers.

Public awareness is also a crucial aspect, as the National Action Plan promotes educational campaigns that educate healthcare professionals and the public about the responsible use of antimicrobials, thereby encouraging behavioural changes that help combat resistance.

The National Action Plan, along with the 'One Health' approach, establishes a comprehensive framework to address antimicrobial resistance, ultimately aiming to preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics and safeguard public health.

Ajyal partners with leading entities

THE 2024 edition of Ajyal Film Festival, being held from November 16 to 23, has partnered with leading national and global organisations to present a community-focused event that uplifts diverse and independent voices in cinema and culture. Continuing its long-term partnership with Katara Cultural Village as cultural partner, Ajyal 2024 will once again host several activities at this iconic venue while Media City Qatar and Visit Qatar have joined as principal partners.

Other partners are ELAN media, Katara Hospitality, Msheireb Properties, Qatar Museums, and Vox Cinemas, which will screen several Ajyal films. Friends of the Festival include Aldo Coppola; Giffoni; Raw'a; College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Hamad bin Khalifa University and West Bay Beach.

In a press statement, Doha Film Institute CEO and Ajyal festival director Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, said: "Year after year, the strong commitment of our community and our partners makes it possible to continue to deliver a festival full of new surprises and life-changing experiences". Ajyal 2024 will feature a selection of 66 films from 42 countries.

27th edition of the Algiers International Book Fair begins, Qatar guest of honour

THE 27th edition of the Algiers International Book Fair (SILA 2024) kicked off with Qatar as this year's guest of honour.

The opening ceremony was attended by Algerian Prime Minister Nadir Larbaoui, HE the Minister of Culture of Qatar Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-Thani, Minister of Culture and Arts of Algeria Dr Soraya Mouloudji, as well as several ministers and ambassadors present in Algeria. The Ministry of Culture is participating in the fair, which will run until Nov 16, showcasing Qatari intellectual production, promoting the ministry's digital library, and enhancing cultural and intellectual exchanges. Qatar's participation includes a variety of activities, featuring cultural programmes, workshops, a dedicated children's section, among other activities. The ministry's pavilion also exhibits a collection of photographs by Qatari photographers, highlight-



ing the beauty of Qatar, along with paintings by Qatari visual artists. This year's edition of the fair hosts approximately 1,007 participants from 40 countries, including 290 local exhibitors and 350 guests from 24 countries. The comprehensive cultural programme includes seminars, discussions, and meetings, along with a dedicated children's programme featuring educational, recreational, and artistic activities such as theatre, drawing workshops, and competitions. (QNA)

Design Doha debuts in Dubai

Design Doha has made its debut in Dubai with a private event at Skooni Art Foundation & Residence, and a 'Reading Lounge' Activation at Dubai Design Week 2024, located at the Dubai Design District. Design Doha is a biennial for design excellence dedicated to celebrating and nurturing contemporary design from Qatar and the Mena region established by Qatar Museums (QM). 'Design Doha Comes to Dubai' marks the international launch of Arab Design Now, a first-of-its-kind title released in September this year, surveying Design in the Mena Region. The publication

details local and regional design talent across disciplines, from architectural and material innovations to contemporary crafts, furniture, fashion, graphic, and object design. Published by QM in collaboration with Silvana Editoriale, the exquisitely illustrated full colour 360-page book, edited by curator Rana Beiruti, celebrates the central presentation of the inaugural edition of Design Doha. Design Doha's presence in Dubai will highlight the significance of this publication and its role in shaping the future of design across the region. In a press statement, Design Doha acting director Fahad

al-Obaidly said: "Hosting such a special event and bringing the Arab Design Now publication to Dubai is a significant milestone for us, especially during one of the region's largest creative festivals. We hope that this activation will advance dialogues about design in the wider Mena region, while also emphasising the publication's crucial role in shaping the future of design." Organised by Design Doha and hosted by Skooni Art Foundation & Residence, the event featured a presentation by al-Obaidly, followed by a curated panel discussion, Living the Dream: Arab Design Now. Moderated by Design Doha



artistic director Glenn Adamson the discussion explored evolving narratives in Arab design, featuring Nada Debs, renowned for her unique craftsmanship, Omar al-Gur of Modu Method, and Nisreen and

Nermeen Abudail of Studio Naqsh. Continuing until November 10, Design Doha is activating a 'Reading Lounge' in Dubai Design District, letting visitors experience the essence of contemporary Arab



(From left) Nada Debs, Glenn Adamson, Fahad al-Obaidly and Nisreen and Nermeen Abudail.

design while engaging with the book and its key themes. The Art Jameel Pop-Up Bookshop will offer the book for sale.

Shura Council participates in roundtable at WUF12 in Cairo

QNA
Cairo

The Shura Council participated yesterday in Cairo in the Parliamentarians Roundtable Meeting, part of the 12th World Urban Forum (WUF12), co-organised by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the UN Human Settlements Program. The Shura Council was represented by Council Member Ali bin Ahmed al-Kaabi. This meeting seeks to boost multi-level co-operation between parliaments and stakeholders to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, with a focus on the goals related to making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. The agenda included the role of parliamentarians in promoting legislation and policies that support sustainable urban development and ways to



enhance co-operation between the various stakeholders in urban affairs, with the attendees stressing the importance of developing legislative frameworks to encourage sustainable infrastructure, enhance energy efficiency, and adopt environmental solutions that support adaptation to climate change. The meeting aims to present actionable ideas to support legislation to achieve adequate housing and sustainable urban

development at the national and sub-national levels, with a focus on strengthening partnerships between parliamentarians and various parties such as civil society and the private sector. Participants exchanged experiences and lessons learned from previous urban development initiatives, with the aim of building a more inclusive and sustainable urban society that contributes to achieving the global goals for sustainable development.

Qatar condemns targeting of UNIFIL forces in Lebanon

Qatar has condemned, in the strongest terms, the attack on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which resulted in injuries among Malaysian personnel. Qatar considered the attack a blatant violation of international humanitarian law and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701. In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasised the need for an immediate and independent international investigation to uncover the details of this assault. It also called on the international community to take decisive measures to compel the Israeli occupation to immediately halt its aggressive attacks and repeated violations of international law. The ministry stressed the importance of regional and international efforts to stop Israeli aggression against Lebanon and to work in solidarity to prevent the region from descending into a full-scale regional war. The ministry expressed the State of Qatar's wishes for a swift recovery for the injured. **(QNA)**



Qatar pips Asian peers to secure seat in Interpol's executive body

QNA
London

Qatar has won a seat in the Executive Committee of the International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol), in a new international achievement added to its record of security achievements in Asia and the world.

This victory came during the 92nd General Assembly of Interpol in the Scottish city of Glasgow, United Kingdom, from Nov 4 to 7, in which the State of Qatar participated with a delegation to support its candidate headed by Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior for Security Affairs Sheikh Nayef bin Faleh bin Saud al-Thani, and a number of officials from the Ministry of Interior (MoI).

Lieutenant Colonel Ali Mohammed al-Ali, Director of the Arab and International Communications Department at the Ministry of Interior, was elected as a representative of the Asian seat. The elections witnessed strong competition between candidates from seven Asian countries, which reflects the great importance of this seat in strengthening the leadership role within the international organisation.



In a statement following the announcement of the results, Sheikh Nayef bin Faleh bin Saud al-Thani said that this achievement is the culmination of Qatar's vision in supporting regional and international peace and stability, and its efforts to enhance its position in major international organisations, especially in the areas of international security and police co-operation.

Sheikh Nayef stressed that this victory reflects the confidence that the international community gives to the State of Qatar, and its pioneering role in establishing effective security standards that

keep pace with the challenges of the era. The Executive Committee of the International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol) is the governing body responsible for supervising the implementation of the decisions of the General Assembly, and directing the work of the General Secretariat of Interpol.

The committee plays a pivotal role in ensuring the continuity of the effective management of the organisation, and meets three times a year to discuss and debate policies and trends that enhance security and international co-operation among member states.

Al-Khulaifi meets UK minister



HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi met in London yesterday with Minister for the Middle East and North Africa at the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Hamish Faulkner. The meeting dealt with discussing the strong relations between the State of Qatar and the United Kingdom, and the means to enhance them, the latest developments in Gaza and Lebanon, ways to de-escalate, in addition to a number of issues of joint interest. **(QNA)**



Conference on Andalusian legacy and civilisation ends on high note

By Shafeeq Alingal
Granada

The international conference on 'The Andalusian Legacy and Civilisation: from its Birth to Contemporary Transformations', concluded yesterday at Euro Arab Foundation in Granada, Spain, after witnessing discussions to revive the legacy of Al Andalus.

The conference's second and final day hosted academia deliberating the glorious past of Al Andalus and the impact of its expansive legacy on Europe. The day started with a session 'Andalusian Culture and Social Interaction: Schools, Communities and Ethnicities'. Chaired by Prof Dr Barbara Ruiz-Bejarano - honorary professor, at Unesco Chair, Islam, Culture and Society at Alicante University, the session discussed lessons of Andalusian legacy while shedding light on features of social interaction among ethnicities in Andalusia.

The session also discussed Andalusian intellectual schools and their impact on cultural interaction and knowledge bridging and

Granada's cultural and intellectual heritage. Prof Dr Mustapha Cherif, Dr Mohamed El Amarti, Dr Azzeddine Mamiche and Prof Dr Abdullah Ibrahim al-Bussabah participated.

The second session, on 'Andalusian Tangible and Intangible Heritage: Diverse Images of Cultural Creativity', was chaired by Dr Fathi Hasan Fayad Malkawi, regional director, the International Institute of Islamic Thought.

Discussed were Al Andalus' legacy in literature and translation with a focus on the early translations of Holy Qur'an and the impacts of the literary works of Al Andalus on Europe. The session also highlighted translation's contributions to the cultural interaction between Islamic civilisation and Spain. Prof Dr Abdala El Khatib, Dr Mohamed Ouahmane, Prof Dr Ali Abdulrauf and Dr Mohamed Iqbal presented papers.

The third session, on 'The Role of the Andalusian Legacy in Strengthening Relations Between the Muslim World and Spain' was chaired by Dr Khalid Fathalrahman, director, Icesco Centre for Civilisational Dialogue. Prof Dr Naozaid Abdulrahman, Abuyassir

Mbourali Kami, Dr Zubair Hudaawi and Prof Dr Moulay Mhammed participated.

The closing session was chaired by Pro Dr Abdelkader Bakhouche, chair of the Scientific Committee of the Conference, Qatar University. The session marked honouring of the participants. The conference was organised by the Icesco Chair for the Alliance of Civilisations at the College of Sharia and Islamic Studies at QU in co-operation with the Quality and Sustainable Development Foundation, Euro Arab Foundation for Higher Studies, Qatar Committee for the Alliance of Civilisations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Icesco), Journal of Sharia and Islamic Studies - Kuwait University and the International Institute of Islamic Thought and the Institute for Philosophical Studies - Europe, Brussels.

The conference featured speakers from Qatar, Spain, Kuwait, Oman, the US, Canada, India, Kenya, Jordan, Morocco, Algeria, Iraq and Turkiye in various sessions.

Ras Laffan Falconry Championship kicks off

Ras Laffan Falconry Championship competitions organised by the Qatari Falconers Association kicked off yesterday, after being postponed by a day due to adverse weather.

The competitions will be held in Marmi in Sealine (Al Tala'a Championship) and Al Gannas Association Centre field in Ras Laffan (Al Da'wa, Promising Falconer and Young Falconer Competitions). They will continue until November 13.

Mutab al-Qahtani, director of Al Gannas Association Championships and Marmi Festival, said: "The Tala'a Competitions for Groups 1-7 and the Da'wa Farkh Al Hor will give the start signal for the championship."

Today the qualifiers for Al-Tala'a competition for groups from 8-14 and the qualifiers for Al-Da'wa competition for the category (Gir Shaheen chick) will be held.



Phase One of Water Taxi Project complete

From Page 1

A MoT statement explained that work is underway to select a project operator and the types of ferries for transporting passengers. The second phase will cover other areas such as Katara, Old Doha Port, Hamad International Airport, and Al Wakra. The third phase is to connect the Old Doha Port with Al Khor in northern Qatar, passing by Lusail City and Simaisma, as per the studies to be conducted later.

The Water Taxi project contrib-

utes to supporting Qatar's tourism profile and Qatar Tourism's plans and efforts by promoting domestic travel by ferries.

At the MoT booth at Qatar Boat Show, also on display are a package of new digital services now available for vessels at the MoT website, automatic identification system (AIS) used on ships for better safety and for easy tracking process during inspection operations, and Skipper Plus, a moisture meter for wooden boats and fibreglass vessels to ensure the body of the vessel is in good

shape and condition and helps reduce maintenance costs on the long run.

On the sidelines of the event, the MoT is holding two panel discussions in association with the International Maritime Organisation. The first will focus on raising awareness of the multiple types of boats for purposes of safe navigation and the second about the reliability of unmanned ships and in what way the technological advancements are good for smaller boats and leisure boats.





Captivating



Glistening droplets and the interplay of light and shade on a water lily leaf in a Doha garden create a captivating frame. PICTURE: Gulf Times news editor Bonnie James (Instagram: the.explorer7).

SLMQ hosts annual symposium

The Sri Lankan Majlis Qatar (SLMQ), recently hosted its 21st Annual Symposium, with participation from member families, community leaders, professionals, sponsors and guests.

The event themed 'Collective Responsibility' underscored SLMQ's dedication to empowering communities and driving meaningful social development.

In his welcome address, president Abdul Rahman highlighted SLMQ's impact on education, welfare and community initiatives, through various projects in Qatar and Sri Lanka.

He recalled vital initiatives including relief efforts during natural disasters, tsunami aid and Covid-19 support for Sri Lankan hospitals.

The event recognised the achievements of SLMQ members' children, for their academic degrees, pro-

fessional certifications and religious accolades.

The symposium featured pre-recorded video messages from well known scholars who shared insights on 'Collective Responsibility' from Islamic and cultural perspectives, motivating the audience to embrace unity, empathy, and shared responsibility.

Outgoing Sri Lankan ambassador Mafaz Mohideen was the chief guest. He lauded SLMQ's significant contributions to community cohesion and social development.

Other highlights included the relaunch of SLMQ's website, unveiling a commemorative souvenir and a special video presentation tracing SLMQ's journey from 2001 to 2024.

Chief event co-ordinator Ayoub Fazil proposed a vote of thanks.



Cricket league logo released



The logo launch for the Indian Pharma Cricket League took place at the Wasif Workers Cricket Ground as part of Sports Fiesta 2024, organised by the Indian Pharmacist Association Qatar (Ipaq). The logo was unveiled by Abdul Rahiman Eriyal, Shamnad, and Sameer K. I. Ashraf Nellinuma, Shanawaz, Abdul Karim, Sameer, Muhammad Nawaz, Aziz, Prasad, Anuresha, Latif, Suhail, Anu Koshi, Naveen, Ahmad, Rasool, Safwan were present. The league, structured with 20 matches across four groups, will kick off tomorrow at Al Sadd Cricket Ground.



Amuaq marks Sir Syed Day 2024



The Qatar Chapter of the Alumni of India's Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) celebrated the 207th birth anniversary of the university's founder Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.

Prof Dr Abbas Ali Mahdi, vice-chancellor of Era Medical University, Lucknow, was the chief guest, and Atif Hanif, author of *Discovering AMU* the special invitee.

Bangladesh ambassador Nazrul Islam, Unesco chair for water technology and Qatar University faculty member Prof

Javaid Zaidi, Engineers Australia president Asif Rahmany, Indian Cultural Centre official Subramanya Hebbagelu, RJ Obaid Tahir, RJ Sarwar and RJ Kabir of FM 107, Red Dot Films director Shadab Khan and prominent businessman Saad al-Sulaiti were among the guests.

More than 220 people including children attended the event anchored by Nazia and Nuzhat.

Haleema Khan started the programme with a recitation from the Holy Qur'an.

The national anthems of Qatar and India were played. Amuaq president Dr Syed Jaffery welcomed the gathering, presented the annual report and announced two new scholarships - Prof Mahdi Hasan Memorial scholarship honouring noted Professor of Anatomy at the JN Medical College, AMU, for the students of Business & Entrepreneurship in memory of the late patron Sabih Bukhari.

Sanaullah of Gulf Lights has supported the education endeavours.

A moment of silence was observed for the martyrs of Gaza.

A presentation on Artificial Intelligence presentation was given by Naheed Akhtar followed by a speech on sport by Jasim and poetic recitation by Shadma Khan and Ali Imran, who took the audience on a trip down the memories of AMU.

A children's skit, 'Beyond the Walls' portrayed the importance of education in life.

A book written by Atif Haneef was

launched by the chief guest who spoke about his AMU days and his journey in establishing the Era Medical University.

Dr Aamir Ahmad was honoured for his recent ranking among the top 0.4% of scientists worldwide. Dr Hasan Rizvi was celebrated for his contributions to establishing the Royal College of Pathologists Exam Centre at Hamad Medical Corporation in Qatar.

The AMU Tarana was followed by a vote of thanks by Samia Khan.

Ideal School starts evening session



Ideal Indian School has launched the evening session, from 1pm to 6pm, for students from all grades. Addressing the school assembly, principal Shaik Shamim Sahab welcomed the new students and emphasised the school's commitment to delivering

an excellent learning experience. The school has made all the necessary arrangements for the evening session, including classrooms, appointment of teaching and non-teaching staff, and transport among others, a statement added.

IIS team returns from Nasa trip



A group of 25 students from various grades and three teachers from Ideal Indian School, returned to Qatar after a 11-day educational tour of the US.

The students participated in a three-day Space Training Programme at the Kennedy Space Center, Florida, where they engaged in a Space Trek Rocketry Workshop. They learned the fundamentals of rocket design and refined their skills in theoretical and experimental data collection and analysis.

A highlight of their experience was an interactive session and lunch with astronaut Mike Baker, a seasoned space mission veteran who flew aboard the space shuttle.

He shared captivating stories about his time in space, inspiring the students with his remarkable experiences. Besides Nasa, the group also visited famous places across the US, including New York City, Washington, D.C., Niagara Falls, Universal Studios and Disneyland.

Chess tournament held

Ramaswami Rakappan won an open chess tournament organised by Focus International Qatar Region. Muhammed Sadeed and Jawahar Bharathan were the first and second runner-up, respectively. Shivansh Joshi, Shrutika Sunil, Zaheer K P, Tamin Shah, and Ashraf C H received consolation prizes. Focus Qatar Region CEO Harris P T, COO Ameer Shaji, and tournament manager Sajeer Punathil distributed the prizes.



Indian Cultural Centre observes Ayurveda Day



Indian Cultural Centre (ICC), under the aegis of the embassy of India, celebrated Ayurveda Day. Embassy of India's deputy chief of mission, Sandeep Kumar, was the chief guest. Dr Fazeeha Ashkar, the keynote speaker, elaborated on the topic 'Ayurveda Innovation for Global Health'. ICC office bearers and community leaders were present.

KEF Toastmasters, Gavel Club celebrate 14th anniversary

KEF Toastmasters and KEF Gavel Club organised a 14th anniversary event, collaborating with the centennial celebrations of Toastmasters International. KEF Club president Remi Raji and KEF Gavel Club president Rohan Nair opened the event anchored by Shabir Hameed and Leena Ollachery. Pradip Sadiye felicitated past presidents. Founder president Raghavan Menon spoke. Lazim Sidhique, Hamna Azad, Najla Azad, Ridha and Paavni's gave music performances. Nivedya and Christa co-ordinated and conducted games. Ajinas Arangatt was the event co-ordinator. Bindu Pillai conducted the centennial quiz. District 116 director Sabeena M K, Division D director Smitha Bindu Punnen, Doha Malayalam Toastmasters Club president Mohammed Ajmal and families of the KEF members were present.



LAW AND ORDER

UK Labour MP charged with assault over brawl video

A lawmaker suspended from Britain's ruling Labour party after footage emerged appearing to show him punching a man in the street has been charged with assault, police said yesterday. Mike Amesbury, who was first elected in 2017, is accused of assaulting a 45-year-old man in Frodsham, on October 26, Cheshire police said. Labour suspended Amesbury after the Mail Online published a video seemingly showing Amesbury punching the man to the ground and then continuing to attack him, while onlookers shouted "Stop it". Prime Minister Keir Starmer described the footage as "shocking" and said his party had moved "very swiftly" to suspend the lawmaker.

CONTROVERSY

Australia's ambassador deletes comments on Trump

Australia's ambassador in Washington, Kevin Rudd, deleted comments he previously made about Donald Trump after the Republican's election win, saying yesterday they did not reflect the view of the Australian government. Rudd, a former prime minister, had previously made the comments about Trump in his capacity as the head of a US-based think tank, a statement on his personal website said. "Out of respect for the office of president of the US, and following the election of President Trump, ambassador Rudd has now removed these past commentaries from his personal website and social media channels," the statement said.

PEOPLE

Thai PM meets Myanmar junta chief at China summit

Thai Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra met Myanmar's junta chief on the sidelines of a regional summit in China yesterday, in a rare overseas trip by a general grappling with a civil war at home. Myanmar's ruling military has been battling against a rebellion that erupted after it seized power in a 2021 coup and has largely ignored calls by its Southeast Asian neighbours to cease hostilities and enter into dialogue with its opponents. "We had a private conversation and there was nothing unexpected," Paetongtarn said of her meeting with Min Aung Hlaing during an interview with Thai reporters. "I offered our goodwill to cultivate peace."

TRAGEDY

Nepali team retrieves body of Slovak climber

Nepali rescuers yesterday retrieved the body of a top Slovak climber who died last week after climbing the 23,734-foot Langtang Lirung peak in the Himalayas. Ondrej Huserka, a member of the Slovak national mountaineering team who had climbed in the Alps, Patagonia and Himalayas, fell into a crevasse during his descent last Thursday. Initial search and rescue efforts were hampered by bad weather. "The long line team was dropped on the mountain and they identified the area where he fell. They were able to pull him out today," Subin Thakuri of 14 Summits Expedition, who helped organise the climb, said.

India raids offices of vendors using Amazon, Flipkart online platforms

Reuters
New Delhi

India's financial crime agency has raided offices of some sellers operating Amazon and Walmart-owned Flipkart in an investigation into alleged violations of foreign investment rules, three government sources said yesterday. The searches came weeks after India's antitrust body had found that the two companies and their sellers violated competition laws by giving preference to select sellers on their online platforms. Both the companies have maintained that they comply with the Indian laws.

The raids are the latest setback for Amazon and Flipkart, which count India as a key growth market where e-commerce sales are rapidly rising.

One senior government source said raids were being carried out in New Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru, but did not give names of sellers whose offices were being raided.

"The raids on sellers of Amazon and Flipkart is a part of ED's probe ... for alleged violations of foreign exchange laws," said the first government source with direct knowledge.

Amazon and Flipkart did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

A representative of the financial crime agency said he had no immediate comment.

A second government source

said the raids were being conducted at 19 locations in India, and the agency was investigating how e-commerce platforms indirectly influence the sale price of goods, in violation of Indian laws, and do not provide a level playing field for all sellers.

The enforcement directorate agency has been investigating both the e-commerce giants for years for allegedly bypassing foreign investment laws that strictly regulate multi-brand retail and restrict such companies from operating a marketplace for sellers.

The first government source yesterday pointed out that it was conducting the latest searches on the observations of the antitrust body in its recently concluded investigation of the two companies.

Those Amazon and Flipkart antitrust investigation reports from August, which are not public, say the platforms "had end-to-end control over the inventory and the sellers are just name lending enterprises."

A Reuters investigation in 2021, based on internal Amazon papers, showed the company exerted significant control over the inventory of some of the biggest sellers, even though Indian laws prohibit foreign players from holding inventory of products.

India's commerce minister in August publicly slammed Amazon, saying its investments in India have often been used to cover its business losses, adding that such losses "smell of predatory pricing."

Dengue fever spreads in Bangladesh



Patients and relatives crowd the dengue ward inside the Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The country is struggling to tamp down a surge in dengue cases as climate change turns the disease into a year-round crisis, leaving some paediatric wards packed with children squeezed two to a bed. "Normally, around this time, we would expect the flow of patients to ebb," said Fazlul Haque, walking through a crowded ward at Dhaka's Shaheed Sohrawardi Medical College. "For the last three weeks, the number of dengue cases has been increasing".

Mercedes improves pollution management at India plant

Reuters
New Delhi

Mercedes-Benz has improved wastewater and air pollution management at its only car factory in India after officials detected environment law lapses in recent inspections, government documents show.

Pollution control officials in the western state of Maharashtra signed off on Mercedes' compliance with environment norms in an October 11 visit report.

The clearance is a relief for the German carmaker, India's top luxury car seller, which

announced plans in January to launch over a dozen models and invest \$24m in the country this year.

In August, state officials made surprise checks at the Mercedes plant in Chakan, Maharashtra, and found the company was discharging untreated effluent and emissions, "causing water and air pollution into the environment," according to a government notice sent to Mercedes on September 19.

The notice recorded a total of nine non-compliances by the German carmaker, including inadequate maintenance of its sewage treatment plant, the presence of pollution causing compounds near its paint booth and failure to install some required emission

control devices. The accusations triggered a political storm in India's richest state as opposition lawmakers said it could damage the region's reputation as a major hub for foreign companies.

Industrial pollution is a major concern in India, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi and state governments have set stringent targets to limit air and water pollution caused by factories and vehicles.

The company did not respond to requests for comment on Indian officials noting improvements at its plant. But it said in a statement this week that it continued to co-operate with officials and had addressed all queries raised.

Anger at attempt to reframe New Zealand's founding document

A bid to reinterpret a centuries-old treaty between New Zealand's Indigenous Maori and European settlers was tabled in parliament yesterday, sparking consternation despite the slim chance of it becoming law. The bill would seek to reframe the Treaty of Waitangi, seen as New Zealand's founding document. The text was signed in 1840 and brought peace between 540 Maori chiefs and British forces, establishing New Zealand as a colony. Its principles today underpin efforts to foster partnership between Indigenous and non-Indigenous New Zealanders and protect the interests of the Maori community. But a bill introduced by David Seymour's libertarian ACT party would seek to more narrowly define the treaty's principles in legal documents. Critics say the real aim is to unravel education and other programmes for Maori citizens, to divide New Zealanders and to foment identity politics. The move is almost certain to fail.

Prince William visits fishing community



Britain's Prince William, Prince of Wales, takes part in a traditional fish braai lunch with Heidi Klum, Winnie Harlow, Billy Porter and Tobe Nwigwe at Kalk Bay Harbour, near Cape Town, South Africa, yesterday. Prince William visited a fishing community in Cape Town on the final day of a climate-focused trip to South Africa planned around his multi-million dollar environmental prize.

Thousands evacuated as typhoon hits Philippines

AFP
Manila

Typhoon Yinxing slammed into the northeast tip of the Philippines yesterday, uprooting trees and sending building materials flying, weeks after another storm left at least 150 people dead.

More than 21,000 people across 200 villages in Cagayan province were evacuated in the hours before the mid-afternoon landfall, provincial disaster official Rueli Rapsing said.

"There is debris flying all around. Here in Gonzaga, an entire hamburger stand flew off and the winds are ripping open the shop doors at the public market," Rapsing said from Gonzaga, a town near coastal Santa Ana.

Yinxing is the third storm in

less than a month to threaten the Philippines after severe Tropical Storm Trami and Super Typhoon Kong-rey together left 158 people dead, the national disaster agency said, with most of that tally attributed to Trami.

Packing maximum sustained wind speeds of 175kms per hour and gusts up to 240kph, the typhoon struck the coastal town of Santa Ana and nearby areas, unleashing heavy rain and ripping off parts of houses.

Rapsing said the storm had uprooted trees and authorities were trying to confirm reports that the Santa Ana police station had been damaged. No casualties were immediately reported.

The Cagayan provincial government's disaster response was being conducted from a public building in Gonzaga, he said.

Santa Ana officials could not be reached for comment.

Australia moves to ban children under 16 from social media

AFP
Sydney

Australia's prime minister yesterday vowed to ban children under 16 from social media, saying the pervasive influence of platforms like Facebook and TikTok was "doing real harm to our kids".

The tech giants would be held responsible for enforcing the age limit and face hefty fines if regulators notice young users slipping through the cracks, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said.

Australia is among the vanguard of nations trying to clean up social

media, and the proposed age limit would be among the world's strictest measures aimed at children.

"This one is for the mums and dads. Social media is doing real harm to kids and I'm calling time on it," Albanese told reporters outside parliament.

The new laws would be presented to state and territory leaders this week, before being introduced to parliament in late November.

Once passed, the tech platforms would be given a one-year grace period to figure out how to implement and enforce the ban.

"The onus will be on social media platforms to demonstrate they are taking reasonable steps to prevent

access," Albanese said, explaining what he dubbed a "world-leading" reform.

"The onus won't be on parents or young people."

Meta, the parent company of Facebook and Instagram, said it would "respect any age limitations the government wants to introduce".

But Antigone Davis, Meta's head of safety, said Australia should think carefully about how these restrictions were implemented.

She said poorly drafted laws "risk making ourselves feel better, like we have taken action, but teens and parents will not find themselves in a better place".

Snapchat pointed to a state-

ment from industry body DIGI, which warned that a ban could stop teenagers from accessing "mental health support".

"Swimming has risks, but we don't ban young people from the beach, we teach them to swim between the flags," a DIGI spokeswoman said.

TikTok said it had nothing to add at this stage.

Once celebrated as a means of staying connected and informed, social media platforms have been tarnished by cyberbullying, the spread of illegal content, and election-meddling claims.

"I get things popping up on my system that I don't want to see. Let

alone a vulnerable 14-year-old," Albanese said.

"Young women see images of particular body shapes that have a real impact."

Communications Minister Michelle Rowland said social media companies were repeatedly "falling short" in their obligations.

"Social media companies have been put on notice. They need to ensure their practices are made safer," she told reporters at a press briefing alongside Albanese.

Rowland said companies like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and Elon Musk's X would face financial penalties if they flouted the laws.

While Rowland did not detail how

big these would be, she suggested fines of US\$600,000 (A\$1m) were well below the mark for companies boasting yearly revenues in the tens of billions of dollars.

Analysts have expressed doubt it would be technically feasible to enforce a strict age ban.

"We already know that present age verification methods are unreliable, too easy to circumvent, or risk user privacy," University of Melbourne researcher Toby Murray said earlier this year.

A series of exemptions would be hashed out for platforms such as YouTube that teenagers may need to use for school work or other reasons.



Biden calls for 'bringing down temperature'

AFP
Washington

President Joe Biden urged Americans yesterday to lower the political temperature after Donald Trump's crushing election win over Kamala Harris, saying in a conciliatory address to the nation that he would ensure a peaceful transition of power.

In a solemn speech from the White House, Biden also said the result should "lay to rest" doubts about the integrity of the US election system fuelled by Trump's refusal to acknowledge his own 2020 defeat by the Democrat.

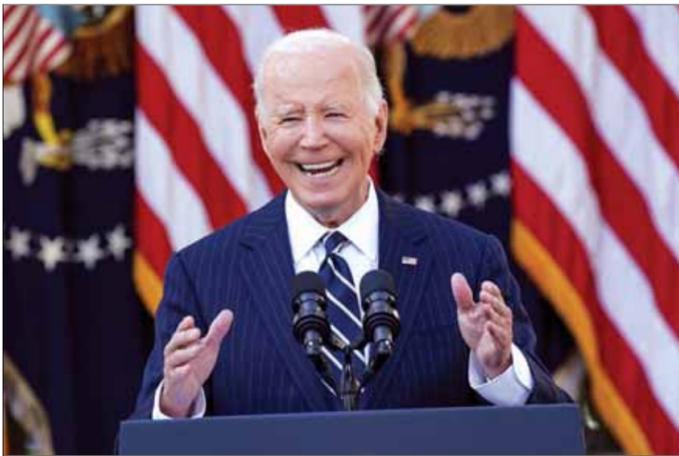
"Something I hope we can do, no matter who you voted for, is see each other not as adversaries but as fellow Americans. Bring down the temperature," Biden said.

Staff rose to their feet, cheered and clapped as Biden arrived in the famed Rose Garden. The 81-year-old dropped out of the race against Trump in July and handed the Democratic nomination to Harris, his vice-president.

Biden said he had called Republican Trump to congratulate the twice-impeached former president and assure him there would be a "peaceful and orderly" transition.

"On January 20, we'll have a peaceful transfer of power here in America," said Biden, whose inauguration Trump had refused to attend.

The outgoing president also urged supporters not to lose hope after the re-election of Trump, who is likely to dismantle



US President Joe Biden delivers remarks in the Rose Garden of the White House in Washington yesterday. (Reuters)

Vote tally: Trump 295, Harris 226

The final state calls are coming in for the US presidential election, with President-elect Donald Trump at 295 electoral votes, well past the 270 needed for victory, and Democratic Vice-President Kamala Harris at 226, US networks said. Maine was the latest state to be called, with three electoral votes going to Harris and one going to Trump. US media have declared Trump the winner in more than half of the 50 US states, including key battlegrounds Georgia, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin, all of which voted Democratic in the last election. Final calls have yet to be made by two outlets in Arizona and Nevada.

many of Biden's policies as soon as he returns to the White House.

"Remember, a defeat does not mean we are defeated," he said.

Biden's comments were in stark contrast to billionaire Trump, whose election defeat denial four years ago culminated in the violent January 6, 2021 assault by Trump's supporters on the US Capitol.

Biden has invited Trump to meet at the White House, for what would be their first encounter since Biden's disastrous debate performance against Trump in June that forced him out of the race.

World leaders have swiftly pledged to work with Trump, despite concerns in much of the globe about his nationalist "America First" approach and pledges to slap huge tariffs on foreign imports.

Chinese President Xi Jinping said Beijing and Washington must find a way to "get along" in a message to Trump, calling for "stable" bilateral ties.

Trump, who is at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, is now working on his transition team after an overwhelming victory that promises a radically transformed political landscape for the United States and the world.

His campaign said in a statement late Wednesday that "in the days and weeks ahead, President Trump will be selecting personnel to serve our nation under his leadership."

Robert F Kennedy Jr., a leading figure in the anti-vaccine movement for whom Trump has pledged a "big role" in health-care, told NBC News on Wednesday that "I'm not going to take away anybody's

vaccines." But the former independent candidate, who dropped out of the race to back Trump, reiterated that the Trump administration would recommend removing fluoride from the US water supply.

The world's richest man, Elon Musk, could also be in line for a job after enthusiastically backing Trump. The incoming president has said he will ask the SpaceX, Tesla and X boss to audit the US government to cut waste.

US voters backed Trump's hard-line right-wing policies and rejected Biden and Harris's record, especially on the economy and inflation, exit polls showed.

Trump's victory makes him the first convicted felon and oldest man to be elected US president, and came after a turbulent campaign in which he escaped two assassination attempts and rode out the transfer from Biden to Harris.

Armed with a sweeping mandate, Trump 2.0 is set to dismantle huge chunks of Biden's legacy.

Trump could start by halting the incumbent's billions of dollars in military aid for Ukraine's fight against Russia's 2022 invasion, having previously suggested he would pressure Kyiv to make a peace deal.

Trump will also return to the White House as a climate change denier, poised to take apart Biden's green policies with his pledge to "drill, baby, drill" for oil.

Ultimately Biden's legacy was supposed to be a Harris victory that would keep Trump out of power — but many Democrats feel he waited too long to step aside for his vice-president.

Russia 'can't be pressured but open to talks'

Reuters
Sochi

Russian President Vladimir Putin delivers a speech at the Valdai Discussion Club meeting in Sochi yesterday. (AFP)

Russian President Vladimir Putin said yesterday that it was pointless to try to put pressure on Russia but that Moscow was always ready to negotiate.

"It is useless to put pressure on us. But we are always ready to negotiate with full consideration of mutual legitimate interests. We have been calling for this and we are calling on all participants," Putin said.

Putin said that some in the West dreamed of a world without Russia because they sought world domination but that Russia had repeatedly stopped those who sought global domination.

He condemned the United States for seeking to inflict a strategic defeat on Russia in Ukraine and said a struggle was underway to shape a new world order as the Western-dominated post-Cold War era crumbled.

"We have come to a dangerous line," Putin told the Valdai discussion club in this Black Sea resort, a day after learning that Donald Trump had won the US presidential election.

"The calls of the West to inflict a strategic defeat on Russia, a country with the largest arsenal of nuclear weapons, demonstrates the exorbitant adventurism of Western politicians," said Putin.

The West had arrogantly sought to cast Russia as a defeated power after the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union, he said, describing the US-led NATO military alliance as an anachronism.

Russia, he said, did not consider Western civilisation to be the enemy despite attempts by the United States and its allies to isolate Moscow.

The world was changing in any case, he said, and many powerful countries did not want to isolate Russia.

"The former structure of the world is irrevocably disappearing, we can say it has already gone, and a serious, irreconcilable struggle is unfolding for the formation of a new one," Putin said.

"The world needs Russia, and no decisions by supposed superiors in Washington or Brussels can change that."

Europe exhorted to 'write own history' in shadow of Trump 2.0

AFP
Budapest

European leaders gathered in Budapest yesterday in search of a joint response to the threats of a new Donald Trump presidency — though the seat of powerhouse Germany was left empty by a deepening political crisis.

The leaders of the European Union were joined by others from the United Kingdom to Turkey, as well as Nato chief Mark Rutte and Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky, for the meeting of the European Political Community — to be followed by a summit of the 27-nation bloc.

"The future of Europe is in our hands," European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen said as she headed into the talks dominated by Trump's return to the White House. "We've shown that Europe can take responsibility by standing together."

On the agenda: Europe's security challenges, chief among them Russia's invasion of Ukraine, as well as conflict in the Middle East, migration, global trade and economic security — issues all thrown into sharp relief by the prospect of a disruptive second Trump presidency.

"This is a decisive moment in history for us Europeans," Macron told the gathering in opening remarks.

"Do we want to read the history written by others — the wars launched by Vladimir Putin, the US election, China's technological or trade choices," Macron asked. "Or do we want to write our own history? I think we have the strength to write it."

While Macron's tone was combative, he has been weakened by political troubles at home, as has the leader of the bloc's other heavyweight — Germany's Olaf Scholz — whose ruling coalition finally collapsed overnight, spelling uncertainty at a critical time for Europe.

In a stark illustration of the leadership void, Macron made his appeal in the absence of the German chancellor — who missed the day's talks due to the unfolding crisis, and was to catch up with leaders over dinner.

Most urgent among the challenges posed by Trump's return are the fear he could upend European security and pull the plug on support for Ukraine, while simultaneously unleashing a



(L-R) Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban, Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, French President Emmanuel Macron, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni chat with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (top) as they pose for a family photo during the European Political Community Summit in Budapest yesterday. (AFP)

trade war with steep tariffs on European goods.

Macron urged the continent to assert its strategic independence from the United States — and defend its interests over those of geopolitical rivals.

"We must not delegate forever our security to America," he said.

Nato's Rutte, who made a pitch to convince Trump to keep backing Kyiv, argued that North Korea's involvement in the conflict — and the transfer of Russian weapons technology to Pyongyang — directly threatened the United States. "I look forward to sit down with Donald Trump to discuss how we can face these threats collectively," said the alliance's new leader.

The Budapest meetings are being hosted by Hungary's Viktor Orban — one of Trump's rare close allies in the EU — who adopted a noticeably restrained tone as he joined calls for European unity.

Today's EU summit will focus on addressing the risk of Europe's economy falling dangerously behind major rivals the United States and China.

Trump's return will only intensify calls —

highlighted in a key report by former Italian leader Mario Draghi — for vitally needed new EU funding tools for defence and economic innovation, seen as critical to ensuring its sovereignty.

"The Europeans really have a knife at their throat," said political analyst Sebastian Mailard, of the Jacques Delors Institute. "The election result forces the EU to open its eyes."

But whether Trump's election will jolt the continent's leaders into action remains to be seen.

"I don't think they really prepared for this," said Guntram Wolff of the Bruegel think tank. "There is no fully discussed plan on what to do now — at the EU level, but also at the Franco-German level."

Yesterday's leaders' dinner is supposed to be devoted to the issue of transatlantic relations.

But beyond a bland statement acknowledging the result, Ian Lesser, vice-president at the German Marshall Fund of the United States think tank predicted it would be "very difficult for European leaders to produce a coherent reaction" at this stage.

Offering Putin concessions 'unacceptable', says Zelensky

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky yesterday said it would be "unacceptable" for Europe to offer the Kremlin concessions to halt its invasion of Ukraine.

Speaking to European leaders at a summit in Hungary, Zelensky blasted those who were urging him to give in to some of President Vladimir Putin's hardline demands, and urged Europe and the United States not to loosen ties following the election of Donald Trump.

"There has been much talk about the need to yield to Putin, to back down, to make some concessions ... It's unacceptable for Ukraine and unacceptable for all Europe," Zelensky said.

He accused some European leaders, without specifying who, of "strongly" pushing Ukraine to make "concessions to Putin" — something Kyiv says would only embolden the Kremlin leader and encourage further aggression.

"We need sufficient weapons, not support in talks. Hugs with Putin won't help. Some of you have been hugging him for 20 years, and things are only getting worse," Zelensky said.

The summit was being hosted by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who has repeatedly railed against the West's multi-billion dollar support to Kyiv. Zelensky also urged Europe and the US to preserve their strong ties following Trump's election victory this week.

The Republican has repeatedly criticised American aid to Ukraine and said he could end the war within hours of taking office.

"We do hope that America will become stronger. This is the kind of America that Europe needs. And a strong Europe is what America needs. This is the connection between allies that must be valued and cannot be lost," Zelensky said.

As he repeated a call for more Western arms for his struggling army, Zelensky said Europe had to realise that North Korea was effectively "waging war" on the continent.

Scholz urged to call election after coalition collapses

German opposition parties and business groups yesterday urged Chancellor Olaf Scholz to trigger a new election quickly to minimise political uncertainty after his rocky three-way coalition collapsed.

The coalition fell apart on Wednesday when years of tensions culminated in a row over how to plug a multi-billion-euro hole in the budget and revive Europe's largest economy, headed for its second year of contraction.

The break-up creates a leadership vacuum at the heart of the European Union just as it seeks a united response to Tuesday's election of Donald Trump as US president on issues ranging from possible new US trade tariffs to Russia's war in Ukraine and the future of the US-led NATO alliance.

The chancellor said he would hold a confidence vote in January, which he would probably lose, triggering a new election by the end of March — six months ahead of schedule. Friedrich Merz, leader of the opposition conservatives, who are leading in nationwide polls, called for a vote of confidence "by the beginning of next week at the latest", in comments echoed by other opposition parties.

An election could take place in late January,



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, newly appointed Finance Minister Joerg Kukies, Transport Minister Volker Wissing, outgoing Finance Minister Christian Lindner, outgoing German Justice Minister Marco Buschmann, and outgoing Education Minister Bettina Stark-Watzinger stand in Bellevue Palace on the day Kukies receives certificate of appointment and the outgoing ministers receive certificate of dismissal, in Berlin, yesterday. (Reuters)

he said. "We simply cannot afford to have a government without a majority in Germany for several months now, followed by an election campaign for several more months and then possibly several weeks of coalition negotiations," Merz told reporters. German industry, reeling from high costs and fierce Asian competition, also urged Scholz's government yesterday to arrange an election as soon as possible.

The uncertainty caused German borrowing costs to jump, with the benchmark 10-year yield rising as much as 10 basis points to its highest since July. A key market gauge that signals debt risk as it falls dropped to its lowest on record. Scholz delayed his departure for Thursday's European Union summit in Budapest due to the crisis at home and cancelled his attendance at the next United Nations climate change summit.

Scholz, of the centre-left Social Democrats (SPD), said he had fired his finance minister, Christian Lindner of the fiscally conservative Free Democrats (FDP), for obstructing a resolution of budget disputes.

The last straw was his opposition to Scholz's plan to ease debt limits in order to increase support for Ukraine in the 2025 budget by €3bn (\$3.25bn).



The Da'wah of the prophets

Calling to Allah is the way of the Messenger Muhammad, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam* (may Allah exalt his mention), and his followers, as Allah, the Most High, Says (what means): "Say [O Muhammad]: 'This is my way; I invite to Allah with insight, I and those who follow me. And exalted is Allah; and I am not of those who associate others with Him.'" [Qur'an 12:108]

Calling to Allah was the mission of all the Messengers and their followers, in order to bring the people out of darkness into light, from *Kufr* (unbelief) to true *Eeman* (faith), from *Shirk* (polytheism) to *Tawheed* (monotheism), and from the Fire to Paradise. This call to Allah rests upon firm pillars, and is established upon foundations which are absolutely essential. If any of these are missing, the *Da'wah* (call to Islam) will not be correct and will not produce the desired results - no matter how much time or effort is expended - and this is the reality which we witness with regard to many of the present-day calls which are not supported by those pillars and built upon those foundations. These pillars, which support the correct *Da'wah*, are clearly shown in the Book (the Qur'an) and the *Sunnah* (prophetic tradition), and can be summarised as follows:

1. Knowledge of that which one calls to:

Since the ignorant person is not suitable to be a *Da'ee* (caller), Allah, the Most High, said to His Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, (what means): "Say [O Muhammad]: 'This is my way; I invite to Allah with insight (*Baseerah*), I and those who follow me. And exalted is Allah; and I am not of those who associate others with Him...'" [Qur'an 12:108] '*Baseerah*' is knowledge. So the caller is certain to face those who are scholars of misguidance, those who will attack him with doubts and futile arguments in order to rebut the truth. Allah, the Most High, Says (what

means): "...And argue with them in a way that is best..." [Qur'an 16:125]

2. Acting in accordance with that which he calls to:

This is so that he will be a good example - his actions attesting to his words, and leaving no excuse for the opponents of the truth. Allah, the Most High, informs us that His Prophet Shu'ayb, may Allah exalt his mention, said to his people (what means): "...I do not intend to differ from you in that which I have forbidden to you; I only intend to reform as much as I am able..." [Qur'an 11:88]

3. Purity of intention (*Al-Ikhlas*):

Da'wah should be made purely and sincerely, seeking Allah's pleasure to seek the Face of Allah (and seeking His Reward) - not for show, repute, status, leadership, nor desiring worldly goals. If any of these goals adulterate it, the call is no longer for Allah; rather it is for one's own benefit or for the attainment of worldly goals. Allah informs us that His Prophets said to their people (what means): "...I ask of you for it [i.e., this message] no payment..." [Qur'an 6:90] And in other verse Allah repeats it (what means): "...I ask not of you for it any wealth..." [Qur'an 11:29]

Let us take a glimpse at the way in which two of the well-known Prophets, Nooh (Noah) and Ibraheem (Abraham), may Allah exalt their mention, called to Allah:

Nooh:

The name of Prophet Nooh, may Allah exalt his mention, has been mentioned in the Qur'an 45 times. Let us recall some of these verses and chapters. Allah the Most High and Exalted Says (what means): "And We certainly sent Nooh to his people, and he remained among them a thousand years, and the flood seized them while they were wrongdoers." [Qur'an 29:14] And: "Indeed, We sent Nooh to his people, [saying]:



"Warn your people before there comes to them a painful punishment. He said: 'O my people! Indeed I am to you a clear warner.'" [Qur'an 71:1-2] And so came to pass a tradition by Allah, the High and Exalted, in

which the propagation faced trials, ordeals, etc. Along with that, barriers were erected by the enemies of Allah as a means of standing in the way of the call to monotheism and towards its callers.

This is the lengthy history of humankind, from the time of the Prophet Nooh, may Allah exalt his mention, to our present day; full of dedicated powers standing in the path of *Da'wah* to Allah, the High and Exalted, being publicly insurgent and intimidating, without shame or discretion. Prophet Nooh, may Allah exalt his mention, remained among his people for a very long time, but none except a very few believed his call. So the rest were taken away by the flood, as they were wrong-doers.

Ibraheem:

Indeed Prophet Ibraheem, may Allah exalt his mention, was a true Muslim, avoiding any creed except that of Islam (submitting oneself to Allah only, and following His commands), and believing that Islam is the first and final message to the whole of humanity. This was also the belief of those who succeeded him from among his progeny: Isma'eel (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac), Ya'qoob (Jacob), and Al-Asbat (the twelve descendants of Jacob who form the twelve tribes of Israel), may Allah exalt their mention. They passed this creed on to Prophet Moosa (Moses) and 'Eesa (Jesus), may Allah exalt their mention, and the matter finally concluded with the Muslim descendents of Ibraheem, may Allah exalt his mention.

The story of Ibraheem, may Allah exalt his mention, in the Noble Qur'an shows us that the orderly conduct of living, the manner of morals, and principles of behaviour and ethics cannot be implemented and firmly upheld except if the '*Aqeedah*' (creed) connects the spirit with the body. Indeed, Ibraheem was at the peak of his youth when Allah, the High and Exalted, gave him matu-

ity and adulthood, as he denounced the worshipping of idols by destroying them. He ridiculed and mocked them, and finally smashed them into pieces. Not only that, but he also ridiculed the mentality of the people, and opposed them, saying (what means): "Uff to you and to what you worship instead of Allah. Then will you not use reason?" [Qur'an 21:67]

Thereafter, his people were overtaken by pride, which lead them to offence, just as it always does the tyrant oppressors and the powerless alike, when they have no proof. So, they resorted to outrageous, tyrannical force, and severe punishment. And Allah Says in the Qur'an about the words that they said to him (what means): "...Burn him and support your gods - if you are to act." [Qur'an 21:68]

But, Allah's mercy and assistance for those who call others to Him totally voided their sayings and nullified their plan (to throw Ibraheem, may Allah exalt his mention, into a blazing fire); Allah Says (what means): "We [i.e., Allah] said: 'O Fire! Be coolness and safety upon Ibraheem.'" [Qur'an 21:69] Take a good look at the 'father of prophets': He may Allah exalt his mention suffered, but was patient; and was gifted. In return, he was thankful, so the generous end (of this conflict) was befitting to him because of his graceful patience. From his progeny, the best of nations were sent out to the people, guiding with the Command of Allah, and establishing Allah's legislature upon guidance and light. So, similar action must be displayed by the people of *Da'wah*: being patient in the face of rejection, and in suffering in the Path of Allah.

Article source: <http://www.islamweb.net/mainpage/>



Morals in the life and Da'wah of the prophets

Adhering to *Tawheed* (Islamic monotheism) does not only apply to deeds but also to words. Some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, asked the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam* (may Allah exalt his mention), to make a tree for them that was known as *Thaat Anwaat* so that they could hang their weapons on it in order to seek its blessings as the disbelievers used to do. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, responded: "By Allah, you have said to me the same as the Children of Israel said to Moosa; they said: {O Moosa make for us a god just as they have gods}." [Ahmad and At-Tirmithi - Hasan Saheeh]

The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, was asked about soothsayers, and he said: "They know nothing." [Muslim] Even if soothsayers tell the truth once, they add to it a hundred lies.

The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, warned us many times about using graves as masjids (mosques). Allah The Almighty Says (what means): [And [He Revealed] that the masjids are for Allah, so do not invoke with Allah anyone.] [Qur'an 72:18] Therefore, it is the duty of all people to return in repentance to Allah The Almighty, submit themselves to Him, abandon any form of *Shirk*, *Kufr* (disbelief) or devoting any acts of worship to anything other than Allah and to believe in Him Alone. People must also know that *Tawheed* comes first, as one must give precedence to what is most important, whether in matters concerning seeking knowledge, work or *Da'wah*.

The claims that the disbelievers, polytheists and philosophers have set the measures and foundations for good morals and that they have good manners is vain, as what is bred in the bone will come out in the flesh. Also, those disbelievers and polytheists will only benefit from their good deeds in this worldly life, but in the Hereafter they would embody the verse (what means): [And We will regard what they have done of deeds and make them as dust dispersed.] [Qur'an 25:23]

[But those who disbelieved - their deeds are like a mirage in a lowland which a thirsty one thinks is water until, when he comes to it, he finds it is nothing but finds Allah before Him, and He will pay him in full his due; and Allah is swift in account.] [Qur'an 24:39]

Adhering to Legislation: All ways are blocked except that of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, and it is not permissible, or indeed possible, to become firmly established with good morals first, then try to interpret Islamic texts in a way that would suit these morals. Allah the Almighty Says (what means): {O you who have believed, do not put [yourselves] before Allah and His Messenger, but fear Allah.} [Qur'an 49:1] In fact, we are required to derive our methodology, principles, and morals from the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, without permitting ourselves or others to neglect any of the Shari'ah texts. In this regard, we have to follow the example of the Prophet, *sallallahu*

'alaihi wa sallam, where we have many proofs. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, saw a man walking during pilgrimage supported by two men, so he asked about him. The people informed him that he had vowed to go on foot to perform pilgrimage. He said: "Allah is not in need of this old man's torturing himself." Then he told the people: "Order him to ride." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

Also, when the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, saw Abu Israel, may Allah be pleased with him, standing in the sun and not speaking, he asked the people about him. They said, "He has vowed that on this day he will keep standing, remain in the sun and keep silent." The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "Let him end his fast, speak, come in the shade and sit down." [Al-Bukhari] Sitting in the sun is a burden that does not bring the person closer to Allah the Almighty, and abstaining from speaking is how the previous nations used to fast, which is not a part of our *Shari'ah*. The proof of this is what the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "The one who believes in Allah and the Day of Judgment should say something good or remain silent."

Further proof is that when the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, knew that 'Abdullaah ibn 'Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, was fasting during the daytime and performing voluntary prayers throughout the night, which made him neglect the rights of his wife, he said to him: "Fast like my brother, Daawood, [Prophet David, may Allah exalt his mention], who would fast every other day and never fled from his enemies." [Muslim] It was also narrated that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "Your Lord has a right over you, and your wife has a right over you, so give each one his right." [Al-Bukhari]

Thus, a person must be just, moderate and careful regarding the different benefits in life and should maintain a good balance between them, without excessiveness or negligence. One must also take the requirements of the body and soul into consideration, without aloofness or committing excess, and should have a comprehensive view of giving every person his due right.

Another example is when three men went to the houses of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, asking about his acts of worship. When they were informed about it, it seemed as if they thought it was insufficient. Therefore, they said, "How can we compare ourselves to the Prophet *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, when his past and future sins have been forgiven?" Thereupon, one of them said, "I will offer voluntary prayers throughout the night and never sleep." Another said, "I will fast throughout the year and will not break my fast." The third said, "I will keep away from women and will never marry." When the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, was told about them, he mounted the pulpit and gathered the people, then he said: "Why are some

people saying such and such? I am the most knowledgeable and most fearful of Allah among you, yet I fast and break my fast, I offer voluntary night prayers and I sleep, and I marry women. Therefore, the one who does not follow my *Sunnah*, is not of my *Ummah*." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

The path that leads to Allah the Almighty and the Gardens of Pleasure is the way of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, that should not be exceeded. This way should be followed without innovations as the most perfect human is the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, and his *Sunnah* is the praised way that was followed by his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. The *Sunnah* is everything that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, did, said or approved of. It also includes any characteristic that was intended as a means of legislation for the *Ummah*. The one who turns away from the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, should be told as the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "The one who refrains from my *Sunnah*, is not of my *Ummah*." The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, would say: "If someone innovates something that is not in harmony with the principles of our religion, that thing is rejected." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim] It was narrated that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "Every innovation is deviation, and every deviation is in Hell."

According to Ash-Shaatibi, may Allah have mercy upon him, an innovation is an invented way in the religion that is falsely attributed to the *Shari'ah*, even though it is done with the intention of worshipping Allah The Almighty. Innovations are more preferable to Iblees (Satan) than sins, and the one who does them is among those to whom the evil of their deeds has been made attractive, so he considers them good. 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, would say, "Every innovation is a deviation, even if people consider it to be good." Ibn Mas'ood, may Allah be pleased with him, would say, "Follow and do not innovate as you have what suffices you. Adhere to the way of the early generations [the Companions of the Prophet]."

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, followed this clear methodology and did not allow anyone to ruin *Tawheed* or Legislation. 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, for instance, would kiss the Black Stone and say, "By Allah, I know that you are just a stone that can neither harm nor benefit, and I would have never kissed you if I had not seen the Prophet *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, kissing you."

Any addition or deletion in acts of worship or behaviour that is done with the intention of drawing closer to Allah The Almighty, is a rejected innovation even if the intention was good as long as this act does not coincide with the *Shari'ah* of Allah The Almighty.

Article source: <http://www.islamweb.net/mainpage/>

Prayer for seeking rain from Allah

This prayer is a means of seeking rain from Allah, the Exalted, during times of drought. That is, people are naturally disposed to ask help from the One Who is able to support them; Allah Alone. This prayer was known among the previous nations. It is regarded also as one of the acts of the prophets, peace be upon them all, as Allah, the Exalted, Says (what means): "And [recall] when Moses prayed for water for his people..." [Qur'an 2: 60]

Similarly, the Seal of Prophets, Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam* (may Allah exalt his mention), performed prayer for rain for his people many times, and in many ways. In addition, Muslim scholars unanimously agree on the legality of such an act.

The prayer for rain is ordained during times of drought and times when rain fails, which causes harm to people. Then there is no way out except by supplicating their Lord and asking Him for water (rain). People may supplicate Allah in various ways. For instance, people may supplicate Allah in Prayer, whether in congregation or alone. They may also supplicate Him by invoking Him during the sermon of the *Jumu'ah* (Friday) Prayer, in which the Imam may invoke Allah, and Muslims say, "Aameen (Amen)".

Furthermore, it may be by invoking Allah, the Exalted, after performing prayers, or by supplicating Him in seclusions with neither prayer nor sermon. All such acts are related about the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*.

The Prayer for Rain is regarded as a stressed *Sunnah* (Prophetic tradition) as 'Abdullah Ibn Zayd, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, went out to invoke Allah for rain. He faced the *qiblah* (the direction of Ka'aba in Makkah), invoking Allah. Then he reversed his cloak and performed two *Rak'ahs* (units of prayer) and recited the Qur'an aloud in them." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

There are many *hadiths* in support of this practice.

The Rain Prayer is similar to that of the Eid Prayer concerning its relevant rulings and the place where it is performed. That is, it is viewed desirable to perform it in the place where the Eid Prayer is performed; outside the mosque. Moreover, its rulings and practices are the same as those of the Eid Prayer, namely the number of *Rak'ahs*, the loud recitation of the Qur'an, being performed before delivering the sermon, and the additional *Takbeers* (saying '*Allahu Akbar*') in the first and second *Rak'ahs* before the recitation of the Qur'an.

Ibn 'Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated: "The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, performed two *Rak'ahs* as he does in the Eid Prayer."

At-Tirmithi says that this is a *hasan* (good) and *saheeh* (authentic) *hadith*, and Al-Hakim and others view it as a *saheeh* (authentic) *hadith*, as well. The one performing the Rain Prayer is to recite the chapter of *Al-A'laa* in the first *Rak'ah*, and the chapter *Al-Ghashiyah* in the second. People are to perform it in a vast spacious place, away from the place of residence, as the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*,

did not perform it except in the desert. This is because performing it in such a place is a means of showing much need to Allah, the Exalted. When the Imam wants to proceed to perform the prayer for rain, he should start with reminding people of what may soften their hearts by mentioning Allah's reward and punishment. They should also be commanded to turn to Allah in repentance and return rights to whom they are due. This is because sins are amongst the main reasons that cause rain and blessings to be withheld. On the other side, repentance and asking Allah, the Exalted, for forgiveness are reasons for Allah's answering of supplication. Allah, the Exalted, Says (what means):

"And if only the people of the cities had believed and feared Allah, We would have opened [i.e. bestowed] upon them blessings from the heaven and the earth; but they denied [the messengers], so We seized them for what they were earning." [Qur'an 7: 96]

Furthermore, the Imam should command people to give charity to the poor and needy, as this is regarded as a cause for sending Allah's mercy. After that, he is to set for them a certain day, at which they are to come out and be prepared for such an honourable occasion, and according to that which best suits it as an act of the *Sunnah*. At that date, people are to go out to the place of prayer showing humbleness, submissiveness and neediness of Allah, the Exalted, as Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

"Allah's Messenger, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, went out to perform the Rain Prayer showing humility, humbleness, and submissiveness, and supplicating (Allah)." [At-Tirmithi said that this is a *hasan* and *saheeh* (good and authentic) *hadith*.]

No Muslim should stay behind (from going out) while able, even boys and women, whose presence does not cause temptation, are to go out to perform it. Then, the Imam is to lead people performing two *rak'ahs*, as mentioned before. After doing so, he is to deliver one sermon. However, some scholars view that the Imam is to deliver two sermons. Both opinions are permissible, but the soundest opinion is to deliver one sermon, according to the most preponderant legal proof. In most cases, the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, delivered the sermon after performing the prayer for rain, and Muslims acted according to this. However, it is related that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, delivered the sermon before performing the prayer. This is the view of some scholars, but the first view (delivering the sermon after performing prayer) is more preponderant; and Allah Knows best.

In the sermon of asking for rain, the Imam should ask for Allah's forgiveness as well as recite the verses that command asking for forgiveness, in abundance, as this is considered a cause for sending rain. Moreover, the Imam should supplicate Allah, the Exalted, with much invocation, asking for rain. When supplicating Allah, the Imam should raise his hands, as the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, used to raise his hands when invoking Allah in the Prayer for Rain, so much that the whiteness of his armpits became visible.

[Extract from: A Summary of Islamic Jurisprudence]



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Orban gears up to be Europe's 'Trump whisperer'

As much of Europe frets over the return of Donald Trump, Hungary's Viktor Orban is in a jubilant mood. "A much needed victory for the World!" the Hungarian nationalist leader wrote on X minutes after Trump declared victory.

Orban hopes his close personal ties with Trump will elevate his standing in a politically fractious Europe and bolster support for his far-right allies, at a time when he faces serious headwinds at home.

Yesterday, he got to take centre stage as the host of a summit in Budapest of European leaders, many of whom are concerned at what Trump means for Ukraine, Nato and global trade.

Orban, who has grown increasingly isolated within the EU for his ties with Russia and opposition to military aid for Ukraine, has praised Trump as a "man of peace" who would quickly end the war. The two spoke by phone late on Wednesday, and Orban posted on social media: "We have big plans for the future".

Trump's victory could reduce Orban's isolation in Europe as he aims to act as a mediator between Washington and Europe.

That would align with Orban's self-styled "peace mission" that upset European Union leaders in July when he visited Moscow and Kyiv without notifying the EU or Nato. He ended that mission meeting Trump at Mar-a-Lago, after which he said Trump would act "as a peace broker immediately" after he wins.

"Orban will see himself as a Trump-whisperer and use that to get himself more leverage within the EU," Ian Bremmer, president and founder of Eurasia group, told journalists.

The EU may be reluctant for Orban to take the lead on discussions related to security or Ukraine, but with Trump threatening to impose a 10% tariff on all imports they may be hoping he can carry some weight in discussions over trade.

"We will celebrate if Trump is back," Orban told a briefing last month during a visit to the European Parliament.

On Wednesday, Orban said Europe would need to rethink its strategy on Ukraine with Trump returning to power.

Trump said last year that he could end the war "in 24 hours" but has not said how.

"Orban ...hopes that his weight as a kind of political dealmaker will be much more important than before," said Peter Kreko, director of think tank Political Capital in Budapest.

In office since 2010 and before that from 1998-2002, Orban is now facing rare challenges at home from a new and strong opposition party and a stagnating economy. The return of Trump is likely to see political pressure from Washington evaporate over his curbs on media freedom.

Relations between Budapest and Washington also soured under outgoing President Joe Biden because of Orban's ties to Moscow and foot-dragging over the ratification of Sweden's Nato bid.

In a speech on Wednesday, the US ambassador to Hungary, David Pressman, said Orban had treated the US election "like a card game at a casino," putting his alliance with the United States at risk by so firmly backing Trump. "And he placed a very big bet. Whether he believes that he won or lost this hand, he was gambling not with money but with the US-Hungary relationship," Pressman said.

With Trump in office, Orban's room for manoeuvre ahead of the 2026 national elections could widen at home, some analysts added.

But although Orban now envisages a return to a "golden age" of American-Hungarian relations, there is a flip side: Trump's trade policies, including proposed tariffs on car imports, which could hurt Hungary's economy.

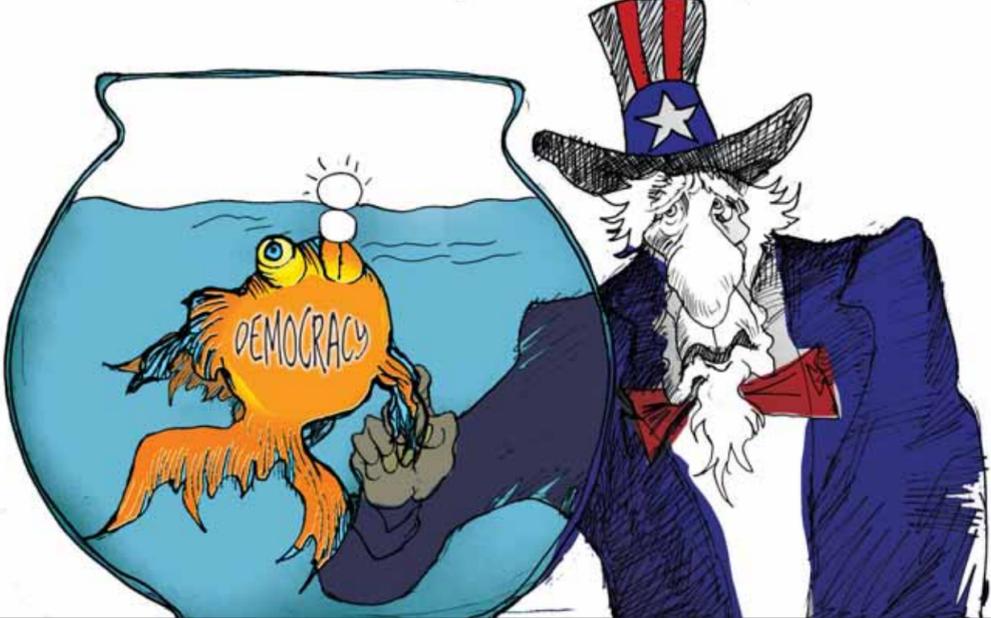
The automotive sector accounted for 12.3% of manufacturing jobs in Hungary in 2021 according to data from European Automobile Manufacturers' Association, with Stellantis and China's BYD among those having plants there.

Trump has said he will impose a 10% tariff on imports from all countries, and 60% duties on imports from China.

"The Trump 2.0 era could bring serious headaches for European industry," Peter Virovacz, an economist at ING said after dismal Hungarian output data on Wednesday.

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08-11-2024

"Don't worry, you're safe... as long as you stay in the bowl."



Will Trump craft a coherent policy to end Sudan war?

By Mohamed Suleiman al-Shazly

As the violent conflict between Sudan's Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) ravages the country — displacing millions and pushing Sudan toward collapse — the question arises: how would Donald Trump respond? With Sudan's future uncertain, would Trump and the Republican Party develop a coherent strategy to end the violence, or would the war unfold without a clear US policy?

Trump's foreign policy during his first term was defined by unpredictability, a focus on "America First," and a reluctance to intervene in conflicts that did not directly threaten US interests. His administration largely avoided foreign entanglements, preferring economic measures, diplomatic efforts, and a drawdown of military commitments. So, what might a second Trump term mean for Sudan, and how might the Republican Party's broader views on international intervention shape the US response? Trump's foreign policy was marked by a strong aversion to US military involvement unless there was a clear, tangible benefit. His "America First" doctrine prioritised US economic and security interests, often at the expense of multilateral diplomacy or international humanitarian efforts. He was deeply sceptical of interventions in regions like the Middle East, Africa, or Central Asia, where the US had limited security interests.

During his first term, Trump withdrew troops from Syria and Afghanistan, arguing that the US had spent too many years in "endless wars" with minimal returns. His administration distanced itself from multilateral institutions like Nato and took a hard line on foreign aid, particularly to countries not doing enough to defend themselves.

In the case of Sudan, Trump's administration focused on pragmatic actions — applying targeted sanctions against key Sudanese figures and brokering Sudan's normalisation with

Israel through the Abraham Accords — while showing little interest in deeper involvement in the internal conflict. Given this history, it is unlikely that Trump would dramatically shift his approach, especially as the Sudanese conflict doesn't present an immediate national security threat to the US.

While there is no unified Republican stance on Sudan, many within the GOP share Trump's reluctance to engage militarily in regions like Africa. Republicans tend to prioritise countering threats from China, Russia, and Iran, and would likely resist military involvement in conflicts that do not directly affect US security.

For most Republicans, the idea of military intervention or "nation-building" in Sudan is unlikely to gain traction. However, a faction of the party, particularly those with a more interventionist stance, might advocate for more direct action if framed around US interests. For example, some could push for counterterrorism measures if Sudan became a haven for extremist groups like Al Qaeda or ISIS.

Even these more interventionist voices would likely oppose large-scale operations in Sudan. Instead, the GOP would likely emphasise targeted sanctions, diplomatic pressure, and support for international peace talks. Given Sudan's complex internal dynamics and the lack of direct US strategic interest, it would likely remain a "complicated problem" for Republicans, one that doesn't overshadow other priorities like immigration, trade, or domestic issues.

Trump's response to the Sudan conflict would likely focus on diplomatic and economic measures, rather than military action. He would prioritise safeguarding US security interests and minimising US involvement in conflicts not directly affecting America.

A diplomatic solution, in line with his "America First" policy, would be the preferred approach, using external actors to influence the situation. Trump may look to regional powers like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE to play a larger role in negotiations, using their influence

to broker a ceasefire.

Economic sanctions would likely remain a key tool to pressure Sudan's leaders into peace talks. Additionally, Trump could use economic leverage, such as restricting military aid or blocking Sudan's access to international financial institutions, without committing US to reconstruction.

On Capitol Hill, Republican lawmakers would likely support the administration's cautious approach. While there would be bipartisan backing for humanitarian aid and diplomatic efforts, opposition to large-scale military or peacekeeping intervention would remain firm.

Some Republicans might push for stronger sanctions or more robust diplomatic measures to pressure the warring factions, but military involvement would remain a non-starter. If Sudan's conflict escalated to the point where it directly threatened US interests — such as the rise of extremist groups or instability in neighbouring countries — Republicans might support stronger action. However, absent a direct security threat, there would be little appetite for major US involvement.

Trump's policy towards Sudan would likely be one of limited engagement. The focus would be on economic and diplomatic measures, with the US leveraging its influence to push for peace talks and a political resolution without overextending resources.

Sudan's fate would likely rest with regional actors and international bodies, while the US focuses on protecting its own interests. In closing, Trump and the Republican Party would likely take steps to address Sudan's war through economic and diplomatic tools, with minimal US involvement. The US role would centre on supporting regional diplomacy, applying economic pressure, and encouraging multilateral efforts to halt the violence, without committing to nation-building or large-scale interventions.

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Trump faces an emboldened North Korea

By Josh Smith

Seoul

Donald Trump has long touted his relationship with Kim Jong-un, but if the US president-elect seeks another summit he will find a North Korean leader emboldened by an expanded missile arsenal and a much closer relationship with Russia.

After trading threats of nuclear annihilation during the first year of Trump's initial term, Kim and the then-US president held three unprecedented meetings in Singapore, Hanoi, and at the border between North and South Korea in 2018 and 2019.

"We would've had a nuclear war with millions of people killed," Trump told Fox News last month. "And when I was in there, I got along great with Kim Jong-un."

Many proponents of engagement welcomed the reduction in tensions but those meetings eventually stalled and failed to achieve lasting changes in North Korea. Outgoing President Joe Biden has been unable to entice or pressure Pyongyang back to talks.

Since Trump last met with Kim, the North has greatly expanded its arsenal of massive intercontinental ballistic missiles and hypersonic and short-range weapons that could deliver nuclear warheads against the US mainland or military bases in the region.

Pyongyang has also reopened its nuclear testing site and stands ready to resume tests whenever Kim gives the order, American and South Korean officials said.

And just this year, North Korea signed a

mutual defence treaty with Russia and took the unprecedented step of dispatching thousands of troops to assist in Moscow's war in Ukraine, according to officials in Washington, Seoul, and Kyiv.

Russia has backed North Korea by providing oil and other imports, and vetoed the extension of a panel of experts that had been monitoring United Nations sanctions violations.

Trump's camp did not immediately respond to requests for comment on whether he will pursue new meetings with Kim. But diplomats in Seoul and other North Korea watchers say Trump's comments suggest he may look to rekindle a conversation with Kim sooner or later.

"Trump feels that his engagement worked well during his first presidency in that he feels that he 'solved' the North Korean nuclear issue," said Ramon Pacheco Pardo of King's College in London. "Plus, Trump's summits with Kim attracted significant media attention, which he clearly relishes."

North Korea, Ukraine, China, Iran and other hot spots are interconnected to an extent unheard of during the first Trump administration, a former official in the first Trump administration said on the condition of anonymity.

"President Trump faces a different geopolitical landscape than in 2021," the former official said, adding that any substantial engagement with North Korea will need to wait a bit.

North Korea's ties with Russia combined with the unpredictability of a new Trump administration pose a geopolitical challenge that has officials and diplomats from Europe to Asia scrambling, said one diplomatic source in Seoul. Duyeon Kim, from the Center for a New

American Security, said North Korea does not seem to care who sits in the White House because Kim has made it clear that Pyongyang will march towards its nuclear milestones, and has both China and Russia's backing.

A senior official at in South Korea's presidential office told reporters on Tuesday that it is unclear what course Trump will chart because his comments during the campaign may differ from what is officially adopted when in office.

In December, Trump denied a media report that he was considering a plan for North Korea to freeze — but retain — its nuclear programme in return for sanctions relief and other incentives, but observers say his policies remain unpredictable.

North Korea will likely at least want to sit down with the US to see what Trump may want to offer, as good relations with Washington are the only way for some sanctions to be removed, Pardo said. Trump may even recognise Pyongyang as a nuclear power, he added.

Kim could see an upside in reaching out to Trump, said Bruce Klingner, a former CIA analyst now with the Heritage Foundation.

In August, the regime declared it wouldn't engage in dialogue with the US unless Washington cancelled military exercises and rotational deployments of strategic assets, both of which Trump did in 2018, he said.

"Kim could pitch a peace declaration or treaty to Trump as a major accomplishment potentially worthy of a Nobel Peace Prize, though it would do nothing to actually reduce the threat to the United States and its allies," Klingner said. "Such an agreement could lay the foundation for reducing US forces in South Korea and Japan." — Reuters

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Why Kamala Harris's historic dash for the White House fell short

By Trevor Hunnicutt, Nandita Bose and Stephanie Kelly
Washington

In a meeting with one of America's most powerful unions in September at its Washington headquarters, Vice-President Kamala Harris said she'd protect union jobs and workers' livelihoods better than Donald Trump.

But leaders of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, long staunchly allied with her Democratic Party, appeared unconvinced. When Harris argued that her Republican rival was no champion of the working class, the union bosses grilled her, questioning whether she and President Joe Biden had done enough for union workers, according to a Teamster leader who recounted the September 16 meeting to Reuters. Within days, the union publicly embarrassed Harris by declining to endorse a Democratic presidential candidate for the first time since 1996.

In the wake of Harris' loss of the 2024 presidential election, her tense exchange with union leaders underscores a critical failure of her campaign: connecting with working-class voters anxious about the economy and high prices.

Following Biden's dramatic withdrawal just months before Election Day, Harris threw her campaign together as if it were an airplane being built while in flight, her advisers told reporters. The 60-year-old former prosecutor and US senator pressed a case that Trump was a threat to democracy and women's rights, while promoting a populist economic platform and reproductive freedoms.

Her entrance upended a race that her party had looked set to lose. She made history as the first woman of colour at the top of a major party ticket. She triggered a surge in enthusiasm, broke fundraising records — raising \$1bn in less than three months — and drew endorsements from celebrities ranging from pop star Taylor Swift to actor and former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

But Harris' campaign ultimately failed to overcome deep-seated voter concerns about inflation and immigration — twin issues that opinion polls showed favoured Trump. Her loss underscores a profound shift in American politics over the past decade as blue-collar voters have turned increasingly Republican — a trend Trump appears to have accelerated.

Harris also struggled to counter another Trump-era trend: a torrent of misinformation unprecedented in modern US elections. An avalanche of misrepresentations and falsehoods about her record was spread by the former president and amplified on right-wing websites and media, including conspiracy theories on issues ranging from migrant crime to voter fraud.

When asked by Reuters during the race about misinformation amplified by Trump, his campaign officials typically either repeated the falsehoods or did not respond to requests for comment.

By late Wednesday, Trump had won 294 electoral votes to Harris' 223, with several states yet to be counted. In her concession speech, she told supporters, many of them in tears, not to give up even in their disappointment. "Sometimes the fight takes a while. That doesn't mean we won't win," she said.

This account of how Harris lost is based on Reuters interviews with Harris campaign staffers, White House officials, Democratic Party advisors and close allies.

It was always going to be a heavy lift. The US has only elected one president — Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012 — who wasn't a white man. As the daughter of an Indian mother and Jamaican father, Harris had risen higher in the country's leadership than any other woman.

The only other woman to get as close as she did — Hillary Clinton, defeated by Trump in 2016 — staked her candidacy in part on becoming the first female president. In the wake of Clinton's loss, Harris resisted putting her identity at the centre of her campaign, said close aides and advisors. Instead, she tried to galvanise voters on issues that mattered to women and Black voters in the election — from rights over their bodies to middle-class tax cuts and housing affordability.

But those messages struggled to break



Democratic presidential nominee, US Vice-President Kamala Harris pauses while speaking on stage as she concedes the election, at Howard University on Wednesday in Washington, DC. **Below:** A supporter of the Democratic presidential nominee cries as Harris delivers the speech. (AFP, Reuters)



through at a time when many voters were fixated on rising consumer prices during the first three years of the Biden administration.

"Despite fairly strong economic growth, especially after a major global pandemic, most Americans weren't feeling like they were getting ahead economically," said Melissa Deckman, a political scientist and chief executive of Public Religion Research Institute, a nonpartisan research firm. "The Harris campaign did not necessarily do a good job of explaining how her policies would help the middle class, or at least that message wasn't really resonating with a lot of voters."

A majority of voters said they trust Trump more to handle the economy, with 51% saying they did so compared to 47% for Harris, according to a preliminary national exit poll conducted by data provider Edison Research. And the voters who identified the economy as their primary concern voted overwhelmingly for Trump over Harris — 79% to 20%.

The economy proved to be a much bigger concern among voters than reproductive rights, with 31% of voters saying the economy mattered most in deciding how to vote compared with 14% who cited rights over bodies. The election also saw a large gender gap. Harris won 54% of women voters in the country, while Trump won 44%, the preliminary exit polls showed.

The Harris and Trump campaigns and the White House did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

"America has given us an unprecedented and powerful mandate," Trump said early on Wednesday to a roaring crowd of supporters at the Palm Beach County Convention Center.

The election was punctuated by dramatic twists, including two assassination attempts against Trump and the stunning decision by Biden to abandon his re-election bid on July 21.

Democrats coalesced behind Harris with astonishing speed, locking up her party's nomination within two weeks, excited by her potential to flip the generational argument on Trump. Two decades her senior, Trump had successfully cast the 81-year-old Biden as a frail and confused old man. She would turn that on its head, many Democrats hoped.

Some Democratic strategists questioned the wisdom of one of her first big decisions: picking Minnesota Governor Tim Walz as

running mate over Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro, a deft speaker with proven political strength in a must-win state. Her campaign had hoped the gun-owning Walz, a liberal policy champion and plain-speaking National Guardsman from the Midwest, would help her win over rural white voters.

Walz had generated buzz before Harris picked him by branding Trump and his running mate, Senator JD Vance of Ohio, as "weird" on national television in July, winning Democratic hearts and media attention. Later, though, Walz gained unwelcome attention for misstatements of his biography, including his military service, and for an uneven debate performance against Vance.

Walz and Vance didn't immediately respond to requests for comment.

Still, the Harris campaign believed her signature issues — reproductive rights and Trump's divisiveness — would energise a coalition of women, Black voters, young Americans, independents and "Never Trump" Republicans, sweeping her to the White House.

Well before the race began, Harris emerged as a spokesperson for reproductive rights. When the US Supreme Court in 2022 officially reversed *Roe v Wade*, the setback for women's reproductive rights created an unexpected opening for Harris.

The ruling catapulted her from the political periphery into the heart of America's culture wars. Opinion polls showed most Americans disapproved of the court's decision — and Harris became the face of an issue that Democratic strategists saw as electoral gold.

For the first time in Biden's presidency, he handed a decisive issue entirely to his vice-president. She went on the road, speaking forcefully on a subject that played an outsized role in helping Democrats stave off an expected bloodbath in the 2022 congressional elections. After the midterms, with the Democrats having held the Senate and swung to a slight minority in the House of Representatives, Harris was now seen as a viable future leader in the party.

Still, even after Biden stepped aside, concerns lingered among some top White House aides over the former San Francisco district attorney's political skills — including

a perception that she hadn't made a mark as VP, her short-lived campaign for the 2020 Democratic nomination and her limited experience courting conservative voters in battleground states. Some also questioned whether she could overcome the long history of racial and gender discrimination in the US.

After securing the nomination, Harris initially put many of those concerns to rest. She revitalised a beleaguered Democratic campaign, attracting record-high funding and a groundswell of support. She soon moved ahead of Trump in the polls, a sign she was sparking enthusiasm among voters, particularly among women. Trump had previously been seen as the front-runner, partly based on his perceived strength on the economy after several years of high inflation under Biden.

She aced her first big test — a Sept. 10 televised debate against Trump.

As Harris' team prepared for what would be her only in-person face-off with Trump, they focused on ways to unnerve the former president and draw attention to his frequent falsehoods on policies, according to several aides involved in the preparations. Harris holed up in Pittsburgh with advisers and conducted mock debates for the prime-time showdown, the aides said.

The strategy paid off. Harris appeared to get under her rival's skin during the debate. She pressed Trump on the economy, Ukraine, healthcare, the January 2021 Capitol riots and reproductive rights, leaving him rattled and struggling to respond.

Fundraising spiked: Her campaign said it raised \$47mm in the 24 hours after the debate. Most voters thought Harris had won, polls showed. Trump shot down offers for another debate, claiming he'd already beaten her.

On the campaign trail, Harris mocked Trump's debate performance, including his comment that he had "concepts of a plan" to replace a federal health care law. As she gained in polls, Harris' campaign believed she was opening up states that had been out of reach for Biden, including North Carolina, where the president had his narrowest loss against Trump in 2020 and where she was drawing even in the polls with Trump.

North Carolina was the scene of her next big test, the late September Hurricane Helene, one of the deadliest storms to hit the US in the last 50 years. The storm shifted focus from messages at the foundation of Harris' campaign to the handling of the disaster by the Biden-Harris administration.

It hit just as her lead was narrowing. Trump went on the attack, criticising the Democratic administration's response to the disaster and tying it to his strongest issue, immigration. As the death toll rose and swathes of North Carolina lay devastated, Trump amplified and spread falsehoods, including a claim that Harris spent disaster-assistance money on housing illegal migrants.

In response to a recent request for comment by Reuters about false claims about how disaster funds were being used, the Trump campaign repeated accusations that money had been spent on housing migrants in the country illegally.

Harris cut short a campaign swing and flew to Washington on September 30 for a briefing on Biden's emergency response. On her plane, three staffers sat on the floor, ripping apart briefing books, replacing the pages with new notes, a Reuters reporter witnessed.

The disaster, which killed more than 200 people, marked a shift in the race, as misinformation around the administration's response and Trump's hard-line rhetoric on immigration gained traction. The baseless claims included that the government covered-up deaths, confiscated charitable donations and diverted disaster funds to help immigrants. Harris' campaign struggled to address both the false claims and voters' concerns about an uptick in illegal border crossings during Biden's presidency.

One jurisdiction that illustrated the risks for Harris was Buncombe County, a North Carolina Democratic stronghold of about 280,000 people hammered by the storm. In its aftermath, Democrats stopped targeting potentially persuadable Republican voters there because of concerns they had become too hostile amid the misinformation, Kathie Kline, Buncombe County Democratic chair, told Reuters. In the end, Trump won the state.

As the race tightened through October, and polls indicated a toss-up, alarm spread among Democratic strategists.

They focused on shoring up the so-called Blue Wall of Democratic states: Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Eight years ago, when Trump beat Hillary Clinton, he breached the Blue Wall by winning all three states, each by less than a percentage point. In 2020, Biden won them back. Holding the Blue Wall now was Harris' best path to the White House, the strategists reasoned. But they had a problem: Michigan and the Gaza War.

Michigan's large population of Arab Americans and Muslims helped cement Biden's 2020 victory in the state. Trump turned off many of these voters in his first term, in part by banning immigration to the US from a number of Muslim countries early in his tenure.

In the race's final stretch, Muslim and Arab-American voters told Reuters they were disappointed Harris did not distance herself more from Biden's unwavering support of Israel during the Gaza war. In the final weeks, Trump aggressively courted their vote. Many said they would sit out the election or vote Republican.

Harris staffers knew that disillusioned Muslim and Arab-American Democrats were a risk. "It could cost us the election," said a senior Michigan operative for Harris in July.

The campaign ultimately concluded it was impossible to fully win back those voters. To offset their loss, campaign officials said they focused in the final weeks on marshalling enough support from union workers and Black voters in Detroit, the nation's largest Black-majority city.

But few issues threatened Harris like inflation.

Her campaign had hoped the economic recovery from the pandemic would be a winning issue. Growth is markedly more robust in the US than in other major industrial nations. Stock-market indexes are near record highs.

Instead, the issue eroded Democratic support throughout much of 2024 as union workers and non-college-educated white voters broke for Trump, polls showed. Sharp increases in housing and food costs frustrated voters, overshadowing a strong job market. Trump blamed Harris for the spike during her and Biden's time in office.

While most unions have long supported Democratic candidates, rank-and-file workers in recent years have moved behind Trump, proving a decisive factor in his victory. There were some positive signs for Harris. The AFL-CIO, the largest federation of unions, saw a surge in female members supporting Harris and willing to volunteer for her, AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler told Reuters.

In the final weeks of the race, Harris' momentum appeared to have stalled, with polls showing her edge over Trump narrowing. By mid-October, the race was a dead heat in crucial states.

A pronounced gap in polling between men and women had emerged, too. While Harris cut away at the Republicans' longstanding edge with white voters overall by gaining ground with white women, Trump appeared to be boosting his advantage with men.

Harris shifted strategy in an attempt to win over more men and Republicans. The campaign dispatched running mate Walz on a tour in mid-October to reach male voters. Harris also held campaign events with former lawmaker Liz Cheney, one of Trump's fiercest Republican critics and one of the most prominent conservatives to endorse the Democrat. Days later, Trump suggested Cheney should face gunfire in combat, drawing outrage among Democrats and pundits.

The vice-president also sharpened her attacks on Trump. In an October 29 speech billed as her closing argument, Harris warned of the dangers of another Trump presidency. He was "unstable" and sought "unchecked power," she told a rally held at the spot in Washington where Trump addressed his supporters before they attacked the US Capitol on January 6, 2021. With a well-lit White House behind her, she cast herself as a defender of democracy, unity and freedom.

She also sought to reassure voters about the cost of living. Trump's proposals to raise tariffs would amount to "a 20% national sales tax" on imported goods, she said. She vowed to "protect hard-working Americans who aren't always seen or heard."

In the end, not enough of those Americans believed her.

Rural vote thrusts Trump back to the presidency

By Gregory Walton
Erie

Rural voters helped propel Donald Trump to a resounding victory, providing a boost as he outperformed pollster predictions and his past performances at the ballot box.

Painting a picture of a neglected US heartland overlooked by urban elites, Trump's campaign placed rural Americans at the heart of its divisive effort to whip up support.

In the northwestern tip of Pennsylvania, Erie County has boomeranged between Democrat and Republican candidates in the last three elections and went firmly for Trump this year.

Trump's support among rural voters dipped between his win in 2016 and his 2020 defeat, but it rebounded handily with the Republican securing 63 percent of votes cast by the group nationally, according to a CNN exit poll.

The chair of the Erie County Republican Party in swing state Pennsylvania told AFP that rural voters were motivated by economic issues — specifically the cost of gas and grocery price inflation — to vote for Trump.

"If anybody votes for Trump I think it's because of the economy," Tom Eddy said as the scale of Trump's victory became apparent, adding that only those who had a grievance with Trump voted for Harris.

He said turnout in one precinct was almost 90 percent, while in another Republican votes outnumbered Democrat by three to one.

Erie, a boomerang county which opted for Barack Obama in 2010, Trump in 2016 and Joe Biden in 2020, this year went for Trump again by almost 2,000 votes. "I was surprised by the breadth of the (Republican) margins across the swing states," said Kyle Kopko, an adjunct politics professor at Elizabethtown College, noting each side ran "drastically different" campaigns. Kopko warned that even though Trump campaigned on the economy in rural areas, where economic shocks can be more keenly felt, "there is no magic bullet."

Dylan Robuck, 28, who works at a McDonald's restaurant in Erie said "I'm happy for him. I think it's gonna make it better for everybody."

"I'm pretty excited about the taxes. That was a big thing he talked about," he added, referring to Trump's tax cut proposals.

As well as rural voters, Trump cleaned up among Latino men and first-time voters, according to US media analysis.

Despite polls indicating the result would be a nail-biter, Trump was on course to win the popular vote as well as the electoral college, and may end up sweeping all seven swing states.

Trump's campaign, which observers have credited with being far more professional than his first two, saw him crisscross rural corners of the seven swing states where he vied with Harris to woo voters.

He repeatedly returned to rural Pennsylvania, with its 19 electoral college votes — more than any other swing state — campaigning in Erie in a rally at the end of September.

He also stumped in the town in July 2023, highlighting the importance of the bellwether county. "Trump's the man. He gets it done," said Erie County voter Zachary Rindfuss, a scrap metal merchant.

"I was happy with him when he was in before, and then he lost the second election. I think I've seen America really make a downfall, and I'm glad he's back in," added Rindfuss, 29.

Gillian Kratzer, chair of the PA Dems' rural caucus who spearheaded her party's efforts to reach voters in rural Pennsylvania said many people in non-urban communities would "cover their vote with the economy — but the facts do not back that up."

"I think honestly, unfortunately racism and misogyny played a very huge part." Kratzer said that despite Harris' poor showing in rural areas, it was important for the party not to back off and retreat to the cities. In this election Harris' campaign sought to target 500,000 likely rural voters with a 30-second radio ad aired on 130 rural Pennsylvania radio stations from September.

Qatar Boat Show a massive draw, secures defence contracts over QR360mn

The Ministry of Defence revealed at Qatar Boat Show 2024 yesterday contracts exceeding QR60mn for new vessels and maintenance projects, along with plans to finalise additional contracts worth an estimated QR300mn with local companies, showcasing the country's commitment to maritime security and innovation.

Performance Marine and Barzan Holding also signed a Memorandum of Understanding at the event, aimed at advancing the localisation of defence equipment production in Qatar. The partnership focuses on the development of Unmanned Surface Vehicles (USVs).

With high attendance on the first two days, the event will extend its hours until 10pm today. On its second day yesterday, the four-day event continues to attract a remarkable crowd. The Old Doha Port CEO and the Qatar Boat Show 2024 organising committee chairman Mohamed Abdulla al-Mulla welcomed numerous dignitaries.

Visitors were captivated by the array of activities, including watersport shows and cultural performances, such as a craftsman showcase, traditional maritime band, horse parade, as well as symphonies from the military bands around the Old Doha Port. They also enjoyed live musical performances and carnival games, held in the Activities and F&B area, then ended the night with a stand-up paddle night show.

Visitors also got a taste of the luxurious boating lifestyle with iconic showcases of the latest luxury superyachts and marine vessels. For insights into the marine industry, visitors toured the exhibitor booths to explore and learn about the latest innovative technology and equipment.

Yesterday at the event, the Ministry of Transport held sessions providing insights into Qatar's comprehensive safety protocols, showcased advanced maritime security measures, and outlined strategic initiatives that strengthen the country's position as a leader in maritime governance and innovation.

"As we reach the halfway mark of this four-day event, we take pride in the significant agreements being signed on the ground and the vibrant showcase of our rich maritime heritage and innovation," al-Mulla said.

Hosted by Old Doha Port, the Qatar Boat Show brings attention to the rich and thriving maritime industry in Qatar as well as a full immersion into its marine culture and history.

Outside of Qatar Boat Show, visitors can experience a range of festivities at the Mina District, such as marine competitions, music performances, roaming horse shows, artists showcasing Qatari culture, and an elite supercars display. More information of Qatar Boat show is available from <https://boatshowqatar.com>



Watan 2024 exercise set to start on Nov 10

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He noted that this exercise included more than 55 scenarios and training hypotheses, covering all types of risks and challenges, and they were prepared based on studies and strategic plans by a team of experts and specialists, based on the risk register and the outputs of previous versions of the exercise, which achieved distinguished successes and results that reflect the seriousness and commitment of all participating agencies in implementing their tasks to achieve the general objectives of the exercise.

For his part, Commander of the Command, Control, Preparation and Scenarios Management Cell for the /Watan Exercise 2024/, Major Mohammed Ahmed Jaber Abdullah outlined the general timeline of the exercise, which is divided into six stages including: the preliminary stage, the readiness stage, the equipment stage, the office executive stage, the field executive stage, and the final stage.

He pointed that these stages contain several axes, most notably identifying the objectives and target groups, preparing scenarios and the profile, in addition to holding office and field exercises, presenting the final summary and reporting the results to the leadership.

The exercise sites include land, sea and air ports, vital military and service facilities, tourist sites, in addition to operations rooms, residential areas, main roads, commercial complexes, and a number of other sites, he said.

Director of the Public Relations and Communication Department at the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Eng Mohammed Ahmed al-Dhahi explained that the "Watan Exercise 2024" represents a joint effort that includes a group of government military and civilian agencies, in addition to the private sector and private institutions, aiming at enhancing joint work, co-operation and co-ordination to deal with security crises and emergency incidents. He highlighted the exercise's endeavour to simulate realistic scenarios, which allows participants to apply procedures and standards that ensure an effective and rapid response, enhancing the integration of roles between various military and civilian agencies in the country, in addition to activating the command and control mechanism to achieve integration of roles and implement the required tasks as quickly as possible.

Eng al-Dhahi considered that the impact of previous editions of the "Watan Exercise" is evident in activating the joint work system and raising the level of readiness to face various challenges, adding that the participation of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change in the "Watan Exercise 2024", as one of the civil government agencies, represents an opportunity to measure and test emergency operational plans and develop and update effective response procedures for the various concerned departments in the ministry, through active participation in workshops as well as office and field exercises for various scenarios, in order to achieve the common strategic goals.

Vibrant, diverse Japanese Cultural Week kicks off

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

A vibrant celebration of Japanese culture kicked off yesterday at Hyatt Plaza, marking the start of a week-long event designed to foster cultural understanding and strengthen ties between Qatar and Japan.

The event, officially opened by Japanese ambassador Satoshi Maeda, features a diverse range of activities, from traditional arts and crafts workshops to live painting demonstrations, until November 14.

"This event is a wonderful opportunity to deepen the understanding of the Japanese culture, traditions, and artistry among the good people of Qatar. In Japan, we cherish our traditional culture while embracing the future and its opportunities through innovation and technology," he said.

Maeda underlined the various activities planned for the week, including origami and calligraphy workshops, alongside live painting demonstrations and Mizuhiki workshops by visiting Japanese artists.

A karate demonstration by students further enriched the opening day's programme, witnessed by mall officials led by Qatar Central Markets Company CEO Feroz Moideen, other embassy officials, and guests.

"Japan, a land of rich history, artistic brilliance, and technological innovation, has always captivated the world," Moideen said in his speech, highlighting the opportunity for the Qatari community to immerse itself in the beauty of Japanese culture.

He thanked the ambassador for



Japanese Cultural Week opened at Hyatt Plaza yesterday. PICTURES: Feroze Ahamed

his presence and for strengthening the bonds between the two nations. He also expressed his appreciation to sponsors Homes R Us and Daiso, and to the organisers of the Japanese Cultural Week, saying: "We hope this event will inspire cultural understanding, friendship, and mutual respect".

Taking place until November 14, the event offers Qatar residents and visitors, especially families and children, a chance to experience and get a glimpse of Japan's rich culture.

Building on the success of the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2022 and Expo 2023 Doha, Qatar and Japan continue to expand their cultural exchange programmes to further strengthen bilateral ties. This includes broadening outreach beyond previously initiatives such as school and shopping mall performances and lectures.

