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HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani and other officials at the inauguration of the Medical Care and Research Center of Hamad Medical Corporation yesterday. Page 12

PM opens HMC's Medical Care and Research Center

QNA Doha

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani inaugurated the Medical Care and Research Center of Hamad Medical Corp (HMC) yesterday.

Following the inauguration, HE the Prime Minister toured the centre's wards, inspecting the services aimed at enhancing therapeutic practices through precision clinical medicine.

The centre, the latest addition to Hamad Medical Corp, aims to support and conduct precision medicine trials and provide access to precision care across all major and sub-specialties offered by Hamad Medical Corp. It also supports researchers and clinical participants in conducting clinical trials prioritising patient safety, leading to fundamental improvements in patient care and outcomes through research and clinical trials.

The inauguration of the Medical Care and Research Center reflects Hamad Medical Corporation's firm commitment to enhancing healthcare services and increasing the capacity to provide specialised care at the highest global quality standards to all residents of the country. The centre includes 250 beds to provide a therapeutic environment for inpatients.

Located in Hamad Bin Khalifa Medical City in Doha, the centre consists of four floors, plus a basement, and features several single and shared patient rooms, medical isolation rooms, a clinic for posture and movement correction, and is closely connected via an internal bridge to three specialised care hospitals: the Women's Wellness and Research Center, the Ambulatory Care Center, and the Qatar Rehabilitation Center. This facilitates access to

The centre aims to support and conduct precision medicine trials and provide access to precision care across all major and sub-specialties offered by HMC

specialised care, diagnostic, and laboratory services.

The centre also includes a range of high-quality clinical units, such as the Clinical Trials Unit, which specialises in designing, conducting, and managing trials to explore the safety and efficacy of medical strategies, treatments, or medical devices with patients.

The Clinical Precision Medicine and Genomics Center develops personalised medical treatments tailored to individual patient characteristics, in addition to conducting research and innovations. The centre is also dedicated to providing the highest quality paediatric care, featuring a Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, an advanced care unit, a paediatric day care unit, and a paediatric ward.

Additionally, there is a Geriatrics Unit for acute cases, supporting the growing need for acute care among the elderly, and a modern palliative care unit offering a comfortable and welcoming environment for patients and their families. The centre also includes an outpatient prosthetics clinic and a range of support services, including a pharmacy, an ambulance pathway for patient transport, a physiotherapy gym for inpatients, waiting areas for men and women, and multi-purpose rooms. Page 12

Sidra fifth to administer gene therapy for DMD

Sidra Medicine, a member of Qatar Foundation, has become the first hospital in Qatar and the fifth hospital to administer Elevidys worldwide, a revolutionary gene therapy medication for treating Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD). It primarily affects males, with a prevalence of approximately 1 in 3,500 live male births. Children with DMD typically appear normal at birth, but between the ages of two and three, begin to exhibit developmental delays. Elevidys is currently the only gene therapy medication available for treating DMD. Page 5

TSE Polishing Plant to save freshwater opens at Katara

By Joey Aguilar Staff Reporter

Katara Project and Veolia Water Technologies have unveiled a state-of-the-art Treated Sewage Effluent (TSE) Polishing Plant, marking significant strides in environmental sustainability by conserving freshwater resources used for irrigation and district cooling makeup at Katara - Cultural Village.

This new innovative facility is set to play a key role towards fulfilling Qatar's National Vision 2030's environmental goals, promising to save daily between 5,000 cubic metres in winter and 15,000 cubic metres of freshwater during summer. It also reduces the energy required for production by 80% compared to traditional treatment methods, advancing resource efficiency.

Katara Project director general, engineer Mohamed al-Meer, said in a press statement: "By utilising treated sewage for irrigation and cooling, we are not only preserving vital natural resources, but also setting a new benchmark for sustainable practices in cultural and touristic destinations".

The plant enables the full reuse of treated wastewater (TSE) to cover the irrigation needs for Katara's green hills and supplies



Ahmed Fahmy (right) and Bouthaina al-Emadi at the site visit yesterday. PICTURE: Shaji Kayamkulam

makeup water for the cooling towers of the district cooling system.

According to Katara Project, this innovation substitutes the use of freshwater from the Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation (Kahramaa), achieving a cost reduction from QR9 to QR1 per cubic metre. The project was seamlessly integrated into the existing Katara Energy Centre, utilising advanced technology and design to optimise space and power within the limited plot area.

Veolia Water Technologies Middle East CEO Thierry Froment lauded the project's alignment with Veolia's GreenUp strategic programme, aimed at helping regions adapt to climate change. To Page 3

Shura Council's current session approves draft laws, ends

QNA Doha

The Shura Council yesterday held its closing session for the third regular session of the first legislative term, corresponding to the 52nd annual session.

The session was presided over by HE the Shura Council Speaker Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem.

After reviewing the reports of the competent committees and discussing the provisions of various draft laws, the Council approved several significant legislative measures. These included a draft law amending certain provisions of the Penal Code (issued by Law No 11 of 2004), a draft law regulating district cooling services, a draft law on the protection of public electrical and water facilities, and a draft law establishing a unified industrial regulation law system for the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries.

The Shura Council also approved its final account for the fiscal year 2023 and the Council's draft budget for the fiscal year



HE the Shura Council Speaker Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem presiding over the meeting.

2025, following a review of the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee's report.

During the session, the Council reviewed numerous reports on the participation of its members in regional and international parliamentary meetings and events. It also approved three requests to extend the work of its permanent committees to study the topics referred to them by the Council.

Secretary-General of the Shura Council, Nayef bin Mohamed al-Mahmoud, read out Amiri Decree No 40 of 2024, officially adjourn-

ing the third regular session of the first legislative term, corresponding to the 52nd annual session of the Shura Council, effective from Tuesday, July 2, 2024. At the session's conclusion, HE al-Ghanem expressed, on behalf of himself and the Council members, profound gratitude to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani for his unwavering support and patronage of the Shura Council, as well as his commitment to fostering popular participation in decision-making. To Page 2

Media's role vital, says Shura Council speaker



Editor-in-Chief of Gulf Times Faisal Abdulhameed al-Mudahka, accompanied by fellow editors-in-chief and media leaders, attended the closing session of the Shura Council yesterday, on an invitation from the Speaker of the Shura Council, HE Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem. The Shura Council concluded its third regular session of the first legislative

term at the Tamim bin Hamad Hall. At a special session, HE al-Ghanem stressed the important role of journalism and the unique experience of popular participation in its third year. The session was attended by HE Dr Hamda bint Hassan al-Sulaiti, the Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council, and HE the Secretary-General Nayef bin Mohamed al-Mahmoud. To Page 2

Israel orders fresh S Gaza evacuation

Israel's army yet again ordered the evacuation of parts of southern Gaza yesterday. Orders were issued to evacuate Al-Qarara, Bani Suhaila and other towns in Rafah and Khan Yunis, nearly two months after an initial order to evacuate Rafah ahead of a ground offensive. Prior to the ground incursion in Rafah, well over one million people had been displaced to the southernmost city. "Fear and extreme anxiety have gripped people after the evacuation order," said Bani Suhaila resident Ahmad Najjar. "There is a large displacement of residents." Witnesses and the civil defence agency reported Israeli air strikes including in the southern Rafah area and the central Nuseirat refugee camp. Witnesses also reported constant Israeli tank fire in Gaza City's Shujaiya district where battles raged for a fifth day. An AFP correspondent reported Israeli helicopters firing on houses in Shujaiya. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who recently declared that the "intense phase" of the war was winding down, said on Sunday troops were "operating in Rafah, Shujaiya, everywhere in the Gaza Strip".

Trump enjoys some immunity, says SC

The US Supreme Court ruled yesterday that Donald Trump enjoys some immunity from prosecution as a former president, a ruling that will likely delay his trial for conspiring to overturn the 2020 election. The 6-3 decision split along ideological lines comes four months ahead of the presidential election in which Trump is the Republican candidate to take on Democrat Joe Biden.

9 killed in Seoul after car hits pedestrians

At least nine people were killed and four others were injured when a car struck pedestrians near Seoul city hall yesterday. There were six fatalities at the scene, while three others were pronounced dead after being rushed to hospital. Yonhap news agency reported that a 68-year-old driver crashed into people who were waiting at a traffic signal. He was driving in the wrong direction and hit two other vehicles before ploughing into the pedestrians. Page 9



## Labour minister meets Philippine envoy



HE the Minister of Labour Dr Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri met yesterday with Philippine ambassador to Qatar Lilibeth Velasco Pono. The meeting discussed topics of common concern. (QNA)

# UN official praises Qatar for hosting Afghan talks

By Ayman Adly  
Staff Reporter

The United Nations Undersecretary General Rosemary DiCarlo has expressed 'deep appreciation' to the Government of Qatar for hosting the third meeting of Special Envoys on Afghanistan in Doha.

Addressing a press conference yesterday, after the conclusion of the meeting, she stressed there is a need to go ahead for such talks and to push forward women's rights in Afghanistan and to engage the civil society groups to improve the human rights situation.

The UN official pointed out that depriving women of the right to education and work would ultimately drag back the economic development in Afghanistan and eventually negatively impact the lives of its people.

"This is the third Doha meeting, but it is also a first. Indeed, this is the first time such a broad cross section of the international community and the de facto authorities have had the opportunity to hold such detailed discussions."

She said that a lot of related questions on the Afghan issue were discussed, stressing the pressing need to find a step for step solution to the pending issues that affect the life of people.

"These discussions were frank and, I believe, useful. They were based on priority areas listed in the independent assessment the UN Security Council recognised last November. That assessment called for a more structured process, with clear conditions and expectations for all sides," she said.

Rosemary DiCarlo noted that such a process to find a step by step approach is still at the beginning and there is a need for these discussions and negotiations to go on to address the pressing issues such as security and human rights. It is a people-centred approach aimed at easing the suffering of people and to arrive at a society that functions with its basic services running.

"At the opening (of the meeting) on Sunday the special envoys and the de facto authorities aired their expectations. Today we looked at the private sector and counter-narcotics. The Afghan private sector faces enormous obstacles to its development and growth, which adversely affects the economy and livelihoods.

"Afghanistan also needs support in building on progress made in curbing drug production. Running through all the discussions was the deep international



The United Nations Undersecretary General Rosemary DiCarlo speaking in Doha yesterday.

concern - from special envoys and from me - about the ongoing and serious restrictions on women and girls. Afghanistan cannot return to the international fold, or fully develop economically and socially, if it is deprived of the contributions and potential of half its population."

"We also discussed the need for more inclusive governance and respect for the rights of minorities," she stressed.

The UN official pointed out that it is not for the UN as an organisation to recognise or not recognise the Taliban government in Afghanistan, it is a decision that is up to the UN member states to take.

"We faced a very tough, maybe impossible choice in organising this meeting. We have a mandate to support this process. Our brief was to bring the de facto authorities and the special envoys together for direct talks. Regrettably, the de facto authorities will not sit across the table with Afghan civil society in this format. But they heard very clearly the need to include women and civil society in all aspects of public life. There was broad agreement on the need to chart a clear way forward. And we at the UN are committed to continue to facilitate this process."

"This is part of a process. And while women and civil society were not sitting across the table from the de facto authorities the last two days, they made their voices heard. Civil society has a rightful role to play in shaping Afghanistan's future."

Rosemary DiCarlo confirmed that it has been agreed to continue this process and consider setting up working groups for the related issues.

## Shura Council deputy Speaker hails Amir's unwavering support

HE the Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council Dr Hamda bint Hassan al-Sulaiti, has hailed His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's unwavering support, generous patronage and great confidence bestowed upon the Council.

Speaking on the occasion of the adjournment of the third regular session of the first legislative term of the Shura Council, HE Dr al-Sulaiti said this support and patronage are the greatest evidence of His Highness' belief in the pioneering role of the Council and the importance of popular participation in decision-making. She highlighted the fruitful co-operation between the Council and the esteemed government, noting that this co-operation has yielded a lot of outcomes that have been positively reflected in the laws, legislation and procedures taken by the government.

She pointed to the successes of the third regular session, stressing that the co-operation between all members of the Council and the diligent work of its various committees have contributed to the Council performing its role to the fullest extent. HE Dr al-Sulaiti expressed her pride in the awareness of the

**She highlighted the fruitful co-operation between the Council and the esteemed government, noting that this co-operation has yielded a lot of outcomes that have been positively reflected in the laws, legislation and procedures taken by the government**

Qatari society of the role of the Shura Council, hailing the society as a partner of the Council during the exercise of its constitutional powers. She stressed the keenness to deal with all the issues raised by the society, and said that it takes all of that into consideration.

Highlighting the Council's participation in Gulf, Arab and international parliamentary events, and its support for just causes, especially the Palestinian cause, Her Excellency noted the Council's repeated calls on every occasion for parliaments and parliamentary unions, and its demand for them to seek to stop the aggression on Gaza, and take practical measures to provide support to the brothers in Palestine.

Meanwhile, Secretary-General of the Shura Council, HE Nayef bin Mohamed al-Mahmoud, stressed that the success of this session would not have

been achieved without the support of the wise leadership, diligent work and fruitful co-operation with various parties.

He said that the General Secretariat worked hard and diligently to ensure the provision of all forms of technical and administrative support that the Council members need to carry out their duties to the fullest.

Al-Mahmoud praised the co-operation shown by all relevant parties, through their positive communication with the General Secretariat of the Council, noting that this co-operation is in the interest of the country and contributes to achieving its National Vision 2030.

He also pointed out that the General Secretariat of the Council was keen to attract the best national competencies, as it worked to qualify and train them according to the highest administrative standards. (QNA)

## Labour minister chairs workers' fund management board meeting

The Workers' Support and Insurance Fund Management Board held yesterday its second meeting for 2024, chaired by HE the Minister of Labour Dr Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri. The meeting discussed several items on the agenda, as well as cases referred to the fund. It adopted several decisions and recommendations aimed at improving the fund's performance and effectiveness, contributing to the enhancement of the working environment. Established under Law No 17 of 2018, the Workers' Support and Insurance Fund aims to support, insure and care for workers, ensure their rights, and to provide a healthy and safe working environment. (QNA)



## Egypt invites Qatar to air show

HE the Minister of Transport Jassim bin Saif al-Sulaiti received a letter from Egyptian Minister of Civil Aviation Lieutenant-General Mohamed Abbas, on co-operation between the countries in civil aviation and ways to enhance it. The letter also included an invitation to the Egypt International Air Show (EIAS), to be held in September. Egyptian ambassador to Qatar Amr Kamal El Din El Sherbiny delivered the letter during his meeting with HE the Minister of Transport yesterday. (QNA)



## Meetings discuss ways to support Afghan people



HE the Special Envoy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Faisal bin Abdullah al-Hanzab met separately with Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Roza Otunbayeva; Special Representative of the President of Uzbekistan for Afghanistan, Esmatullah Erkashev; and Special Envoy of Switzerland for Afghanistan Albert Grof. The meetings were held on the sidelines of the 3rd UN Meeting of Special Envoys on Afghanistan, currently held in Doha. During the meetings, ways to enhance stability and peace in Afghanistan and to support the aspirations of the Afghan people for a decent life were discussed, and the importance of the Doha process to achieve the desired progress was emphasised. (QNA)



## Shura Council's current session approves draft laws, ends

From Page 1

HE al-Ghanem highlighted that during the 52nd annual session, the Council examined and discussed 24 draft laws and amendments to existing laws.

He praised the productive co-operation between the Council and the esteemed government, acknowledging the government's receptiveness to the Council's proposals and the responsiveness of ministers and officials to the Council's invitations to present strategic plans and answer members' inquiries.

He also outlined the Council's accomplishments, noting the approval of 15 draft laws after thorough discussion, including the draft state budget for the

fiscal year 2024, and significant laws related to real estate registration, judicial enforcement, and job localisation in the private sector. Additionally, the Council discussed nine draft laws amending existing provisions and submitted 13 general discussion requests and a proposal addressing various issues such as rainwater accumulation, tourism economy development, investment support, and domestic worker departure procedures.

In the realm of community engagement, HE al-Ghanem emphasised the Council's interaction with educational institutions and collaboration with the Ministry of Sports and Youth in implementing the 'Simulation of Shura Council Sessions'

programme, aimed at enhancing youth involvement in decision-making.

He also underscored the Council's active participation in Gulf, Arab and international parliamentary activities, reiterating its support for just causes, particularly the Palestinian cause, condemning the aggression on Gaza, and urging other parliaments to support peace efforts.

HE al-Ghanem concluded his speech by expressing gratitude to the heads and members of the standing committees for their dedication, the media for their professional coverage of the Council's activities, and the General Secretariat for its continuous support of the Council's efforts. (QNA)

## Media's role vital, says Shura Council speaker

From Page 1

After the meeting, HE al-Ghanem, in a post on his X account said: "I was pleased today with the presence of a number of local media leaders at the closing session of the third session of the first legislative term of the Shura Council, and I was pleased with our fruitful meeting following

the session, where we exchanged conversations about the vital role that the media plays in conveying facts and building community awareness. The power of the media is evident in its ability to convey the voice of the citizen and reflect the pulse of the street. During the meeting, we appreciated the great role played by the media, and praised their distin-

guished performance and great interest in conveying the news of the Shura Council. Without a doubt, the media is an important partner in promoting the development and prosperity of our country. I wish our local media success and prosperity, and may they remain an example of honesty and high professionalism."

## Qatar hosts 3rd GCC Cybersecurity Executive Committee meeting

Qatar hosted yesterday the third meeting of the GCC Cybersecurity Executive Committee with the participation of the undersecretaries of ministries and deputies of the bodies and centres concerned with cybersecurity in the region.

In his opening speech, Adviser to the President of National Cybersecurity Agency, Abdullah bin Jassim al-Sayed, stressed the importance of enhancing international co-operation, and praised the efforts of the technical committees affiliated with the Executive Committee in preparing the Gulf Cybersecurity Strategy.

He noted the need to intensify efforts to achieve the common goal between the countries of the region within the frame-



work of the strategy, and urged the encouragement and development of scientific research and innovation in the field of cybersecurity.

The director of the Telecommunica-

tions and E-Government Department at the GCC General Secretariat, Maher bin Abdullah al-Saleh, praised the efforts of Qatar and the interest and continuous support it gives to the progress of the Co-

operation Council in various fields.

Topics on the agenda discussed included the Gulf Cybersecurity Strategy, the first Gulf Cybersecurity Hackathon, and the Gulf Cyber Exercises scheduled to be



held in Doha in November.

The meeting also discussed the agenda of the next GCC Cybersecurity Ministerial Committee meeting due in Doha in October. - QNA

## MCIT holds workshop to discuss Digital Government Model Index

The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) organised a workshop yesterday at the Digital Centre of Excellence Msheireb to discuss the outcomes of the Digital Government Model and assess the digital transformation maturity of government entities.

The workshop was aimed at reviewing the performance development mechanisms, evaluate the index's effectiveness in government entities, and discuss the key findings of the reports issued by the entities that participated in the first phase.

This workshop follows a previous one, where the MCIT launched the Digital

Transformation Maturity Index Model for Government Entities.

Representatives from the MCIT, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Sports and Youth, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Social Development and Family, the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the Civil Service and Government Development Bureau, and the Supreme Judiciary Council participated in the workshop.

The MCIT developed the Digital Govern-

ment Model to enhance government capabilities, promote a comprehensive government approach, and, most importantly, support the urgent and significant implementation of the Digital Agenda 2030.

This model is crucial for helping government agencies identify their maturity levels regarding key organisational and technological aspects to improve government digital transformation.

The Digital Government Model comprises six pillars: leadership and governance, technology and innovation, e-services, data, sustainable development goals, and cybersecurity.

The model acts as a planning and decision-support tool designed to enrich decision-making in areas requiring investment to increase government entities' capacity for leadership and innovation in digital government.

It enables government entities to identify necessary actions to enhance the quality of their digital operations, their effectiveness in supporting digital services and programmes, and their achievement of goals and expectations related to service innovation and government transformation.

The model is a valuable tool for officials in government entities in Qatar, assisting them in digital transformation by developing digital government strategies aligned with Qatar's Digital Agenda 2030 and comprehensive government concept.

It helps form a comprehensive understanding of digital transformation in their entities, identify potential gaps, benchmark their digital transformation maturity, and enhance collaboration with other government entities and the community.

The model also facilitates knowledge exchange and best practices, improves



decision-making and investment in technology, raises awareness and understanding of emerging technologies and models, and aligns digital transformation strategies with global practices.

It builds the capacity of government entities to innovate and achieve excellence in digital transformation.

The director of the MCIT's Digital Transformation Excellence Department, Farha al-Kuwari, stated: "The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology seeks to accelerate digital transformation in government institutions by developing an advanced and sustainable technological infrastructure."

"This workshop, a crucial part of the ministry's efforts, is designed to support various government entities in their digital journey actively," the official said. "It will enhance their efficiency and competitiveness through innovative digital strategies that promote inclusivity and sustainable prosperity in the digital age, which aligns with the 2030 digital agenda and Qatar National Vision 2030."

These combined efforts will elevate Qatar's efficiency by solidifying its position as a regional and global digital transformation leader, she added.

The results of Qatar's Digital Government Model will help identify areas of high and low maturity or capabilities, determine risks to digital government strategies, formulate risk mitigation strategies, and outline a roadmap for successful digital government transformation. - QNA



Snapshots from the workshop in session.



## QARS takes part in International Radio Amateurs Exhibition

The Qatar Amateur Radio Society (QARS) has concluded its participation in the International Radio Amateurs Exhibition "Friedrichshafen Exhibition" in Germany.

In a statement yesterday, the QARS said that its pavilion at the exhibition, which was held from June 20-30, witnessed a large turnout from various participants.

Qatar's participation was the only Arab presence at the event.

Visitors could learn about the specifications of the Qatari Es'hail satellite - 2, which was launched in 2018 and carried an amateur radio transmitter, and is considered the first amateur transmitter on a satellite launched in fixed orbit in the world.

The presentation showcased by the QARS during the exhibition about the amateur transmitter on the satellite also witnessed the largest viewership among other presentations presented by participating amateur radio associations and clubs.

QARS chairman Abdullah bin Hamad al-Attiyah expressed his pleasure for the QARS's participation in the Friedrichshafen Exhibition.

He said that the participation of the QARS's members in international forums allows the society to publicise the most important achievements made by Qatar, and the region in terms of amateur radio.

Al-Attiyah added that the exhibition was also an opportunity for Qatari amateurs to gain international experience and exchange information with international experts in this hobby, and learn about the most important advances in modern technology in the field of devices and equipment for the amateur radio.

The Friedrichshafen Exhibition is held annually and is considered the largest of its kind in the world.

The exhibition features a forum in which wireless amateurs around the world participate.

Topics related to the wireless hobby are discussed in light of the growth in the world of communications and technology.

The QARS was established in 1991 to promote and develop the radio hobby in Qatar, regulate its practice in accordance with the local and international laws, and co-operate with the authorities in setting regulations related to granting licences to practise the radio hobby and the devices that are used for this purpose. - QNA

## TSE Polishing Plant to save freshwater opens at Katara

From Page 1

Katara's expanding green spaces, which cover about half of the Cultural Village, necessitated an innovative, sustainable, and eco-friendly solution to maintain its greenery.

This project addresses that need while showcasing Qatar's commitment to sustainable development.

During a site visit yesterday, Veolia deputy operations director Ahmed Fahmy, along with Katara Project operations director engineer Bouthaina al-Emadi, provided insight into the plant's design and resource utilisation.

Al-Emadi further stated that the waste generated from the plant is treated to comply with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change parameters.

Fahmy underlined the careful planning and surveying that ensured the project's integration into Katara's existing infrastructure, specifically the Energy Centre.

"This plant had to be designed in a way to fit in an existing building," he said. "We are getting the highest recovery, minimum power supply and minimum space in order to fit within this existing area."

Fahmy highlighted the measures taken to ensure the plant's long-term performance and sustainability, saying: "One is by doing the design from the beginning in a way that can sus-



The project was seamlessly integrated into the existing Katara Energy Centre, utilising advanced technology and design to optimise space and power within the limited plot area.

tain the requirement of the operation in different scenarios?"

"Second, we have the system in order to operate the plant by qualified operators," he con-

tinued. "Third, we are connecting the system to our Hubgrade digital technologies, enabling us to monitor the site 24/7 and provide essential operational insights."

## QC ready to announce summer activities



Qatar Charity (QC)'s Centre for Community Development, Al Rayyan Branch, has completed preparations for the fifth edition of its annual 'Your Summer is Different-5' programme, on July 7. The QC aims to provide a group of 80 girls, in the 10-18 age group, with cultural knowledge and life and scientific skills that combine recreation, enjoyment, and benefit during the summer vacation.

Those wishing to register for the programme can call 44290000 or 50014579. Several ministries, institutions and companies are participating in the programme.

## GCO underscores role of effective communication in driving govt success

The Government Communications Office (GCO) hosted the first semi-annual joint Newsroom meeting in the presence of communications professionals representing 26 government and semi-government entities in Qatar. This initiative aims to establish a comprehensive and streamlined communications system by addressing pressing challenges, building capabilities, and improving decision-making processes.

The meeting featured presentations on Qatar's communications landscape, innovative communications tools and lessons learned. Participants also engaged in an in-depth analysis of current government communications frameworks and a workshop on the strategic communications.

In his opening address, HE the GCO Director, Sheikh Jassim bin Mansour bin Jabor al-Thani, underscored the role of effective



communication in driving governmental success, emphasising its power in fostering co-operation among government entities and aligning efforts to achieve Qatar's development goals.

He added that various institutions across Qatar are now elevating their communications strategies, focusing on developing reliable channels that serve as trusted sources for the public.

The event's opening session focused on the GCO's efforts in coordinating crisis responses among

various entities. Participants were invited to identify and discuss best practices that ensure effective communication and mitigate the impact of crises.

During the closing session, attendees took part in a workshop titled 'Strategic Communications: Challenges and Solutions', where they discussed key challenges faced in the national communication system and explored solutions to develop efficiency and unify messaging across the country. (QNA)

# Travel, tourism sector set to contribute QR90.8bn to Qatari economy in 2024

By Pratap John  
Business Editor

Travel and tourism sector is set to contribute an "all-time high" of QR90.8bn to the Qatari economy this year, which will account for 11.3% of total output, according to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTTC)'s 2024 Economic Impact Research (EIR).

The sector will support more than 334,500 jobs across Qatar, which will account for 15.8% of the total workforce in 2024, WTTTC noted.

Spending by international travellers is expected to increase significantly this year, with forecasts indicating a record spend of QR69.6bn this year, while domestic spend is projected to reach QR12bn.

"This success is testament of the government's commitment in prioritising collaboration between the public and private sectors to boost Qatar's travel and tourism, creating diverse and immersive experiences for visitors.

"As part of these collaborative efforts, dedicated working groups across multiple industries have been established, with regular meetings planned to tackle challenges and leverage private sector expertise to drive travel and tourism growth," WTTTC said in its

Economic Impact Research.

WTTTC President & CEO Julia Simpson said: "Qatar's travel and tourism sector is poised to break records this year, highlighting its significance as a leading destination in the Middle East.

"While international visitor spending is lagging behind the previous peak, the government's efforts and emphasis in collaboration will propel Qatar's travel and tourism growth, setting the stage to play a crucial role in the national economic landscape, promising a future defined by prosperity and opportunity."

The global tourism body is forecasting that the sector will grow its annual GDP contribution to more than QR135bn by 2034, nearly 13% of Qatar's economy, and is projected to employ nearly 458,000 people across the country, with one in five residents working in the sector.

The Middle Eastern Travel & Tourism sector grew by more than 25% in 2023 to reach almost \$460bn. Jobs reached nearly 7.75mn and international spending grew by 50% to reach \$179.8bn. Domestic visitor spending grew by 16.5% to reach more than \$205bn.

WTTTC is forecasting that Travel & Tourism across the region will continue to grow throughout 2024 with the GDP contribution set to reach \$507bn.

Jobs are forecast to reach 8.3mn, international visitor spending is forecast to reach \$198bn and domestic visitor spending is expected to reach more than \$224bn.

World Travel & Tourism Council's 2024 Economic Impact Research has revealed the Qatari travel and tourism sector reached new heights last year, with GDP contribution, jobs and domestic traveller spend all surpassing previous peaks.

Last year, travel and tourism GDP contribution grew by 31% to reach a record-breaking QR81.2bn, representing 10.3% of Qatar's total economic output, demonstrating the sector's importance to the national economy, WTTTC noted.

The sector also proved to be a vital source of employment, creating more than 20,300 new jobs, and raising the total to nearly 286,000 nationwide, representing one in every eight jobs across the country.

Domestic visitor spend was also stronger than ever to reach QR1.4bn.

"Yet despite holding the FIFA World Cup in the previous year (2022) and with spending by overseas visitors increasing by nearly 40% year-on-year to reach QR60.4bn, it was still behind the previous peak by QR1.2bn," WTTTC said.

## OFFICIAL

### Amir sends condolences to Amir of Kuwait

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani and HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent cable of condolences to Kuwait's Amir Sheikh Meshal al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah on the death of Sheikhha Sahera al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah, widow of Sheikh Fahad al-Hamad al-Mubarak al-Sabah. (QNA)

## Amir sends cables of congratulations to...

### ...Mauritanian president on his re-election

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani sent a cable of congratulations to Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Cheikh Ghazouani on his re-election to a second presidential term, wishing him success and continued development and prosperity for relations between the two countries. His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani also sent a similar cable of congratulations to President Ghazouani.

### ...Governor-general of Canada

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent yesterday cables of congratulations to Governor-General of Canada Mary Simon on the occasion of Canada Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a similar of congratulations to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

### ...President of Burundi

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent yesterday cables of congratulations to President of Burundi Evariste Ndayishimiye on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a similar of congratulations to Prime Minister Gervais Ndirakobuca.

### ...Somali president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent yesterday cables of congratulations to Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a similar cable of congratulations to Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre.

### ...Rwandan president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent yesterday cables of congratulations to Rwandan President Paul Kagame on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a similar of congratulations to Prime Minister Dr Edouard Ngirente.

### ... Australia's new governor-general

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani sent a cable of congratulations to Sam Mostyn on the occasion of her swearing-in as the new Governor-General of Australia. The Amir wished her success and the bilateral relations between the two countries enduring development and growth. His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani also sent a cable of congratulations to Sam Mostyn. (QNA)

## Qatar participates in 69th session of ACAO Executive Council



The Qatar Civil Aviation Authority (QCAA) is participating in the 69th session of the Executive Council of the Arab Civil Aviation Organisation (ACAO), taking place in Rabat, Morocco, over two days. The Qatari delegation is chaired by Mohamed bin Faleh al-Hajri, In Charge of Managing QCAA. The meeting will discuss a number of topics related to air transport, air navigation, aviation safety and security, and environmental issues. The Executive Council will also discuss ways to implement ACAO's strategic objectives and enhance joint action, with the aim of advancing the Arab civil aviation industry. (QNA)

### QatarEnergy LNG Tender Invitation



No.	TENDER NUMBER / DESCRIPTION	TENDER ISSUE PERIOD	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (USD)	TENDER CLOSING DATE
1	LTC/C/FDE/6533/24 PROVISION OF GENERAL ENGINEERING SERVICES ON CALL-OFF BASIS	01/07/2024 to 13/07/2024	0	100,000	31/07/2024

#### Scope of Work:

Provision of following services on call-off basis:  
a) General Engineering Services including Feasibility Studies, Concept definition development and selection, Engineering Consultancy, Pre-FEED, FEED, Detailed design, Specialized Engineering Services, OEM Engineering Coordination, Process Enhancement, Value Engineering Services, Engineering Project Management / Support Services, Engineering Standards & Specification Support and Documentation Services  
b) Engineering Manpower Services and  
c) Miscellaneous Engineering Services.

Mandatory requirements for this Tender are as below:

1. Tenderer should have proven experience in handling similar work/services as shown above in last 5 years for Oil & Gas/Petrochemical industry
2. Tenderer should have demonstrated handling minimum Five (5) LNG and / or Oil & Gas / Petrochemical Facility Greenfield / Brownfield projects
3. Tenderer shall have an established Engineering Office
4. Tenderer shall have current and valid ISO 9001 certification
5. Tenderer shall have comprehensive Engineering Standards/Guidelines (Design Manual)

**Bid Validity:** Bid should be valid for 180 calendar days from the Tender Closing Date.

#### Place for Tender Collection and Bid Submission:

ITT document for this tender will be available in QatarEnergy LNG website under Suppliers tab >Current Open Tenders. The bids shall be submitted through the QatarEnergy LNG online platform (SMART by GEP).

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

## QNL partners with IASA to foster heritage preservation across region

Qatar National Library (QNL) took another step towards fostering heritage preservation efforts across the region, this time in partnership with the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA). As the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), Preservation and Conservation (PAC) Regional Centre for the Mena region, the library partnered with IASA to complete Arabic translations of four pivotal publications from IASA's Technical Committee. QNL said in a press statement today. These translations will empower regional organisations and professionals to leverage IASA's technical conservation expertise in the audiovisual field to preserve and disseminate the region's cultural heritage, the statement indicated. Executive Director of QNL Tan Huism emphasised the significance of this collaboration in advancing preservation efforts across the Mena region. For his part, IASA President Patrick J Midtlyng expressed gratitude for the collaboration with Qatar National Library and underscored the global importance of these publications. "By partnering with QNL to translate these key documents into Arabic, IASA is fulfilling its mission to promote international co-operation and knowledge sharing in the field of sound and audiovisual archives," he said. (QNA)

## QATAR FERTILISER COMPANY INVITATION TO TENDER

### QAFCO ANNOUNCES THE FOLLOWING TENDER

TENDER NO.	DESCRIPTION OF WORKS	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER FEE RECEIPT SUBMISSION DATES	TENDER CLOSING DATE
RFQ-600001010	DESIGN, ENGINEERING, PROCUREMENT, FABRICATION, CONSTRUCTION, INSPECTION AND TESTING SERVICES (EPC)- TO PROVIDE BYPASS ARRANGEMENT FROM U0001 OUTLET TO U0002 OUTLET LINE TO BYPASS H2S REMOVAL UNIT IN AMMONIA 3 and 4 PLANTS	500/- (Non-refundable)	-	02.07.2024 03.07.2024 04.07.2024 07.07.2024 08.07.2024 09.07.2024	06.08.2024

#### GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

- During the period this tender is offered, the interested bidders shall first deposit appropriate Tender Fee amount in cash (Cheque will not be accepted) into Company's following Account at any QNB branch:
  - Account Name : QATAR FERTILISER COMPANY (QAFCO)
  - Account Number : 0013-025828-058
  - IBAN : QA51QNBAA00000000013025828058
  - Bank Name : QATAR NATIONAL BANK
- The interested Bidders shall mention their company's name and Tender Number on the payment receipt provided by the bank and submit it as Tender Fee receipt.
- Besides the Tender fee receipt (which should have the Tender Number and bidder's name clearly mentioned on it), interested bidders shall also submit a copy of the valid Commercial Registration, an authorization letter from their company with the name, telephone, fax and e-mail ID of the focal point for this tender (**Very Important**) during the submission of Tender Fee Receipt for ensuring electronic receipt of the Tender Document.
- Tender Fee Receipt along with the specified documents shall be submitted to [purchase@qafco.com.qa](mailto:purchase@qafco.com.qa) on the dates indicated above, after payment of Tender Fee (nonrefundable).
- After submission of the above documents to the above email, Tender Document will be provided through an electronic platform separately after the last date of Tender Fee Receipt Submission Date.
- For any queries related to non-receipt of the tender documents after the last date of Tender Fee Receipt Submission Date, you may contact at 'purchase@qafco.com.qa' or on 44227797
- Technical & Commercial details and Submission Procedures will be specified in the Tender Documents.
- The Company will not consider any offer without the enclosure of the Tender Bond.
- Bids shall be submitted at QAFCO Tender Office, between 09:30 – 11 :00 hours during the Holy month of Ramadan and 09:30 – 11:30 hours and 12:30 – 14:00 hours, of any working day of the Company, on/before the "Tender Closing Date".

## Indian embassy to outsource consular services soon: envoy



Indian ambassador Vipul during the interview with *Gulf Times*.  
PICTURE: Thajudheen

By Joseph Varghese  
Staff Reporter

To meet the demands of its burgeoning population in Qatar, the Indian embassy is planning to outsource its consular service very soon, *Gulf Times* has learnt. "This is a proposal we are discussing with the Ministry of External Affairs in India so that we can be far more efficient and provide better consular services. We are at an advanced stage of discussions and it will take place sometime soon," Indian ambassador Vipul told *Gulf Times*. "Once it is outsourced, the entire services will be done by the agency that will handle it. This includes issuing of new passports, renewal of the passports, visa service, police verification certificates, attestation of documents among others," explained the envoy. According to the ambassador, the current Indian population in Qatar is slightly in excess of 800,000 and the consular service needs are on the increase. At present all these services are done at the embassy. In addition, two apex bodies under the Indian embassy also carry out some of the consular services.

The Indian envoy noted that the passports are generally issued at the embassy within a reasonably good time without much delay. He elaborated: "Currently, we are issuing the passports in about 10 days including the weekend holidays. So, essentially it is done in about seven to eight working days. It is our effort to bring it down further. Several of the other documents are done and issued on the same day." "Sometimes there is a surge in application for passport renewal due to several reasons such as the holiday season and delays can happen at that time. During last March and April, there was some heavy rush for passport services and hence there was some delay for the passport renewal," he continued. The ambassador said the embassy has taken every effort to provide the consular services at the earliest and very efficiently. "One of my priorities is to see that the consular services are delivered well on time and the outsourcing of it will make it smoother and faster. Though the current number of days to issue a new passport is fairly reasonable by most standards, we are putting in our efforts to bring the number of days further down," added ambassador Vipul.

## Sidra Medicine in Qatar first to administer gene therapy

Sidra Medicine, a member of Qatar Foundation, has made history as the first hospital in Qatar and the fifth in the world to administer Elevidys worldwide, a revolutionary gene therapy medication for treating Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD).

Sidra Medicine administered Elevidys to Chris El Kik, a young international patient from Lebanon who became the first recipient of the drug in Qatar, a statement said yesterday.

DMD is the most common form of inherited muscle disorders. It primarily affects males, with a prevalence of approximately one in 3,500 live male births.

Elevidys is currently the only gene therapy medication available for treating DMD. It works by delivering a functional dystrophin gene into the muscle and heart cells. The process slows disease progression and enhances muscle function. The drug was secured through Ebn Sina Medical, a local agent for Roche Pharmaceuticals, which is responsible for making Elevidys. It was cleared by the US Food and Drug Administration in June 2024, for a wide range of DMD patients, including children aged four and older.

Dr Tawfeq Ben-Omran, division chief, Genetics and Genomic Medicine at Sidra Medicine said: "Our collaborative and multidisciplinary team, headed by Dr Khalid Ibrahim, senior consultant neurologist and neuromuscular specialist, work across diagnosis, medication, treatment, prevention, and research - all through the lens of precision medicine.



Chris El Kik, from Lebanon became the first recipient of the drug in Qatar.

Adding a treatment protocol for DMD is another milestone for Sidra Medicine, showcasing our leadership as an expert in the field of personalised medicine for children with genetic diseases."

El Kik is currently under observation by a dedicated team from the hospital, who are closely monitoring the drug's effectiveness and supporting him and his family with crucial outpatient services including child-life, nutrition, physical and mental health support. He is expected to be in Qatar for several weeks.

Dr Iyabo Tinubu-Karch, chief executive officer at Sidra Medicine said: "Qatar's adoption

of Elevidys solidifies its position as a leader in advanced healthcare and families seeking the best possible care for their children. This accomplishment highlights our commitment to providing hope and world-class care for children with rare diseases, empowering them to live healthier and more fulfilling lives. With established protocols in place, we can confidently position ourselves as a trusted care provider and DMD gene therapy centre for the GCC and Mena region."

Sidra Medicine is in the process of preparing three patients from Qatar and two young international patients from Kuwait to receive the same drug, the statement added.

## PHCC retains Diamond-level accreditation

The Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) has successfully retained its Diamond-level accreditation for the third time, achieving an overall compliance rate of 99.8% across all sites, a statement said yesterday.

PHCC, under the leadership of managing director Dr Mariam Abdulmalik, has also been honoured with the first-ever globally recognised People-Centered Care Centre of Excellence Award from Accreditation Canada.

Dr Amal al-Ali, executive di-

rector, Quality and Patient Safety Directorate, announced that a comprehensive evaluation by Accreditation Canada surveyors included site visits to all 31 health centres and PHCC headquarters. The assessment focused on the culture of quality, patient safety, and people-centred care across all sites.

Syed Hamza, director of quality improvement and accreditation, emphasised that PHCC firmly believes that better quality leads to better health outcomes.

"It is the steadfast commit-

ment to upholding this belief that has brought PHCC this prestigious recognition today.

"The organisation takes immense pride in its teams' dedication and relentless efforts in delivering safe and quality care, which are the driving forces behind their success. It is the strong work ethics and unwavering commitment to showcasing a culture of quality, patient safety, and people-centred care that truly sets PHCC apart from others, the statement added.



Dr Mariam Abdulmalik

## Kahramaa announces registrations for Tarsheed competitions 2024

Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation (Kahramaa), represented by the Conservation and Energy Efficiency Department, announced the start of registration for competitions of the 11th edition of the National Programme for Conservation and Energy Efficiency, Tarsheed.

The initiative aims to encourage all entities in the government or private sector, as well as individuals, researchers, and students, to innovate ideas and implement projects that contribute to the rationalisation of electricity and water consumption and the efficiency of their use to achieve sustainability.

This will be done through 12 competitions for all sectors, according to specific technical standards and conditions, which can be viewed and registered for through the corporation's website from now until the end of September 2024.

Through Tarsheed Conserving Building Competition buildings that apply the best practices in the efficient use of electricity and water and contribute to reducing harmful carbon emissions will be selected. The aim is to promote entities and individuals that implement building conservation practices and to spread awareness about electricity and water conservation in buildings among all sectors of the state within categories: (residential buildings - industrial buildings - sports buildings - government buildings - commercial buildings - hospitality buildings).

The Best Building Retrofitting Competition aims to encourage all entities and those responsible for buildings to update the tools used in existing buildings to ensure energy conservation and improve efficiency in its use. The competition is subject to certain evaluation criteria such as: the building's air conditioning system should be based on a system that supports energy efficiency or uses energy-efficient electrical appliances and lighting devices like LED bulbs and others, as well as water-saving devices such as efficient faucet heads and smart irrigation methods.

The Best Sustainable Building Design applies the conservation code for buildings with the aim of spreading awareness about the

concept of building design conservation among individuals, consultancy offices, and contracting companies, and the benefits of applying proper conservation practices. It also aims to motivate the market to adopt the best building practices.

The competition is subject to technical standards and is evaluated by an expert committee comprising representatives from research centres, universities, and ministries, who assess the nominated designs at various stages.

In the field of smart applications, Kahramaa has launched a competition for the Best Smart Solution in the Field of Sustainability and Energy Efficiency. An application can provide a service related to energy efficiency or offer interactive smart games that convey the message of conservation and energy efficiency in an enjoyable way, especially for future generations.

Additionally, there is a competition for the Best District Cooling System Performance aimed at enhancing the district cooling system in Qatar and ensuring the application of the required standards and specifications for continuous improvement. It provides the best practices, innovations, and solutions that increase the value and significance of the district cooling system by suppliers and developers, and spread the concept of the culture of energy efficiency through district cooling systems.

The Best Water Recycling Initiative competition aims to increase awareness and support the efforts of entities in conserving water. The initiative focuses on applying water recycling in irrigating green spaces, agriculture, construction activities, central cooling systems, industrial purposes, and more.

The Best Graduation Project for Energy Efficiency competition invites all engineering college students in the country who have a graduation project for a bachelor's, master's, or PhD degree on the efficiency electricity and water use to submit their projects. The project must be the students' own innovation and must not have participated in other awards.

The Best Project in Renewable Energy competition aims two categories, one for individuals and the other for entities, to encour-

age participants to collaborate on projects that benefit from renewable energy sources and reduce electricity consumption from the grid, as well as reduce the carbon footprint. The project must present innovative methods for generating and using renewable energy, and it should have a positive impact on the environment.

The Tarsheed Short Story Competition for School Students encourages school students to write a story about how to preserve electricity and water resources through positive and correct practices in our daily lives to rationalise their consumption and spread awareness within the community for a better life.


The competition aims to disseminate the cultural and societal values associated with conservation and energy efficiency among the future generation, and to urge students to read and invest their energy towards development and social responsibility.

Among the competitions directed at school students, there is also the Best School Project on Sustainability and Energy Efficiency, which is open to all school students in Qatar. They are invited to submit applied research projects that highlight solutions to the challenges included in SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12, and 13 of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals announced by the United Nations.

The Tarsheed Competition for the Best Innovative Idea in Energy Efficiency also supports creative and innovative thinking within the framework of working towards energy conservation and efficiency by presenting innovative, feasible ideas that add value to energy efficiency.

Finally, to encourage the community to use electric vehicles, a competition for the Highest Electric Vehicle User has been launched. The conditions of the competition require that the car be owned by the participant, and the winner will be determined based on the usage rate and the best performance of the electric engine.

Interested participants in the competitions can enter Tarsheed page on Kahramaa official website to obtain more information and view the registration conditions and competition criteria, a statement added.



### Invitation to participate in Barwa Tender

Barwa Real Estate Company wishes to invite capable and competent companies to participate in the tender described below :

Tender Reference	Tender Description	Tender Bond	Non-refundable Tender Fees	Closing Date
BRE/RFP/ITD/016/2024	Providing one-year warranty for VxRail Software	N/A	QAR 200	23 July 2024 12.00 p.m.

To receive the tender documents, a copy of the tender fee deposit slip and commercial registration of the bidder must be forwarded to the following email address: [Tender@barwa.com.qa](mailto:Tender@barwa.com.qa)


To pay the tender fee, it should be deposited into the following account:

**Beneficiary : Barwa Real Estate Company**  
**Bank Name : Dukhan Bank, Main Branch, Doha - Qatar**  
**Account No. : 200000008022**  
**IBAN Number : QA04BRWA000000000200000008022**

No offers submitted beyond the closing date will be considered

Tender bids to be submitted to:

**Tender Committee Secretary**  
**Barwa Real Estate Company**  
**Barwa Al-Sadd Towers - Tower 1 - 16th Floor**  
**P.O Box: 27777 Doha-Qatar**



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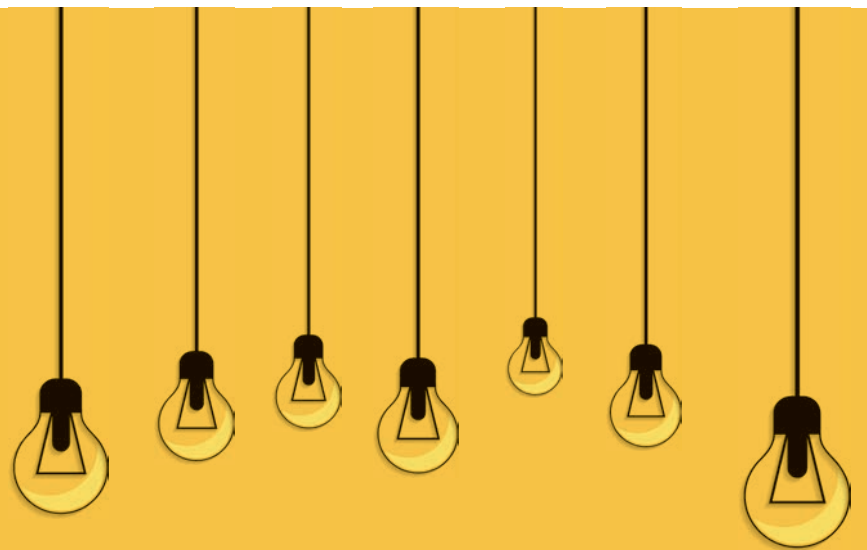
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## Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som invites Qatar residents to prioritise health and wellness with 25% off retreats



As part of its commitment to the local community, Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som, Middle East's first full immersion wellbeing destination, invites the residents of Qatar to enjoy an exclusive gift 25% off retreats and stays in Zulal Discovery.



Just a one-hour drive north of Doha, the campaign encourages Qatar residents to prioritise their health and wellbeing in a serene escape from the hustle and bustle of the city. Whether residents seek relaxation, stress relief, or holistic health improvement, the resort's diverse selection of retreats each incorporate a health and wellness consultation upon arrival, luxury overnight accommodation, three wellness cuisine meals per night of stay served in one of Zulal Discovery's award-winning cuisines, a personalised programme of wellness treatments, access to fitness and leisure activities, in-room wellness amenities, daily laundry services and more wellness benefits.

Perfect for first-time visitors, the Taste of Zulal retreat provides

a personalised journey of self-discovery and change; Mind Body Wellness focuses on replenishing through a range of holistic activities, and Stress Reset and Burnout Recovery offers a unique blend of wellness wisdom and modern therapies to overcome stress and burnout.

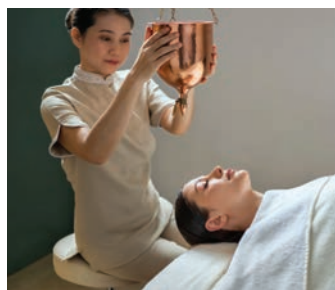
For guests seeking a leaner year ahead, the Natural Slimming retreat helps kickstart a healthy journey through lifestyle changes. Sustainable Weight Loss combines diet with metabolism-boosting exercise and detoxing spa treatments, while the Therapeutic Cleanse retreat offers a metabolic boost in addition to the benefits of detoxification.



The Serenity Beauty retreat has been curated to restore a youthful appearance through spa and aesthetics treatments, while Optimal Physio - Fit caters to those looking to return to physical fitness or optimize their current level of performance.

Families in Qatar, or those expecting one can indulge in the

Mother to Be retreat, which offers relaxation and empowerment for expecting mothers. Zulal Wellness Resort also offers wellness programmes designed specifically for children and parents. At Zulal Discovery they can experience Zulal Nurture Kinder, which focuses on creativity and free expression for children below 4 years old. Zulal Explore Junior introduces children aged 4 to 8 to a healthy lifestyle through activities, nutrition, and treatments. Zulal Adventure, designed for children aged 9 to 12, empowers young guests to build self-esteem and develop positive relationships. Zulal Young Adults, aimed at teenagers aged 13 to 17, encourages self-discovery and accomplishment through a broad range of physical and mental skill sets.



This exclusive offer is available only to Qatar residents and supports part of a wider corporate social responsibility (CSR) campaign. Zulal Wellness Resort is committed to giving back to the community, nurturing the health of the community, and collaborating for sustainability.

Applicable only to Qatar residents and requires a valid ID upon check-in, the 25% discount applies to the Best Available Rate of retreats and stays in Zulal Discovery and cannot be combined with other promotions. Residents can take advantage of this health investment opportunity throughout 2024. The offer ends on 31 December 2024.

For more information or reservations, please email Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som at [reservations@zulal.com](mailto:reservations@zulal.com), call/WhatsApp +974 4477 6500 or visit [www.zulal.com](http://www.zulal.com)

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Al-Shifa hospital director Mohamed Abu Salmiya who was detained by Israeli forces since November, makes a statement after his release alongside other detainees, at Nasser hospital in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip, yesterday.

## Gaza hospital chief claims torture in Israel detention

AFP  
Deir el-Balah

The head of the Gaza Strip's biggest hospital said yesterday after being freed from more than seven months of detention that he had been "tortured" by Israel.

Al-Shifa hospital director Mohamed Abu Salmiya was among dozens of Palestinians released and returned to Gaza for treatment, according to Israeli authorities.

Abu Salmiya said he and other prisoners were put through "severe torture" in Israeli prisons, after being detained since the October first week cross-border storming by Hamas.

"Several inmates died in interrogation centres and were deprived of food and medicine," according to Abu Salmiya, who said he still had a broken thumb.

"For two months no prisoner ate more than a loaf of bread a day," he added.

"Detainees were subjected to physical and psychological humiliation."

The medical chief said no charge had ever been made against him.

Israel's Shin Bet intelligence agency said it had decided on the release with the Israeli military "to free up places in detention centres".

The agency said it "opposed the release of fighters" who had taken part in attacks on Israeli civilians "so it was decided to free several Gaza detainees who represent a lesser danger".

However commenting on X, formerly Twitter, National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir called Abu Salmiya's release "with dozens of other fighters" a "security abandonment".

Israeli forces detained Abu Salmiya during one of a number of raids on Al-Shifa.

**EMOTIONAL REUNIONS**

Al-Shifa hospital has been reduced to rubble by successive raids since Israel launched its assault on Gaza after the October

first week Hamas storming.

After crossing back to Gaza near the city of Khan Yunis, five detainees were admitted to Al-Aqsa hospital and the others were sent to hospitals in Khan Yunis, a medical source said.

An AFP correspondent at Deir Al-Balah saw some detainees in emotional reunions with their families.

Abu Salmiya was not the only top medical practitioner detained.

The Gaza European hospital in Khan Yunis said the head of its orthopaedic unit, Bassam Miqdad, was among those freed yesterday.

In May, Palestinian rights groups said a senior Al-Shifa surgeon had died in an Israeli jail after being detained. The Israeli army said it was unaware of the death.

The war started with Hamas' October first week storming of Israel. Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed at least 37,900 people, also mostly civilians, according to Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry.

## Nigeria weekend suicide bomb attack toll climbs to 32

AFP  
Maiduguri

The death toll from multiple suicide bombings in the northeastern Nigerian town of Gwoza over the weekend has risen to 32, the country's vice-president Kashim Shettima said yesterday.

Saturday's attacks involving female suicide bombers targeting a wedding, a hospital and a funeral was one of the worst in northeast Nigeria in years, a reminder of the darker days of the country's long-running struggle with militants.

"So far, 32 people lost their lives.

Forty-two (injured) were brought from Gwoza," Shettima said, visiting a hospital in the Borno State capital Maiduguri where some of the wounded were being treated.

Initial reports had estimated the death toll at 18 people.

No group has claimed responsibility for the blasts, but the Boko Haram group is active around Gwoza.

More than 40,000 people have been killed and another 2mn people displaced by fighting which started in 2009.

Suicide bombings in towns have become rare since the army pushed militants back from territory they controlled at the height of the con-

flict in 2014, though they still carry out attacks and ambushes in rural areas. "This incident is very shocking," Mohamed Ali Ndume, Borno senator for the ruling APC party, told reporters.

"This is a wake-up call for all of us in Borno State, that we should not be relaxed about security," he added.

"The story of suicide bombing had gone from Borno, but it's unfortunate it is rearing its ugly head again." On Saturday, Gwoza was the target of four almost simultaneous suicide attacks, including at least three perpetrated by female bombers, according to local emergency services. Dozens more were injured.

## Palestinian Authority pledges more backing for NGOs in Gaza

AFP  
Ramallah

The Palestinian Authority yesterday pledged to give greater backing to NGOs in Gaza as it warned that 300,000 families in the beleaguered territory are "marginalised" and need assistance.

The authority held a meeting with about 15 NGOs and aid groups who have complained about increasing problems getting aid into the Gaza Strip and distributing food and other essentials around the territory where Israel has been fighting Hamas for more than eight months. While the Palestinian Authority, which is based in the occupied West Bank, has virtually no influence in Hamas-ruled Gaza, the authority's emergency relief minister Basil al-Kafarna acknowledged the mounting dangers and said: "We are here to support the non-governmental organisations and the agencies for humanitarian relief in the Gaza Strip."



File photo shows a Palestinian family sitting in a room in their apartment with walls destroyed from previous Israeli bombardment, after they returned to the city of Khan Yunis, in the southern Gaza Strip.

He emphasised a number of cooperation projects including two online platforms that monitor the districts and families among Gaza's 2.4mn inhabitants most in need and allow NGOs to highlight problems.

Social development minister Samah Hamad said the authority would be able to provide family records from its social register. "Before (the war) we had about

120,000 families benefiting from cash transfers from the social protection scheme."

Hamad added that the PA believed 300,000 families in Gaza were now "marginalised and going through hardship."

Tens of thousands of Palestinian Authority workers still live in Gaza but the territory has been under Hamas control since 2007.

## Libya reopens Tunisia border crossing after three-month wait

AFP  
Ras Jedir

Libya reopened its Ras Jedir border crossing with Tunisia, the key transit point between the countries, at a ceremony yesterday, three months after it was shut down due to smuggler-related armed clashes.

The event at the crossing in northwestern Libya was attended by both countries' interior ministers alongside other officials, an AFP correspondent reported.

The border crossing was closed on March 19 with Libyan authorities vowing to "ensure the security of the borders and combat crime and smuggling".

Considered vital for Tunisians

and Libyans in the region alike, it had long operated under the sway of local Libyan armed groups.

After authorities decided to take charge of the crossing earlier this year, clashes broke out on the Libyan side between security forces and armed groups.

During a press conference in Ras Jedir yesterday, Tunisian Interior Minister Khaled Nouri expressed hope that the reopening "will have a positive impact on the populations of the neighbouring regions".

The border post in the desert area of Ras Jedir, about 170 kilometres from the Libyan capital Tripoli, is the main crossing point between the two North African countries. People in neighbouring towns have mainly made their

living from cross-border trade — and smuggling. The crossing's reopening, set to take place last month, was delayed when armed groups from the Libyan city of Zuwara, a few dozen kilometres east of the border, erected barricades on the coastal route to protest measures announced by Libyan authorities. "The interior ministries of the two countries will no longer allow border crossings to be exploited for arms and drug trafficking," Libyan Interior Minister Imad Trabelsi said yesterday.

In the meantime, Libyan Local Authorities Minister Badreddine el-Toumi met yesterday with local officials in Zuwara to discuss the city's needs in infrastructure and other services, according to official sources.

## New SA government inspires hope, fear

Reuters  
Cape Town/Johannesburg

South Africa's new unity government inspired cautious optimism yesterday from industry and financial markets but many citizens and political analysts fear the coalition will struggle to deliver economic growth and social change.

President Cyril Ramaphosa appointed former main opposition leader John Steenhuisen to head an important ministry on Sunday, bringing the Democratic Alliance and other parties into a coalition cabinet for the first time in three decades.

The ruling African National

Congress was forced to join rival parties to stay in power after losing its majority in a May 29 poll, getting just 40% of the vote, the first time it has received under half of votes in a national election.

The compromise struck left the DA with six ministries, including agriculture, a major part of South Africa's economy, which went to Steenhuisen, public works, environment and basic education. It also got six deputy minister posts, including finance, trade and energy.

"The sheer weight and spread of these twelve portfolios amount to a recognition that the DA has a vital role to play in the reconstruction of our country," Steenhuisen said in a speech.

### 39 killed in Kenya anti-tax protests

A total of 39 people have been killed in anti-government demonstrations in Kenya, the national rights watchdog said yesterday, as activists geared up for a new round of protests this week, AFP reported from Nairobi. The toll announced by the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights is almost double the figure previously disclosed by the authorities for those killed while contesting a raft of deeply unpopular tax increases that have now been withdrawn. "Data from our records indicates that thirty-nine people have died and three hundred and sixty-one injured in relation to the protests countrywide," the state-funded body said in a statement, adding that the figures covered the period from June 18-July 1.

## Mauritania president re-elected

AFP  
Nouakchott

Mauritania's incumbent President Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani has comfortably won re-election at the helm of the vast desert nation, seen as a rock of relative stability in Africa's volatile Sahel region.

The former army chief won just over 56% of the vote, the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) said yesterday, giving him a second five-year term during which Mauritania is set to become a gas producer.

Dozens of supporters massed outside Ghazouani's campaign headquarters in the capital Nouakchott after the final provisional results of Saturday's election were announced.

"I don't know how to express my joy. Our president is a great president. We are very happy," said 56-year-old Bekouma Mohamed.

The results must now be sent to the Constitutional Council within 48 hours for confirmation.

Ghazouani — who was the overwhelming favourite to win — would have faced a second round had he not secured more than half the votes.



Supporters of the President of Mauritania Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani celebrate in Nouakchott, yesterday.

As it was, he placed well ahead of his main rival, anti-slavery activist Biram Dah Abeid, who won just over 22%.

Abeid, who previously said he would not accept CENI's results, yesterday decried "massive fraud" and said he was waiting for his own teams to provide results before launching possible street demonstrations. "Any protest you make must be peaceful," he told his supporters, according to his campaign's social media account.

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**DEFENCE**  
**North Korea fires two ballistic missiles, one fails**

North Korea yesterday fired two short-range ballistic missiles but one launch failed, South Korea's military said yesterday, a day after Pyongyang warned of "fatal consequences" following major joint exercises in the South. South Korea's joint chiefs of staff said the military had detected two launches, the first at 5.05am (2005GMT) and the second around 10 minutes later. Seoul's military has "strengthened surveillance and vigilance in preparation for further launches", JCS said in a statement. The JCS's Lee declined to comment when asked whether the North's latest launch could have been a test of missiles intended for delivery to Russia.

**CRACKDOWN**  
**11 arrested in Myanmar for inflating rice prices**

Myanmar arrested four executives of supermarket chains, including an official of a Japanese joint venture, for selling rice at inflated prices, state media said yesterday, as the war-torn country's ruling junta struggles to stabilise its economy. The country has been in turmoil since its military deposed an elected civilian government in February 2021, sparking widespread protests that have morphed into a nationwide armed resistance. Authorities said they arrested 11 people, including rice traders and officials of mills and retailers, accusing them of inflating prices by 31% to 70% from prescribed levels, the *Global New Light of Myanmar* newspaper said.

**WILDLIFE**  
**Hope for Mekong dolphins as Cambodia numbers rise**

The number of Mekong dolphins has risen to more than 100 in Cambodia, the agriculture minister said yesterday, raising a glimmer of hope for the endangered mammals. Irrawaddy dolphins - small, shy creatures with domed foreheads and short beaks - once swam through much of the mighty Mekong, all the way to the delta in Vietnam. But their population in the river has dwindled from 200, when the first census was taken in 1997, to just 89 in 2020, largely due to illegal fishing, habitat loss and plastic waste. "Currently, we have some 105 dolphins," Agriculture Minister Dith Tina said.

**DECISION**  
**Tata UK steelworks strike suspended, says union**

A proposed strike next week at Tata Steel UK's sprawling Port Talbot steelworks in south Wales has been called off, unions said yesterday, citing a resumption of talks with management. The Indian-owned giant plans to start shutting the first furnace at the UK's biggest steelworks soon and the second by the end of 2024 under the overhaul, as it transitions to greener production. The Unite trade union had announced in response that Tata staff would begin an indefinite strike from July 8 in protest over the job-slashing plans - but this has now been suspended. Britain's main opposition Labour party had urged Tata to avert the strike.

# Foxconn hiring practices in India raise discrimination concerns: NHRC

Reuters  
New Delhi

India's human rights watchdog yesterday said it had asked government officials to examine reported discrimination by Foxconn, after a Reuters investigation found the major Apple supplier has been rejecting married women from iPhone assembly jobs in the country.

In a statement, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) said it had issued notices to the secretary of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's labour ministry and the chief secretary of the state government of Tamil Nadu, site of a major iPhone factory, calling for a detailed report within a week.

"NHRC observes that the matter, if true, raises a serious issue of discrimination against married women causing the violation of the right to equality and equal opportunity," it said.

The Reuters story has sparked debates on TV channels, newspaper editorials, calls from women groups, including within Modi's party as well as opposition parties to investigate the matter. Modi's federal government has also asked Tamil Nadu state for a "detailed report".

Modi's labour ministry, Apple and Taiwan-based Foxconn did not immediately respond to requests for comment. A Tamil Nadu government spokesman referred questions to its labour depart-

ment, which did not respond.

The Reuters investigation found Foxconn systematically excluded married women from jobs at its main India iPhone plant on the grounds they have more family responsibilities than their unmarried counterparts. Foxconn hiring agents and HR sources cited family duties, pregnancy and higher absenteeism as reasons for not hiring married women.

Responding to the investigation, published last week, Apple and Foxconn acknowledged lapses in hiring practices in 2022 and said they had worked to address the issues.

All the discriminatory practices documented by Reuters at the Tamil Nadu plant, however, took place in 2023 and 2024. The companies didn't address those instances.

Foxconn has said it "vigorously refutes allegations of employment discrimination based on marital status, gender, religion or any other form."

Apple has said all its suppliers, including Foxconn, hire married women and "when concerns about hiring practices were first raised in 2022 we immediately took action and worked with our supplier to conduct monthly audits to identify issues and ensure that our high standards are upheld."

Indian law does not bar companies from discriminating in hiring based on marital status, though Apple's and Foxconn's policies prohibit such practices in their supply chains.



Police and rescuers stand next to a car involved in accident that resulted in several people killed and injured in central Seoul, South Korea, yesterday.

# Nine killed in Seoul as car hits pedestrians

AFP  
Seoul

At least nine people were killed and four others injured when a car struck pedestrians near Seoul city hall yesterday, police said.

There were six fatalities at the scene, while three others were pronounced dead after being rushed to hospital, firefighter Kim Chun-soo said.

South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported that a 68-year-old driver crashed into people who were waiting at a traffic signal.

He was driving in the wrong direction and hit two other vehicles before ploughing into the pedestrians, Yonhap said.

A man was detained by police over the incident, said Kim Suk-hwan, safety and transport director at the city's Jung-gu district office.

Investigations are underway to determine

if drugs or alcohol were involved, as well as whether the deadly incident was caused by accidental acceleration, Kim said.

Seoul Mayor Oh Se-hoon described "a very sad accident" as he visited the crash site, according to city authorities.

He also ordered officials to "take the victims to the hospital quickly and thoroughly identify the cause of the accident".

Deadly transport accidents with multiple casualties are rare in South Korea, which generally has well-maintained roads and vehicles.

**UK house prices edged up in June, says Nationwide**

British house prices showed a small gain in June from May but the impact of higher borrowing costs is still weighing on the property market, mortgage lender Nationwide said yesterday. Prices rose by 0.2% in monthly terms and were 1.5% higher than in June last year, it said. Britain's housing market boomed during the coronavirus pandemic but it has slowed after the Bank of England pushed interest rates to their highest since 2008 last year. Prices as measured by Nationwide are around 3% lower than their record high touched two years ago. "While earnings growth has been much stronger than house price growth in recent years, this hasn't been enough to offset the impact of higher mortgage rates," Robert Gardner, chief economist at Nationwide, said. The Labour Party has promised to relax planning rules in the hope of spurring construction which could make housing more affordable.

**Hong Kong handover anniversary**



Pro-China supporters hold Hong Kong and Chinese flags at an event celebrating the 27th anniversary of the former British colony's handover to Chinese rule in Hong Kong, China, yesterday.

# India's colonial-era criminal laws replaced

Reuters  
New Delhi

India replaced colonial-era criminal laws with new legislation yesterday, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government said would make the country more just, but the opposition said risked throwing the criminal justice system into disarray.

The new laws were approved by parliament in December in Modi's previous term with the government saying they aim to "give justice, not punishment". It says they were needed as colonial laws had been at the core of the criminal justice system for more than a century.

Among the key changes is replacement of the sedition law frequently used as a tool of suppression, after its enactment under

British colonial rule to jail Indian freedom fighters. Under the new laws - which replace the Indian Penal Code, the Indian Evidence Act, and Code of Criminal Procedure - sedition is replaced with a section on acts seen as "endangering the sovereignty, unity, and integrity of India". "About 77 years after independence, our criminal justice system is becoming completely indigenous and will run on Indian ethos," India's Home Minister Amit Shah told reporters. "Instead of punishment, there will now be justice."

Criminal cases registered under the repealed laws before yesterday will continue to follow them, Shah said. "The laws were debated for three months ... It is not fair to give political colour to this big improvement happening after centuries. I ask the opposition parties to support this legislation," Shah said.

# Japan imposes new fees on Mount Fuji climbers

Reuters  
Fujiyoshida, Japan.

Park rangers on Japan's Mount Fuji officially started this year's climbing season about 90 minutes before sunrise yesterday, levying new trail fees and limiting hiker numbers to curb overcrowding.

At 3am, officials opened a newly installed gate at a station placed just over halfway up the 12,388-ft peak that is a symbol of Japan and a magnet for tourists, now swarming into the country at a record pace.

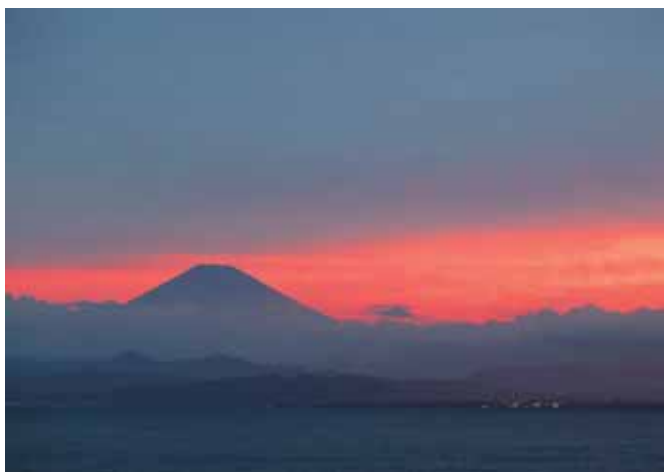
Climbers must pay 2,000 yen (\$12) and their numbers will be limited

to 4,000 a day after complaints of litter, pollution, and dangerously crowded trails flowed in last year.

"I think Mount Fuji will be very happy if everyone is more conscious about the environment and things like taking rubbish home with them," said Sachiko Kan, 61, who was one of about 1,200 hikers gathered on the first day of the new measures.

The yen's slide to a 38-year low has made Japan an irresistible bargain for overseas visitors.

They are injecting record sums into national coffers but are also putting strains on facilities for travel and hospitality, not to mention the patience of locals.



Mount Fuji: a symbol of Japan and a magnet for tourists.

Hordes of tourists became a traffic hazard at a nearby photography spot where Mount Fuji appeared to float over a convenience store, driving officials to put up a barrier of black mesh to obstruct the view that had gone viral online.

The climbing season this year on Mount Fuji, which straddles the prefectures of Yamanashi and Shizuoka about 136km from Tokyo, runs until September 10, after which the weather gets too cold and snowy.

A still active stratovolcano whose last eruption was in 1707, Mount Fuji has been a site of Shinto and Buddhist worship for centuries.

The number of climbers recovered to pre-pandemic levels last

year, with about 300,000 annually, the environment ministry says. Hikers typically start in the wee hours to make it to the top in time for sunrise.

For their money, climbers receive a wristband giving access to the trail between 3am and 4pm excluding those with reservations for mountain huts closer to the peak, to whom the daily limit on visitors will not apply, authorities say.

The new trail curbs were necessary to prevent accidents and incidents of altitude sickness, particularly among foreign "bullet climbers", or those racing to the top, Yamanashi governor Kotaro Nagasaki said last month.



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**GULF TIMES**

## UK firms reassured by employment law proposals of Labour

When Keir Starmer's Labour pulled ahead in the polls in 2023, British business leaders started to fret that, if elected, the opposition party would impose strict laws around hiring, firing, pay and conditions that would limit their growth.

But a year on, eight leading bosses say in interviews that they are more relaxed, and that engaging with the centre-left party gives them confidence they can strike a balance that works for workers, employers and the wider economy. Opinion polls suggest Labour will win the July 4 election easily and end the 14-year rule of the Conservatives – once favoured by business before presiding over a messy exit from the European Union and years of political churn.

That has left room for Labour to try to gain the trust of company bosses.

"I've been encouraged by what I've heard, as have my peers," Alex Baldock, CEO of electricals retailer Currys, which employs 14,000 in Britain, told Reuters.

"Of course it's laudable to seek to protect people, but there needs to be a balance here and we need to make sure that the job creation and the flexibility that's really important to businesses and to colleagues isn't inadvertently damaged."

Labour says British employment laws are outdated, a drag on economic growth and a major factor in the UK's worst period of industrial relations since the 1980s. It has pledged to ban "exploitative" zero hours contracts, end so-called "fire and rehire" practices, and introduce basic rights to parental leave, sick pay and protection from unfair dismissal from day one of employment.

It also plans to ensure the national minimum wage is a "genuine living wage", removing "discriminatory" age bands for younger earners, and has left open the door for a repeal of anti-strike laws put in place by the Conservative government.

### It says employment laws are outdated, a drag on economic growth and a major factor in the worst period of industrial relations since the '80s

Starmer has been trying to move the party back to the centre ground from the left, seeking to work with companies while trying to retain the support of Labour's union backers, who say weak protections leave too many workers in a precarious situation. Economic think tanks have previously described Britain as a laggard in the area of minimum employee benefits. But a tight labour market after Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic has prompted some companies to up their game.

"The broad thrust of this is one that is good for Britain's workers and good for Britain's businesses," Jonathan Reynolds, Labour's business policy chief, told Reuters.

Reflecting concerns that the proposed measures could raise costs and reduce operational flexibility, Labour said it would "consult fully with businesses, workers, and civil society" on how to put the plans into practice before legislation is passed.

Ken Murphy, CEO of supermarket Tesco, which with a UK workforce of about 270,000 is Britain's biggest private sector employer, said he was "not unduly worried".

"Many of the measures outlined in proposed legislation we're already ahead of," he said, noting, for example, that Tesco already recognises an independent trade union.

Stuart Machin, CEO of retailer Marks & Spencer, one of the best known names in British business with 40,000 store workers, similarly told Reuters he was "not overly worried".

"Whoever comes in government, we want them to work seriously with business," he said.

Other big employers, including grocer Asda and baker Greggs, also said they were relaxed about the proposed changes.

According to Helen Dickinson, head of the British Retail Consortium, which speaks for a sector employing 17% of workers, Labour's stance on zero-hours contracts is a case in point. The contracts, which do not guarantee any set number of working hours, have prompted broad debate about the balance of power between employers and staff.

"The headlines a year ago were about banning zero-hours contracts, whereas the outcome presented by Labour is very different," she said, with an emphasis on getting rid of "exploitative" contracts and a recognition that some workers appreciate the flexibility of a zero-hours contract.

Dickinson said Labour's employment plans "had looked quite scary" initially, but that meetings with Reynolds and with Rachel Reeves, who will become Britain's finance minister if Labour wins, had changed that.

Currys' Baldock said he felt Labour had listened to his argument on the importance of retaining probation periods for new recruits.

But not everyone is happy. Unite, one of Britain's biggest unions, did not endorse Labour's manifesto, saying it was disappointed that the party had softened its proposed worker protections. — Reuters



"I'll have the human experience, rare. No feelings, just facts."



## Presenting a growth agenda for the United Kingdom

By Mohamed A El-Erian  
Cambridge

**POINTS TO PONDER**

- Both major political parties in the UK emphasise long-term economic growth by boosting productivity, resource allocation, and avoiding financial shortcuts, with the Labour Party currently ahead in proposing structural reforms.
- Sustainable and inclusive growth is essential for improving living standards, public services, sustainable energy, and combating inequality, with a comprehensive policy approach needed to address years of insufficient investment and low productivity.
- Labour's proposed reforms include revamping the planning system, boosting infrastructure, improving trade links, encouraging investment, and enhancing innovation and efficiency, all while maintaining financial stability and preparing for complex international challenges.

As in many other developed countries lately, the two major political parties in the United Kingdom have embraced economic growth as their top policy priority. Following the volatile 49-day experience of Liz Truss's government and its "dash for growth" in 2022, however, both parties emphasise that there are no financial shortcuts. The focus, instead, is on devising measures to boost productivity, resource allocation, and growth over the long term. In this respect, the opposition Labour Party is ahead of the ruling Conservatives, though both are still working out the details of actual implementation.

Buoyant, durable, sustainable, and inclusive growth is essential for a country where the older generations risk seeing their children end up worse off than they are. That has not happened in many decades. Only growth can deliver the resources needed to enhance living standards, improve public services, support sustainable energy initiatives, limit the scale of generalised tax increases, and combat inequality of wealth, income, and opportunity.

In short, it is all about increasing the safe speed limit for economic growth. The Bank of England (BoE) estimates the UK economy's potential growth may be as low as 1%. At that speed, much that ails the country is likely to get worse, rather than better, over time. Moreover, this already weak growth potential could deteriorate even further if the problem is left to fester. There is no singular, silver-bullet initiative that can change this outlook. Many British politicians are still haunted by the Truss saga, when the newly arrived prime

minister tried to use unfunded tax cuts as a stimulus, only to create a damaging episode of financial instability that forced a change in government. It is now widely acknowledged that after so many years of insufficient investment and sagging productivity, achieving high-quality growth requires a comprehensive policy approach that builds on many intermediate objectives.

The Labour Party has gone further in specifying such structural reforms. Its program includes proposals to revamp the planning system, boost infrastructure, improve trade links, crowd in domestic and foreign private investment (including through an energised National Wealth Fund), remove tax distortions, and pursue sector-specific initiatives. The party has also identified promising public-private partnerships geared toward enhancing investible funds, while encouraging innovation and efficiency.

Labour has indicated that it would try to "hardwire" many of these reforms by strengthening existing institutions. To ensure that all its policies remain compatible with financial stability, it has committed to adhere to the same

public-debt "rule" as the current Conservative Party.

The challenge now is to devise a detailed execution plan, one that includes a high-frequency monitoring system to provide real-time feedback and allow for timely course corrections, if needed. Any economic-policy roadmap must favour comprehensive over piecemeal reforms. Such reforms should be implemented simultaneously, rather than sequentially, and they should come sooner rather than later.

As Labour demonstrated with its successful take-off after coming to power in 1997, a new growth emphasis would benefit from serious credibility-enhancing steps. That is what then-Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown did with his surprising and insightful decision to hand over the reins of interest-rate policy to the BoE, thus enshrining the principle of central-bank independence.

One must hope that the current Labour leadership has not ruled out too much policy flexibility in its pursuit of a decisive election victory. Some of the most powerful measures that it is proposing would require resources up front, but their growth and financial

benefits would materialize only over time. The next government also will find itself confronting a more complicated, increasingly fragmented international system; and it will need to secure consistent buy-in from the private sector, which ultimately must do most of the heavy lifting.

Another, related task is to improve the functioning of existing growth engines while also supporting the development of the sectors and industries that will drive growth in the future. Striking a proper balance may prove to be the most difficult part of the challenge, given the country's resource constraints and the fact that some key initiatives are better pursued at a regional level. (With its lack of sufficient robust regional initiatives to drive innovation in artificial intelligence, life sciences, and sustainable energy, the European Union currently faces a similar problem.)

Promoting high, durable, sustainable, and inclusive growth was never going to be easy after so many years of neglect. The need to revamp the UK's existing growth engines and simultaneously kick-start new ones makes the task even more complicated. But to paraphrase US President John F Kennedy's famous moonshot speech, the winning party must do these and "other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard." — Project Syndicate

• Mohamed A El-Erian, President of Queens' College at the University of Cambridge, is a professor at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and the author of *The Only Game in Town: Central Banks, Instability, and Avoiding the Next Collapse* and a co-author (with Gordon Brown, Michael Spence, and Reid Liddow) of *Permacrisis: A Plan to Fix a Fractured World*.

## Soft power: Tools and perspectives in a changing world



By Sheikh Mohamed bin Thamer al-Thani

It seems from the current global reality where interests collide and exchange, and power maps vary in foreign policy and international relations, the emergence of soft power as an effective tool to achieve political and strategic objectives is inevitable, expanding influence without military force. Its strength lies in its ability to influence and attract others through its tools, which include an appealing culture, enlightened media open to various opinions, advanced technology, systematic development, a thriving economy, and entrenched democracy. These tools are used to

influence others and can potentially promote globally desired values and principles.

Indeed, culture reflects the national identity of nations and serves as the voice of people, facilitating communication and understanding among the world's regions. Through culture, countries express their cultural, intellectual, and historical heritage, such as cultural tourism, cultural exchange, language, education, etc., as practical tools to disseminate countries' cultures and enhance their positive image internationally.

Media, as the maker of opinion and voice of truth, is also a powerful tool to influence public opinion and raise flags for discussions in societies. Through various media outlets, countries can convey their messages and values to different parts of the world, enhance understanding of their heritage, and cultivate positive international impressions.

Modern technology represents the key to communication and interaction today, especially with the Internet revolution and

social media platforms offering tremendous opportunities for communication, interaction, and mutual influence among diverse societies and cultures. Countries can reach a wider audience through technology, disseminate knowledge, and promote co-operation in various fields.

Furthermore, democracy and public diplomacy play a crucial role in building trust and promoting democratic dialogue to strengthen freedom, human rights, and the rule of law. They enhance a country's status in the international community and facilitate communication with all peoples and communities to foster understanding between nations.

The economy is the backbone of power and a marker of a country's status. It is one of the most essential pillars of soft power as it determines a state's independence and position among nations. Trade exchange, knowledge sharing, and economic co-operation effectively enhance a country's influence and achieve its interests.

In addition to the

forementioned tools, the arts must be noticed in all their forms and sports. They have become essential means for their ease of dissemination and significant and direct impact on individuals. Amid the communications revolution and cultural interplay, globalisation also emerges as a driving force to strengthen non-material tools that attract others and influence their behaviours without coercion.

In conclusion, harmony among various soft power tools constitutes its real strength in today's world, where everyone seeks to influence and persuade. This is evident through their intelligent and effective use, enabling countries and organisations to build strong bridges with people to promote understanding and international co-operation and achieve political and strategic objectives sustainably.

• Sheikh Mohamed bin Thamer al-Thani, is a Qatar University graduate, majoring in International Affairs. He's the class valedictorian of 2024 Qatar University graduation.

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# Supreme Court rules Trump 'enjoys some immunity'

The US Supreme Court ruled yesterday that Donald Trump enjoys some immunity from prosecution as a former president, a ruling that will likely delay his trial for conspiring to overturn the 2020 election.

The 6-3 decision split along ideological lines comes four months ahead of the presidential election in which Trump is the Republican candidate to take on Democrat Joe Biden.

The historic case was the last heard during the top court's current term and has far-reaching implications for executive power and the White House race.

Conservative Chief Justice John Roberts, in his majority opinion, said a president is "not above the law" but does have "absolute immunity" from criminal prosecution for official acts taken while in office.

"The president therefore may not be prosecuted for exercising his core constitutional powers, and he is entitled, at a minimum, to a presumptive immunity from prosecution for all his official acts," Roberts said.

"As for a President's unofficial acts, there is no immunity," the chief justice added, sending the case back to a lower court to determine which of the charges facing Trump involve official or unofficial conduct.

Both a District Court and a three-judge appeals court panel had previously

## If re-elected, he could, as president, order fed cases against him closed



People hold anti-Trump signs in front of the US Supreme Court yesterday in Washington, DC. (AFP)

rejected Trump's immunity claims. The District Court will now hold what is expected to be a series of lengthy pre-trial hearings, making a trial before the November White House vote extremely unlikely. Trump is charged with conspiracy to

defraud the United States as well as obstruction of an official proceeding — the January 6, 2021 joint session of Congress held to certify Biden's victory. The 78-year-old former president is also charged with conspiracy to deny Americans the right to vote and to have

their votes counted.

The three liberal justices dissented from yesterday's ruling with Justice Sonia Sotomayor saying she was doing so "with fear for our democracy."

"Never in the history of our Republic has a President had reason to believe that he would be immune from criminal prosecution if he used the trappings of his office to violate the criminal law," Sotomayor said. "In every use of official power, the President is now a king above the law."

"Orders the Navy's Seal Team 6 to assassinate a political rival? Immune. Organises a military coup to hold onto power? Immune. Takes a bribe in exchange for a pardon? Immune. Immune, immune, immune," she said.

Trump, in a post on Truth Social, welcomed the ruling calling it a "big win for our Constitution and democracy." Biden's re-election campaign team countered that Trump "thinks he's above the law."

Trump's original trial date in the election subversion case had been March 4. But the Supreme Court — dominated by conservatives, including three appointed by Trump — agreed in February to hear his argument for absolute presidential immunity, putting the case on hold while they considered the matter in April.

Steven Schwinn, a law professor at the University of Illinois Chicago, said the ruling "simply means that this case is

going to drag on more and more and longer and longer and well beyond the election."

"To the extent that Trump was trying to drag his feet and extend this beyond the election, he has succeeded wildly," Schwinn said.

He said the opinion also provides a "roadmap" for a president to avoid prosecution for a particular action "simply by intertwining it with official government action."

"That's going to seriously hamstring the prosecution of a former president because the president's official actions and unofficial actions are so often intertwined," he said.

Facing four criminal cases, Trump has been doing everything in his power to delay the trials until after the election. Trump was convicted in New York in May of falsifying business records to cover up a sex scandal in the final stages of the 2016 campaign, making him the first former US president ever convicted of a crime.

His sentencing will take place on July 11. By filing a blizzard of pre-trial motions, Trump's lawyers have managed to put on hold the three other trials, which deal with his attempts to overturn the 2020 election and hoarding top-secret documents at his home in Florida. If re-elected, Trump could, once sworn in as president in January 2025, order the federal cases against him closed.



## Ex-Trump adviser starts serving prison sentence

Steve Bannon (pictured), an outspoken right-wing figure in American politics and former senior adviser to Donald Trump, reported to prison yesterday to begin a four-month sentence for contempt of Congress. He was convicted of defying a subpoena to testify before the congressional panel that investigated the January 6, 2021 attack on the US Capitol by Trump supporters. Bannon, 70, spoke defiantly as he showed up at a federal prison in Connecticut. "I'm proud of going to prison today," Bannon said, "if it's what it takes to stand up to Joe Biden." Bannon and others argue that legal proceedings stemming from the January 6 insurrection against the seat of US democracy amount to political persecution designed to thwart Trump's bid for re-election in November. A cluster of people waving "Trump 2024" flags greeted Bannon outside the prison, as did Marjorie Taylor Greene, a fiercely pro-Trump lawmaker from Georgia who is one of the new faces of the Republican Party tightly controlled by the former president. One of the masterminds behind Trump's successful 2016 presidential campaign, Bannon was sentenced to four months in prison in October 2022.

## Bolivia recalls envoy over Milei coup claims

Bolivia recalled its ambassador to neighbouring Argentina yesterday after its firebrand president, Javier Milei, said a coup attempt against his counterpart Luis Arce last week was "fraudulent".

Army chief Juan Jose Zuniga was arrested last Wednesday after soldiers and tanks took up position outside government buildings in what Arce said was an attempt to unseat him. Zuniga later claimed he was following orders and that Arce had hoped to trigger a crackdown that would boost his popularity as the country faces surging prices amid shortages of money and fuel. Amid the flurry of international condemnation of the events, Bolivia's powerful former president Evo Morales — with whom Arce is feuding ahead of the 2025 elections — also accused the president of mounting a "self-coup." In his first public appearance after Wednesday's events, Arce denied he had conspired with Zuniga, who is currently being held in a maximum security prison. Milei, however, said Arce's coup claims were "fraudulent". Yesterday, Bolivia issued a "strong rejection" of Milei's statements and said ambassador Ramiro Tapia had been recalled for consultations.

# Khan's detention arbitrary, violates international law: UN rights group

Reuters/AFP  
Washington

Former Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan's detention is arbitrary and in violation of international law, a UN human rights working group said in an opinion issued yesterday, adding the jailed politician should be released immediately.

Khan's "detention had no legal basis and appears to have been intended to disqualify him from running for political office", the working group concluded.

"Thus, from the outset, that prosecution was not grounded in law and was reportedly instrumentalised for a political purpose," it said in the opinion, which was dated on March 25 but only made public yesterday.

The Geneva-based working group, made up of five independent experts, whose opinions are not binding but carry reputational weight, called on Pakistan's government to "take the steps necessary to remedy the situation of Mr Khan without delay and bring it into conformity with the relevant international norms".

"The appropriate remedy would be to release Mr Khan immediately and accord him an enforceable right to compensation and other reparations, in accordance with international law," they added.

The UN working group said Khan's legal woes were part of a "much larger campaign of repression" against him and his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party. It said that in the lead up to the 2024 elections, members of Khan's party were arrested and tortured and their rallies were disrupted. It also alleged "widespread fraud on Election Day, stealing dozens of parliamentary seats".

The Pakistani embassy in Washington had no immediate comment. Pakistan's election commission denies that the elections were rigged.

Khan, who served as prime minister from



Security officers escort Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan as he appeared in Islamabad High Court last May. (Reuters)

## UN experts say Khan's legal woes were part of a "much larger campaign of repression" against him and his party and that in the lead up to the 2024 elections, members of his party were arrested, tortured and their rallies disrupted. It also alleged "widespread fraud on Election Day, stealing dozens of parliamentary seats"

2018-2022, has been entangled in more than 200 legal cases since he was ousted, in what he says is a campaign to keep him from power.

In recent months, Pakistani courts have suspended Khan's jail sentences in two cases about the illegal acquisition and sale of state gifts, and also overturned his conviction on charges of leaking state secrets.

However, he has remained in prison due to a conviction in another case in which a trial court ruled that his 2018 marriage was unlawful. Khan also faces a trial under anti-terrorism charges in connection with violence in May last year even though he was in detention at the time and didn't know about the events.

Khan came to power in 2018 and was

ousted in 2022 after falling out with Pakistan's powerful military. He alleged the US and Pakistani military played a role in his ousting through a parliamentary no-confidence vote. Both deny the accusations.

Analysts have said Pakistan's powerful military, which ruled directly for decades and still wields immense power, is likely behind the slew of cases.

Khan was ousted by a parliamentary no-confidence vote after falling out with the top generals who had once backed him.

He then waged an unprecedented campaign of defiance in opposition against them and accused top officers of conspiring in an assassination attempt in which he was shot during a political rally in November 2022. Khan's brief arrest in May 2023 sparked nationwide unrest, which in turn prompted a sweeping crackdown against the PTI and its senior leaders.

Despite not running himself, candidates backed by Khan defied all expectations to secure the highest number of seats, but the Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) formed a coalition government.

The US, Britain and the European Union expressed concern about reported irregularities in the elections and urged a probe while United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed concern about violence and the suspension of mobile communications services during the elections.

Neither Pakistan's interior nor information ministry immediately responded to a request for comment.

Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party meanwhile hailed the ruling as "a huge victory".

"It has shown without any one percent of doubt that Imran Khan is innocent and has been thrown into prison illegally," PTI spokesman Syad Zulfiqar Bukhari said in a statement.

# French left, Macron race to prevent far-right takeover

AFP  
Paris

Emmanuel Macron's centrist camp and a left-wing alliance were yesterday battling to prevent the far-right from taking an absolute majority and control of government in a historic first after the French president's gamble on early parliamentary elections backfired.

The far-right National Rally (RN) party of Marine Le Pen won a resounding victory in the first round of the polls on Sunday, with Macron's centrists trailing in third behind the left-wing New Popular Front coalition.

Le Pen has asked voters to give her party an absolute majority during a second round of voting on July 7 so 28-year-old RN chief Jordan Bardella can become prime minister.

But most projections show the RN falling short of an absolute majority, even though the final out-



A supporter wave a flag of L'Union Populaire movement as members of the left coalition Nouveau Front Populaire stand on stage during a rally against far-right at Place de la Republique in Paris. (AFP)

come remains far from certain.

"The extreme right at the threshold of power," read yesterday's headline in daily *Le Monde*.

Ahead of the second round, Macron's camp has begun co-operating with the left-wing alliance in the hopes that tactical voting will prevent the RN winning the 289 seats needed for an absolute majority. Third-place candidates

who qualified for the second round have been urged to drop out to present a united front against the far-right. Macron in a written statement on Sunday night urged a "broad" democratic coalition against the far-right.

Yesterday he convened a government meeting to decide a further course of action. "Let's not be mistaken. It's the far-right that's on its way to the highest

office, no one else," he said at the meeting, according to one participant.

"Not a single vote must go to the far-right."

He did not give any firm instructions on standing down, sources said. The emotion was palpable at the meeting, with three ministers dropping out of the race.

The deadline to decide whether to stand down is this evening. According to a provisional count by AFP, more than 150 left-wing or centrist candidates have already dropped out.

Analysts say that the most likely outcome of the snap election is a hung parliament that could lead to months of political paralysis and chaos. The political crisis comes as Paris is preparing to host the Olympic Games this summer.

The RN garnered 33% of the vote on Sunday, compared to 28% for the left-wing New Popular Front alliance, and more than 20% for Macron's centrist camp.

## Russia UN envoy rejects Trump assertion Ukraine war can end in one day

Russia's UN ambassador Vassily Nebenzia said yesterday that "the Ukrainian crisis cannot be solved in one day," when asked about US presidential candidate Donald Trump's frequent claims that he could end the war within 24 hours if re-elected.

Republican candidate Trump has not given any details and has said that if there had been a "real president" in the US — who was respected by Russian President Vladimir Putin — then Moscow would not have invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

"I will have that war settled between Putin and (Ukrainian President Volodymyr) Zelensky as president-elect before I take office on January 20th. I'll have that war settled," Trump said last week during a debate against President Joe Biden, a Democrat. "I'll get it settled fast, before I take office."

US voters go to the polls on November 5 to elect the next president for a four-year term. The outcome of the election matters to Russia, despite its attempts to play it down, because it will determine the extent of Washington's commitment to keep backing Ukraine against Moscow and supplying it with advanced US weapons.

"The Ukrainian crisis cannot be solved in one day," Nebenzia told a news conference to mark the beginning of Russia's presidency of the United Nations Security Council for July.

Trump's campaign did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Nebenzia's remarks. The Kremlin has said that any peace plan for Ukraine proposed by a possible future Trump administration would have to reflect the reality on the ground but that Putin remained open to talks.

## Medical Care and Research Centre highlights Qatar's focus on healthcare



HE Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani and HE the Minister of Public Health Dr Hanan Mohamed al-Kuwari at the new facility.

**H**E the Minister of Public Health Dr Hanan Mohamed al-Kuwari has affirmed that the inauguration of the Medical Care and Research Centre underscores Qatar's commitment to combining health with science to significantly address local and global challenges, underlining that this investment, alongside the dedication of medical staffs and professionals, will lead to core optimisations in healthcare for patients and achieve the results through conducting research and clinical trials.

She stressed the importance of the new centre in upgrading the quality of healthcare services through leveraging cutting-edge technologies and research practices in alignment with the Qatar's third National Development Strategy.

HE Dr al-Kuwari emphasised the unwavering commitment of the Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) to enhancing healthcare services and augmenting the capacity of providing professional care, pointing out that the new facility is a critical milestone in Qatar's public healthcare system.

The Medical Care and Research Centre, which opens today at Hamad Bin Khalifa (HMC) Medical City, includes a unit that specialises in designing, conducting, and managing clinical trials to detect the safety and effectiveness of medical strategies, treatments, as well as the utilisation of medical devices with patients.



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani toured the facility after the inauguration.

The unit can conduct state-of-the-art research and innovations, as it is dedicated to offering high-quality paediatric healthcare through a paediatric intensive care unit, neonatal intensive care unit, paediatric day care unit, and paediatric ward.

The unit embraces an acute geriatric unit to support the care of elderly patients with acute conditions, as well as a modern

palliative care unit that offers a comfortable and welcoming environment for patients and their families.

The medical facility is the latest addition to the HMC, being the hub of precision medicine's related research and genomics, which operates on developing medical treatments tailored to the individual characteristics of patients. - QNA



## Minister goes underwater for coral reef survey project

**H**E the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie participated in a field trip as part of the coral reef survey project being carried out by the ministry.

The objective was to follow up on efforts to protect and develop the marine environment, and to confirm the country's commitment to protecting its natural resources, a statement said.

The trip included a series of field activities aimed at assessing the condition of coral reefs and working to develop appropriate plans to preserve them.

This step comes as part of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change's (MoECC) ongoing efforts to enhance environmental sustainability

and protect biodiversity in Qatari waters.

The minister stressed the importance of such initiatives in preserving the marine habitats of the country, and enhancing awareness of the importance of protecting the marine environment to ensure its sustainability for future generations.

Participating in the trip were the Commander of the Joint Special Forces Major-General Jassim bin Ali Mohamed al-Attiyah, the Environment Directorate of the Ministry of Defence represented by Brigadier-General (Technician/Air) Mohamed Yousef al-Jaida, a number of senior officials in the MoECC, a group of researchers, and marine environment activists.



## QICDRC honours HBKU College of Law students

**A**t a recent ceremony, the Qatar International Court and Dispute Resolution Centre (QICDRC) bestowed awards for exceptional performance on four students from the College of Law at Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU)'s Juris Doctor (JD) programme.

The awards were launched in 2024 under a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the QICDRC and HBKU, which builds on an initial MoU signed in 2019, a statement said yesterday.

The QICDRC established three categories of student awards.

The first is the Lord Thomas Prize, named after QICDRC president and former lord chief justice of England and Wales, Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd.

This prize is given to a member of each JD class for outstanding academic performance during the academic year.

The recipients of the 2024 Lord Thomas Prize were as follows: Tasniem Ahmed Elyass Hussain (Class of 2024), Ionela Cristina al-Thalithini (Class of 2025), and Amy



Nicole Saretsky (Class of 2026).

The second prize is the Sir William Blair Prize, named after QICDRC judge Sir William Blair, who was previously a high court judge in England and Wales.

The Sir William Blair Prize, which recognises the member of the JD graduating class who earned the highest grades in dispute reso-

lution courts, was awarded this year to Tasniem Ahmed Elyass Hussein.

The third prize is the QICDRC Prize, given to a member of the graduating JD class based on overall performance academically as well as to the community in the College and beyond.

The recipient of the 2024

QICDRC Prize was Fahad al-Harji.

Under the initial MoU between the QICDRC and HBKU, the parties held numerous joint events on courts, arbitration, and mediation, which have been open to the public.

The QICDRC registrars, Umar Azmeah, and his predecessor, Judge Christopher Grout, have provided

guest lectures in the College.

Lord Thomas and Sir William Blair are also Honorary Fellows of the College.

The 2024 MoU takes the relationship to the next level with the establishment of the Lord Thomas Prize, the Sir William Blair Prize and the QICDRC Prize.

Dr George Dimitropoulos, asso-

ciate professor and associate dean for Academic Affairs at the College of Law, said: "The College of Law and QICDRC have enjoyed a long-lasting relationship since 2016."

"The awards are a confirmation of this relationship and a significant honour to our students," he said. "We are very grateful to the QICDRC, the president, the chief executive, and the registrar. We look forward to further expanding our collaborative efforts."

"The judges, chief executive, registrar, and staff at the QICDRC have opened substantial educational opportunities for our students and faculty," College of Law dean Susan L Karamanian said.

"We are extremely grateful to them as well as to our colleague Professor Dimitropoulos for these initiatives and look forward to further collaboration."

"This MoU is a testament to our ongoing commitment to collaborate closely with our local institutions in nurturing the next generation of lawyers," said QICDRC chief executive Faisal Rashid al-Sahouti.