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GULF TIMES



FRIDAY Vol. XXXV No. 13132

September 13, 2024
Rabia 10, 1446 AH

www.gulf-times.com 2 Riyals

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BUSINESS | Page 1

GCC economies are competitive on global stage due to 'robust' economic infrastructure, says Sheikh Bandar



Amir, Saudi interior minister review ties

QNA
Doha

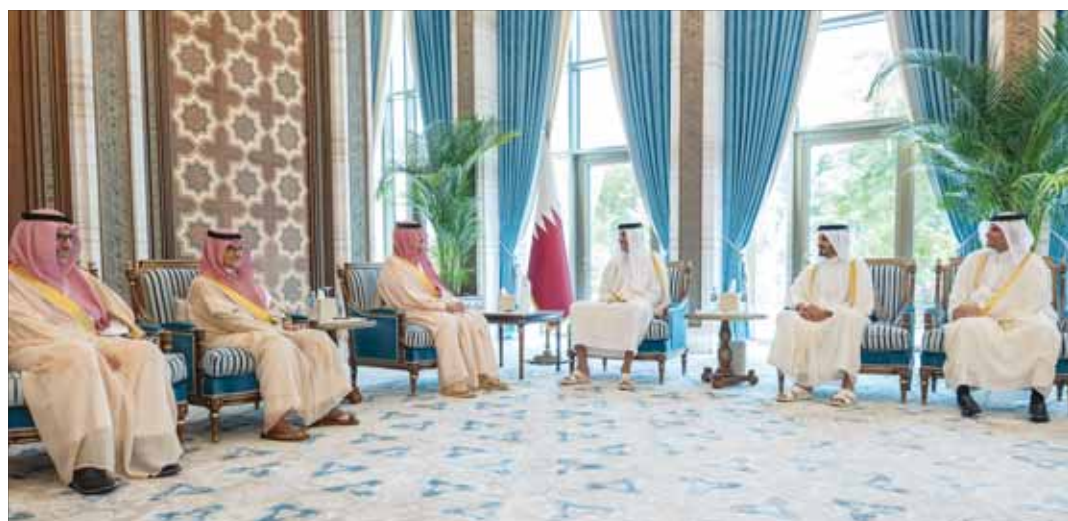
His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani met yesterday at his office in Lusail Palace with Minister of Interior of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, and the accompanying delegation, on the occasion of their visit to the country.

At the outset of the meeting, the Saudi Minister of Interior conveyed the greetings of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud and Saudi Crown Prince and

Prime Minister Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud to His Highness the Amir, and their wishes for the Amir's continued health and happiness and for the Qatari people further progress and prosperity.

In turn, His Highness the Amir entrusted Prince Abdulaziz al-Saud with his greetings to King Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, and to Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, wishing them good health and wellness, and for the Saudi people continued progress and prosperity.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed fraternal relations between the two brotherly countries and ways to support and develop them. (QNA)



PM launches Health Strategy 2024-2030

● The strategy with the theme 'Health for All' is designed to improve the health and well-being of Qatar's population

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

With three priority areas and plans to achieve 15 specific outcomes in the health sector, Qatar's National Health Strategy 2024-2030 was launched by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, yesterday.

The National Health Strategy 2024-2030 with the theme 'Health for All' is designed to improve the health and well-being of Qatar's population through excellence in service delivery, with a focus on sustainability and efficiency within an integrated and resilient healthcare system.

HE the Minister of Public Health Dr Hanan Mohammed al-Kuwari, several cabinet ministers, other dignitaries, and senior officials from various public and private healthcare facilities were present on the occasion.

The National Health Strategy 2024-2030 outlines three strategic priority areas: Improved Population Health and Wellbeing, Excellence in Service Delivery and



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani launches National Health Strategy 2024-2030 yesterday.

Patient Experience, and Health System Efficiency and Resilience.

Dr al-Kuwari, stated: "The National Health Strategy 2024-2030 marks the beginning of a new phase in our journey towards achieving Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Third National Development Strategy for 2024-2030. Our aim is to provide a long and healthy life for current and

future generations."

Dr al-Kuwari noted that under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, the health ministry is committed to ensuring the sustainability of the healthcare system and meeting the health needs of the population in accordance with the highest standards. **To Page 3**

Harris surges ahead

Democratic US Vice-President Kamala Harris leads Republican Donald Trump 47% to 42% in the race to win the Nov. 5 presidential election, increasing her advantage after a debate against the former president that voters largely think she won, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll that closed yesterday.

Among voters who said they had heard at least something about Tuesday's debate, 53% said Harris won and 24% said Trump won, with the rest saying neither had or not answering. Some 52% of those familiar with the debate said Trump stumbled and didn't appear sharp, while 21% said that of Harris. Among Republican voters, one in five said Trump didn't appear sharp.

Harris, 59, put Trump, 78, on the defensive in a combative presidential debate with a stream of attacks on his fitness for office and his myriad legal woes, highlighting Trump's felony conviction on charges he falsified business records. Some 52% of voters familiar with the debate said Harris "gave the impression of having higher moral integrity," compared to 29% who said the same of Trump.

Many Republicans were also not convinced about their candidate's performance in the debate in Philadelphia. Some 53% of Republican voters in the poll said Trump won the debate, compared to 91% of Democrats who said she was the victor.



Harris disembarks Air Force Two at Charlotte Douglas International airport, North Carolina, yesterday.

Among Republicans, 31% said no one won and 14% said Harris got the better of Trump.

Ninety-one percent of registered voters in the poll said they had heard at least something of the debate and 44% said they had heard a great deal. The debate, hosted by ABC News, attracted 67.1mn television viewers, according to Nielsen data, topping the roughly 51mn people who watched Trump debate then-candidate President Joe Biden in June.

Biden's disastrous performance in that debate led to widespread calls by the 81-year-old leader's fellow Democrats for him to drop his re-election bid, which he did in July. — Reuters

OpenAI launches new series with advanced 'reasoning' abilities

Microsoft-backed OpenAI said yesterday it was launching its "Strawberry" series of AI models designed to spend more time processing answers to queries in order to solve hard problems. The models are capable of reasoning through complex tasks and can solve more challenging problems than previous models in science, coding and math. OpenAI used the code name Strawberry to refer to the project internally, while it dubbed the models announced yesterday o1 and o1-mini. The o1 will be available in ChatGPT and its API. OpenAI said the o1 model scored 83% on the qualifying exam for the International Mathematics Olympiad, compared with 13% for its previous model, GPT-4o.

Turkiye seeks warrants over citizen killed

Turkiye has opened an investigation into the death of Turkish-American activist Aysenur Ezgi Eygi, 26, shot by Israeli troops in the occupied West Bank and will request international arrest warrants, Ankara said yesterday. The Ankara chief prosecutor's office is investigating the case.

Putin warns West risks 'war'

Russian President Vladimir Putin warned the West yesterday that letting Ukraine use longer-range weapons to strike targets inside his country would put Nato "at war" with Russia. The stark warning came as US and UK officials discussed Kyiv's demand for them to ease rules on firing Western weapons into Russia.

'Private' spacewalk successful

Two astronauts - a billionaire and an engineer - completed the world's first private spacewalk in orbit yesterday outside a SpaceX capsule. The astronauts on the Polaris Dawn mission went one at a time, each spending about 10 minutes outside the Crew Dragon capsule on a tether.

Israeli strike on Gaza school draws global condemnation

AFP
Gaza Strip

Israel faced international condemnation yesterday after a strike killed 18 people on Wednesday at a school-turned-shelter for displaced Palestinians in war-torn Gaza.

The attack flattened part of the UN-run Al-Jawni school in Nuseirat, leaving only a charred heap of rebar and concrete.

"For the fifth time, Israeli forces bombed the UNRWA-run Al-Jawni School, killing 18 citizens," Gaza civil defence spokesperson Mahmud Bassal wrote on Telegram, referring to the UN agency for Palestinian refugees.

UNRWA later said six of its staff had been killed in two Israeli



Palestinians search in the rubble for survivors at the site of an Israeli strike in the Shejaiya suburb east of Gaza City yesterday.

strikes on the school and its surroundings, calling it the highest death toll among its team in a single incident.

"Among those killed was the manager of the UNRWA shelter and other team members providing assistance to displaced people," it said on X. "Schools and other civilian infrastructure must be protected at all times, they are not a target."

UN chief Antonio Guterres branded the strike "totally unacceptable". His spokesman Stephane Dujarric said that women and children were also among the 18 dead.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said he was "outraged" by the deaths and that the strikes showed a "disregard of the basic principles" of international humanitarian law.

COMMUNITY
See Pages: 7 & 8

Interior minister meets Saudi counterpart

HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya), Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani met at the Lekhwiya HQ yesterday with the visiting Saudi Minister of Interior, Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz al-Saud and his accompanying delegation.

HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of Lekhwiya Force presented the Saudi Minister of Interior with a historic rifle dating back to 1900 CE. The rifle was owned by late Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim bin Mohammed al-Thani. This gesture was made in recognition of his esteemed position and



as a symbol of the deep mutual respect and brotherhood between the nations.

The ministers attended a field demonstration showcasing the capabilities of various units and



departments of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya).

The show was also attended by Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Qatar, Prince Mansour bin

Khalid bin Abdullah al-Farhan al-Saud; the delegation accompanying the Saudi Minister of Interior; and Qatar's ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Bandar bin Mo-

ammed al-Attiyah, along with a lineup of senior officers from the Ministry of Interior and Lekhwiya Force.

MINISTER LEAVES DOHA
Later, Minister of Interior of Saudi Arabia left Doha yesterday, following the official visit.

The minister along with his accompanying delegation, were seen off upon departure from Doha International Airport's Amiri Terminal by HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya). Senior Ministry of Interior and Lekhwiya officials were also present. Also present were Saudi Arabia and the Qatar ambassadors. (QNA)

Al Jazeera 360 digital platform set for launch on Sunday

Al Jazeera Media Network announced yesterday that it will launch its new digital platform, Al Jazeera 360, on Sunday (September 15), as a streaming platform and video-on-demand (OTT) service.

The platform includes a large digital library of programmes and documentaries, and will offer more than 20 programmes produced exclusively for the platform.

Additionally, it will present the archive of Al Jazeera Media Network since its inception in 1996, which includes up to 50,000 hours of programmes and documentaries produced by Al Jazeera Arabic Channel, Al Jazeera Documentary Channel, AJ+ Arabic, Al Jazeera O2 platform, in addition to the content of the "Atheer" podcast platform.

In this context, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al Jazeera Media Network HE Sheikh Hamad bin Thamer al-Thani, said, "The platform carries the Network's message and identity of empowering people

with accurate and balanced media content that commits to professionalism."

Acting Director General of Al Jazeera Media Network Dr Mostefa Souag, confirmed during the launch press conference that the platform will focus on giving the public the freedom to choose the content they watch in the place and time convenient for them, in line with the principle of "Opinion and the Other Opinion", slogan raised by Al Jazeera since its inception.

Dr Souag added, "The new platform carries the spirit of Al Jazeera, to which the Arabic-speaking viewers are accustomed. Content with integrity, respect, and placing the human

being at the heart of everything Al Jazeera offers."

In addition, the Al Jazeera 360 platform's managers reviewed during the press conference the platform's programmes vary between content that includes cultural, entertainment, discussion and religious, all presented in a new format, in addition to a number of films, documentaries and investigative programmes.

They pointed out that the platform will exclusively broadcast news programmes that have been suspended since last October due to the ongoing coverage of events in the region, and will also display the content of the platforms affiliated with the Al Jazeera Media Network. (QNA)



Transport minister meets Bahrain's envoy

HE the Minister of Transport Jassim bin Saif al-Sulaiti met yesterday with Bahrain's ambassador to Qatar Mohammed bin Ali al-Ghatam. During the meeting, the ambassador handed the Minister of Transport an invitation from Shaikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Khalifah, the Personal Representative of King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifah of the sisterly Kingdom of Bahrain and chairman of the Supreme Organising Committee of the Bahrain International Airshow, to attend the 7th edition of the event scheduled to take place in November 2024. (QNA)



Qatar condemns Israeli bombing of UNRWA school in Gaza Strip

Qatar has strongly condemned the Israeli occupation's repeated bombing of a school run by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) that was housing displaced people in the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza, which led to martyrs and injuring of people, including children, women and UN staff.

In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stressed that this horrifying mas-

sacre is the latest evidence of the occupation's criminal approach and its contempt for the principles of international humanitarian law.

The ministry reiterated Qatar's call for an urgent international investigation, including the dispatch of independent UN investigators to investigate the ongoing attacks by occupation forces on schools and shelters for displaced people.

The ministry affirmed that protecting innocent lives, addressing the catastrophic humanitarian

situation, and preserving what remains of Gaza's infrastructure require intensified regional and international efforts to immediately end the Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip.

The ministry reiterated Qatar's firm position on justice for the Palestinian cause, and the legitimate rights of the fraternal Palestinian people, including the establishment of their independent state on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. (QNA)

AlKhater meets Tajikistan, Romania, Paraguay envoys and Afghan official



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater met yesterday with Tajikistan ambassador to Qatar Nurmurod Mahmaddali. The meeting discussed the countries' relations and ways to bolster them, primarily in development projects in addition to enhancing the status of the Arabic language in Tajikistan. (QNA)

HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater met yesterday with Romania's ambassador to Qatar Nicusor Daniel Tanase. During the meeting, the two sides reviewed bilateral co-operation and ways to support and develop them, following the visit of Prime Minister of Romania Marcel Ciolacu to Doha in April 2024. They also discussed the latest developments in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories, as well as the latest developments in Ukraine and the region. (QNA)



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater met yesterday with Paraguay ambassador to Qatar Jose Rafael Aguero Avila. During the meeting, the two sides reviewed bilateral co-operation and ways to support and develop them, and discussed the latest developments in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories. (QNA)

HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater met yesterday with the visiting Spokesperson of the Caretaker Government of Afghanistan Abdul Qahar Balkhi. The meeting discussed the latest developments in Afghanistan and topics of common interest, especially the development field. (QNA)



Cyprus president receives credentials of Qatar's envoy



President of Cyprus, Dr Nikos Christodoulides has received the credentials of Yousef Sultan Laram as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Qatar to Cyprus. The ambassador conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to the Cyprus president and His Highness' wishes for the best of health and happiness, and to the government and people of Cyprus continuous development and prosperity. President of Cyprus entrusted the ambassador to convey his greetings to His Highness the Amir, wishing His Highness the best of health and happiness, and Qatar further progress and prosperity. (QNA)

Qatar chairs GCC ministries of justice undersecretaries' panel meeting



The 26th meeting of the Undersecretaries of the GCC Ministries of Justice, began in Doha yesterday.

Represented by Undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice, Sultan bin Abdullah al-Suwaidi, Qatar chaired the meeting.

In his opening speech, al-Suwaidi welcomed the participating delegations, stressing the importance of the meeting, which embodies the aspirations of the GCC countries to enhance the judicial and legal co-operation. It also embodies the efforts of the Ministries

of Justice in the GCC countries to continue the path of joint judicial work between the GCC countries as well as emphasises the consolidation of areas of shared work. He pointed out that the meeting reviews many draft decisions and guiding laws in various legal fields, in preparation for submitting them to the Ministers of Justice in their upcoming meeting in Doha.

Counsellor Sultan bin Nasser al-Suwaidi, GCC assistant secretary-general for legislative and legal affairs, praised in his speech the great efforts of the Ministry of

Justice and its management of the technical meetings during Qatar's presidency of the work of this session.

The meeting discussed a host of topics pertaining to enhancing joint legal and judicial cooperation between the ministries of justice in the GCC. The GCC policy on judicial and legal co-operation based on the initiative of the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs in the Sultanate of Oman, to enhance judicial integration among the GCC countries was also reviewed at the meeting. (QNA)

Chief of Staff meets Supreme Allied Commander of Europe and deputy Chair of Nato military committee



HE the Chief of Staff of Qatar Armed Forces Staff Lieutenant-General (Pilot) Salem bin Hamad al-Nabit met in Brussels yesterday with Supreme Allied Commander of Europe General Christopher G Cavoli. The meeting discussed several topics of mutual interest. They also reviewed military bilateral relations and ways to enhance and develop them. Qatar's ambassador to the European Union and Nato Abdulaziz bin Ahmed al-Malki al-Jehani attended the meeting, alongside several senior officers of Qatar Armed Forces. (QNA)



HE the Chief of Staff of Qatar Armed Forces Staff Lieutenant-General (Pilot) Salem bin Hamad al-Nabit met in Brussels yesterday with Deputy Chair of the Nato Military Committee Lieutenant-General Andrew M Rohling. The meeting discussed several topics of mutual interest. They also reviewed bilateral military co-operation and ways to enhance and develop them. Qatar's ambassador to the European Union and Nato Abdulaziz bin Ahmed al-Malki al-Jehani attended the meeting, alongside several senior officers of Qatar Armed Forces. (QNA)

Shura takes part in Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in Armenia

The Shura Council participated in the 10th Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which began yesterday in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia.

Representing the Shura Council at the event was Mohammed bin Omar al-Mannai, a member of the council.

The conference discusses the role of parliamentarians in promoting education and employment for youth, especially in light of global crises such as wars, pandemics, and climate change. In his speech during the second session of the conference, al-Mannai emphasised Qatar's strong commitment to education as a fundamental pillar for building sustainable societies. He highlighted Qatar's efforts to enhance its educational infrastructure and improve curricula and programmes that empower youth with the skills necessary to meet future demands. This commitment, he noted, is evident in Qatar's significant investments in the education sector at all levels.

He further explained that Qatar's educational efforts extend beyond its borders, providing support to countries facing challenges due to crises and conflicts. He showcased the work of the Education Above All Foundation, which offers hope by aiming to provide education to children in the most marginalised and affected areas. The Foundation seeks to unlock the full potential of children and youth, enabling them to become leaders in their communities and contribute to sustainable development.

Al-Mannai pointed out that Qatar has participated in nu-



merous educational initiatives to support refugees and provide education in refugee camps, as well as contributes to reconstruction efforts in areas devastated by conflicts. These initiatives reflect Qatar's vision of supporting education as a means of building a better future.

He also touched on the International Day to Protect Education from Attack, which was established based on a draft resolution presented by Qatar to the UN.

This initiative was spearheaded by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, chairperson of the Education Above All Foundation and member of the UN Sustainable Development Goals Advocates. The UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution, and the day is celebrated annually on September 9. Al-Mannai stressed that this

day highlights the urgent need to protect education during times of conflict.

In conclusion, al-Mannai reaffirmed Qatar's unwavering commitment to continuing its support for global education and in ensuring that every child has access to education, regardless of the circumstances. He emphasised that education is a powerful tool for achieving sustainable development and rebuilding societies post-crisis.

The conference includes several sessions focusing on key themes such as advancing education and employment by 2030.

Parliamentarians will also engage in informal dialogue on education and employment amidst global crises, offering proposals to support education in conflict zones and strengthen international funding in emergency situations. (QNA)



Dr Yousef al-Maslamani, Dr Salih Ali al-Marri and Dr Mariam Abdulmalik explaining salient features of the National Health Strategy 2024-2030. PICTURES: Thajudheen

Qatar's new health strategy aims to boost medical tourism

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

Qatar's third National Health Strategy 2024-2030, launched yesterday, aims to deliver on three strategic dimensions to address Qatar's current health sector challenges across population health, service delivery and system efficiency.

Officials from the public healthcare sector told a press conference that the new strategy was the outcome of detailed deliberations over a long time.

They stressed that the strategy also aims to further advance the health system by expanding services and increasing specialised services, with a focus on making Qatar a medical tourism destination, as an initiative will be launched in the near future.

Dr Salih Ali al-Marri, assistant minister for health affairs, Ministry of Public Health; Dr Mariam Abdulmalik, managing director, Primary Health Care Corporation; and Dr Yousef al-Maslamani, deputy chief medical officer for clinical affairs, Hamad Medical Corporation, were present.

The officials spoke about the importance of the new strategy in achieving Qatar National Vision 2030 in enhancing the health and well-being of the population in Qatar, taking into account the need to involve the patient in designing an advanced health system that serves their needs.

Dr al-Marri said that within the three NHS-3 priority areas a set of 15 system-level challenges were identified.

They will be addressed by the delivery of 15 strategic outcomes, supported by a comprehensive set of initiatives that will support the



Dignitaries at the launch of National Health Strategy 2024-2030.

required shifts and help realise the future state, over the next seven years.

The three priority areas are: Improved population health and well-being; Excellence in service delivery and patient experience and Health system efficiency and resilience.

Among the key outcomes of the "Improving Population Health and Wellbeing" priority are raising public health awareness, empowering patients and caregivers, proactive disease prevention and detection, and ensuring integrated health and well-being across all sectors. These outcomes are supported by significant initiatives, including universal vaccination coverage, occupational health, environmental health, and food safety.

Key outcomes under the "Excellence in Service Delivery and Patient Experience" priority include developing updated, comprehensive care models and standards across the entire healthcare system, as well as excelling in primary, community, secondary and specialised care. Important initiatives supporting these outcomes include the continuous improvement of population-specific serv-

ices, quality of care and the Health Tourism Programme.

In the "Health System Efficiency and Resilience" priority, outcomes include excellence in health research and innovation, effective emergency preparedness and response, a skilled and efficient workforce, and a robust digital healthcare system supported by data-driven decision-making, strong governance and sustainable healthcare financing. Notable initiatives under this priority include cross-sector collaboration, enhancing public-private partnerships, workforce skills development, applied health intelligence and investment in biotechnology and medical security.

There is also a comprehensive communication plan to support the implementation of the strategy. The plan focuses on raising awareness among all stakeholders, ensuring continuous engagement with patients to enhance their participation in their healthcare journey, and improving patient satisfaction across all healthcare facilities. The strategy also prioritises patient experience, continuity of previous strategy projects, and supporting Qatar's economic diversification agenda.

PM launches Health Strategy 2024-2030

From Page 1

"Our goal is to achieve excellence, ensuring that Qatar enjoys the highest quality of life. We are working to achieve several key healthcare objectives, including increasing life expectancy to 82.6 years, reducing mortality from non-communicable diseases by 36%, and lowering infant mortality to two per 1,000 live births," explained the minister.

"The strategy builds on the significant achievements made during the first and second National Health Strategies, which established a solid foundation for the continuous development of healthcare services for Qatar's population. The new strategy will continue to unify integrated patient pathways, digitalise our healthcare system, and increase research and development by adopting innovative solutions in both clinical and non-clinical fields, in pursuit of the vision of 'Health for All,'" she added.

During the event, leaders of the National Health Strategy 2018-2022 were honoured, as well as representatives from organisations involved in the successful response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the teams involved in the effective healthcare response to

the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. The teams contributing to all of Qatar's municipalities receiving the title of "Healthy City" from the World Health Organisation, as well as Qatar Foundation's Education City being named a "Healthy Educational City", and Qatar University being awarded the title of "Healthy University", were also recognised.

Dr Salih Ali al-Marri, assistant minister for health affairs, Ministry of Public Health, gave a presentation during the ceremony, in which he reviewed the sustainable achievements of the National Health Strategy 2018-2022 in improving the health of the population. He also shed light on the National Health Strategy 2024-2030 and its key features.

The National Health Strategy 2024-2030 aspires to achieve the healthcare sector's ambition of building "a health-focused society supported by an integrated health system centred on clinical excellence, sustainability, and innovation."

The strategy will be implemented over a seven-year period, with an execution plan targeting the strategy's priority areas. This plan aims to achieve 15 specific outcomes, supported by several significant initiatives and projects.

Qatar appeals for global action to stop Israeli aggression on Gaza

QNA
Geneva

Qatar has affirmed that implementing a reliable international system for the protection of human rights requires the international community to have the courage and full political will to break the silence, assume its legal and moral responsibilities, intervene effectively to stop the aggression on the Gaza Strip and to end the Israeli occupation.

Qatar stressed that it also requires the international community to provide the necessary protection to the Palestinian people who are being subjected to genocide in the open as the whole world watches, and obligate Israel – the occupying power, to implement

the resolutions of the UN Security Council (UNSC), the UN General Assembly (UNGA) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ), in addition to ensuring accountability for all those responsible for the violations and crimes committed against the Palestinians.

This came in Qatar's statement, delivered by Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Delegation of Qatar in Geneva Jawhara bint Abdulaziz al-Suwaidi, during the general debate on the High Commissioner for Human Rights' oral update, within the framework of the 57th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

Al-Suwaidi expressed Qatar's agreement with the High Commissioner for Human Rights, that the current international human rights system needs more dialogue



and political will to enhance trust and build bridges of communication between societies and peoples to consolidate the principles of common humanity that have been torn apart by hate speech, racism and discrimination.

She stressed the need for a system that respects the humanity of all people equally, and which affirms that human rights are for everyone regardless of race, gender, colour or religion, pointing out that the international system

cannot turn a blind eye to violations and crimes against some people, and draw attention to other people simply because the victim is different.

Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Delegation of Qatar in Geneva al-Suwaidi emphasised that all people are equal in human dignity, as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights more than 75 years ago.

Al-Suwaidi said the philosophical perspective applies realistically to the current situation in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territories, especially with the ongoing Israeli aggression and crimes that has caused the death of more than 40,000 Palestinians, and injury to tens of thousands and the forced displacement of more than 1.9mn others. She also re-

ferred to the Israeli occupation's deliberate destruction of infrastructure and civilian facilities in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Al-Suwaidi also highlighted the ongoing suffering of the Sudanese people for nearly a year and a half due to the hostilities that has caused a catastrophic deterioration in the humanitarian, economic, social and security conditions throughout the country.

She expressed Qatar's aspiration for a permanent and comprehensive cessation of hostilities, followed by broad-based negotiations, with the aim of reaching a sustainable peace agreement that meets the aspirations of the brotherly Sudanese people for stability, development and prosperity.

MoEHE launches 'Tamkeen' training pathway

'Tamkeen' pathway aims to train administrators for teaching careers

As part of its efforts to enhance teaching staff, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) has announced the launch of the "Tamkeen" training pathway under the "Tamkeen" programme.

The programme targets administrative employees working in public schools and the ministry, aiming to qualify and enable them to join the teaching profession.

The "Tamkeen" pathway is a comprehensive training programme designed to provide administrative personnel who wish to transition into teaching with the necessary educational knowledge, skills, and practical experience. The programme is overseen by specialised experts from the Training and Development Center and relevant ministry departments, reflecting the ministry's commitment to offering high-quality training opportunities, developing human resources, and diversifying opportunities for those working in the education sector.

Applications for the "Tamkeen" pathway are open until September 19, 2024. Training will commence in October 2024 and continue until May 2025. Participants will benefit from several advantages, including full-time commitment

throughout the training period, retention of salary and financial allowances, and transition to the academic staff after successfully completing the programme, making it a promising opportunity for career growth.

Applicants must be current administrative employees in a public school or the ministry, Qatari, children of Qatari women or GCC nationals. They must hold a bachelor's degree in a non-educational field and provide performance evaluation documents showing a rating of at least "Very Good" in their current role over the past two years. Additionally, candidates must pass an Arabic language test, submit an essay outlining their motivation for joining the pathway, and successfully complete a personal interview.

The establishment of the "Tamkeen" pathway is part of the "Tamkeen" programme, which aims to attract Qatari graduates without educational qualifications and train them to become teachers. This initiative aligns with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education's Strategy 2024-2030, which includes goals to recruit national talents for teaching roles, enable and retain them in the profession, in line with the Third National Development Strategy and the Qatar National Vision 2030, ensuring that it contributes to the nation's long-term vision. (QNA)

MoI delegation attends World Firefighting Championship in China

A delegation from the Ministry of Interior (MoI) has participated in the opening of the 19th World Firefighting and Rescue Sport Championship in China sponsored by the International Sports Federation for Firefighters and Rescuers. The delegation, according to a post by MoI on X, was headed by Col Mohammed Ahmed al-Maarefi, assistant director general of Civil Defence. Qatar, represented by MoI, joined the Federation in 2021. The Federation aims to develop sports for firefighters and rescuers internationally, introduce modern firefighting techniques, and to train international referees from member countries.



GU-Q event explores US election strategy, voter trends

In the heated run-up to the US presidential election, Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q) is diving deep into American democracy through a series of events hosted by the Centre for International and Regional Studies (CIRS).

Two talks featuring leading GU-Q faculty offered nuanced discussions on the forces shaping the electoral landscape – from party politics and voter behaviour to the strategies behind running a presidential campaign.

"What a difference a month makes," began Dr Clyde Wilcox, professor of Government at GU-Q, capturing the volatile nature of the current election cycle. Alternating between humour and seriousness, Prof Wilcox and fellow panellists Dr Amanda Garrett, assistant professor of Political Science, and Dr Paul Musgrave, associate professor of Government, dissected the campaign strategies, emphasising the unusual characteristics of this election.

One key factor influencing the outcome is the Democrats' strategic ambiguity on certain issues. According to Prof Garrett, this might be a calculated effort to



CIRS student event inside a US presidential campaign room.

"cast its net as wide as possible." However, she warned that this approach could backfire, drawing parallels to centrist losses in European elections.

The election will also have far-reaching global implications. "Americans don't vote on foreign policy, but foreign policy is determined by American elections," stated Prof Musgrave. He emphasised that the Harris campaign's approach to international relations, particularly in the Middle

East, remains a pivotal aspect of this election.

"The Harris campaign has been muted on Gaza," Prof Musgrave noted, pointing out that American foreign policy is not as one-sidedly in favour of Israel as before. "It's an issue that really complicates matters a great deal for the Democratic coalition."

Looming over all these factors is how the election "poses a very special threat to American democracy." According to Prof Wil-

cox, when Donald Trump lost the last election, his aides reported that, "He was calling state legislators and saying, 'Why don't you just pretend I won and certify my electors?'" This raises critical questions about whether the election results will be accepted as legitimate this time around, possibly leaving the final decision to the courts.

In a second talk, Prof Musgrave provided a behind-the-scenes look at the presidential campaigns, emphasising the critical role of every vote in battleground states where razor-thin margins could determine the outcome. He pointed out that Vice President Harris' entry into the race has intensified the competition by broadening the electoral map, especially in these key states. "The map is still very narrow, but it is much larger than it had been," he noted.

As the election draws nearer, GU-Q's CIRS will continue to host events offering valuable insights into the forces shaping this pivotal moment in US history. Through expert analysis and engaging discussions, these talks give the community a front-row seat to the unfolding drama of American democracy.

WCM-Q holds workshop on active learning in medical education

The Division of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) at Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar (WCM-Q) organised a workshop focused on Peer Instruction (PI), an active learning approach designed to enhance understanding of STEM subjects by moving beyond traditional lectures.

Titled "What Is Peer Instruction? How Can I Use It in My Classroom?" the two-day workshop was designed to introduce participants to the core principles of PI and showcase effective strategies for its application in the classroom. The session included implementation simulations, allowing attendees to experience the methodology and its practical benefits firsthand.

The overall objectives of the workshop were to equip healthcare professionals with the skills needed to integrate PI into medical education and training, enhance learners reasoning skills, and employ facilitation strategies that promote critical thinking.

The workshop was attended by a diverse group of participants, including physicians, nurses,



dentists, pharmacists, allied health professionals, students and educators.

Highlighting the importance of integrating PI into medical education, associate professor of biology at WCM-Q Dr Lorenzetti said: "Active learning methods, such as PI, foster the learners reasoning and critical thinking skills. Therefore, the implementation of PI should be considered at the early stages of training in the healthcare professions."

Emeritus Professor of medical education, Psychiatry and Paediatrics at Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine Dr Parmelee further emphasised the relevance of the workshop for healthcare professionals, saying: "PI is a great teaching and learning strategy. Done well and following its principles will transform your teaching in many ways. You'll no longer be satisfied with a quiet and attentive audience and will look forward to

listening and watching the students engage with one another in often raucous discussion on the questions you pose. They learn so much more than from a lecture." The workshop was accredited in Qatar by the Department of Healthcare Professions-Accreditation Section (DHP-AS) of the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and internationally by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME). (QNA)

Sidra Medicine to host Paediatric Neuroscience Conference in October

Sidra Medicine will host its 4th annual Paediatric Neuroscience Conference (PNC 2024) from October 24-26, 2024.

PNC 2024 is being held in partnership with Children's National Hospital USA.

PNC 2024 will feature comprehensive scientific discussions on Paediatric Neurology, Neurosurgery, Neuro-critical Care, Neurogenetics, Neuroimmunology, and Neuroradiology.

Dr Husam Kayyali, Division Chief of Paediatric Neurology at Sidra Medicine and PNC 2024 Chair said: "At Sidra Medicine, we are not just treating neurological conditions; we are investing in the future of children's health. The Paediatric Neuroscience Conference is a hub for sharing knowledge and driving innovation in paediatric neurosciences. This collaboration of brilliant minds will pave the way towards a brighter future for children in need of neurological and neurosurgical care. Our innovative work in personalised medicine, allows us to provide targeted therapies and a brighter future for every child." PNC 2024 will also feature

highlights on personalised medicine in paediatric neurology such as the latest advances in the management of Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA). The hospital's SMA gene therapy programme has positioned Qatar as a regional pioneer in advanced genetic therapies for children with neurodegenerative diseases.

Dr Ian Pople, Division Chief of Neurosurgery at Sidra Medicine said: "Our Paediatric Neuroscience Conference has always been about making a real difference in the lives of children with neurological conditions particularly those requiring neurosurgery. Partnering with Children's National Hospital this year allows us to amplify that impact on a global scale. By hosting this pivotal event in Qatar, we are ensuring that the knowledge translates directly into personalised treatments for young patients across the region."

Over the years, the PNC conference has welcomed a diverse audience, including paediatric neurologists, neurosurgeons, paediatricians, primary care physicians, nurses, and medical students. (QNA)

Mthayel Nabati Poetry Competition's seventh round ends

The 7th round of the Mthayel Nabati Poetry Competition, organised by the Ministry of Culture represented by the Qatar Poetry Center Diwan Al Ara, concluded at Darb Al Saai in Umm Salal.

Poet Abdullah Nasser al-Subaie qualified for the final round set to be held in December in line with Qatar's National Day.

The main topic of the 8th round will be envy. It will be open to all poets in Qatar, both nationals and residents.

Director of the Publications and Artistic Works Department at the Ministry of Culture Poet Mubarak al-Khalifa praised Mthayel's turn-

out and said Qatar's poetry scene is at a high level and many special poetry programmes are organised that feature well-known names.

What distinguishes Mthayel is its transparency which helped attract a wide range of poets and over the past months it saw fierce competition that only kept on getting stronger, al-Khalifa said.

He explained that Mthayel has a positive impact on the poetry scene especially as it includes poets from Gulf countries as well as some other Arab countries. Qatari poets and residents of Qatar have a round specifically for them.

Director of the Publications and Artistic Works Department at the

Ministry of Culture said that he hopes to see Qatar claim the title of the Mthayel Nabati Poetry Competition. Al-Khalifa added that the Ministry of Culture and the Qatar Poetry Center always co-operate with all winners of poetry competitions held in Qatar, for their shared goal in supporting talents and creatives.

The 7th round witnessed strong competition between the five qualified poets who presented their poems in front of the judging panel and the audience at Darb Al Saai.

The poets included Abdullah Nasser al-Subaie, Abdulghani Ali al-Qarni, Badr Hamad al-Dhahi,

Sultan Hijab al-Otaibi and Abdullah Khashman al-Hajri.

The judging panel included Hamad bin Saleh al-Marri and Hamad bin Abdullah al-Naimi from Qatar, Dhaidan al-Marikhi from Saudi Arabia, Mishaal al-Zaabi from Kuwait, and Hamoud bin Wahqa from Oman.

The members of the jury expressed their happiness with the level of the poets who qualified for this stage and whose poems reflected depth and which enhances the status of poetry in society.

They appreciated al-Subaie's poem that touched on the topic of trust for its cohesion, distinctive poetic imagery and valuable

vocabulary. In the improvisation section, the five poets were presented with a line from the work of the late poet Saleh bin Sultan al-Kuwari, one of the pioneers of Qatari poetry, by telling three verses with the chosen line used at the beginning or the end of the poem.

Kuwaiti poet al-Subaie expressed his happiness at being the one to qualify for the final since all participating poets share similar levels.

He affirmed that he would do his best to claim the title in the final round.

Al-Subaie said Qatar's Ministry of Culture and the Qatar Poetry Center are doing amazing work

in spreading Nabati poetry in the region with Mthayel which stems from positive values in society.

He also said that the Ministry of Culture is doing a great job at promoting the event and highlighting Nabati poetry through its platforms.

Saudi poet al-Marikhi, a member of the judging panel, said the seventh round featured the true art of poetry. The poets were creative and firm with their poems on the topic of trust, resulting in an extremely strong competition.

He pointed out that the final result was very close which shows the great talent of the participants. (QNA)

Third National Forum for Human Rights concludes



Al-Jamali (left) and others during the closing session.

NHRC reviews recommendations

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) secretary-general Sultan bin Hassan al-Jamali reviewed 11 recommendations during the closing statement of the 3rd National Human Rights Forum on Wednesday.

The official emphasised the need to adopt policies and measures, both legislative and administrative, to enable children to safely access the digital environment, which includes constantly developing preventative tools to keep pace with the evolving risks and challenges in the digital space.

Al-Jamali said that raising awareness and educating parents is very important, as the guardian must be aware of the risks of using technology.

He said that there is a need to tighten penalties for the circulation of pornographic sites and others that encourage children to com-

mit suicide and self-harm, and to work on strengthening prevention mechanisms, including designing digital materials and platforms that enhance national and religious identity.

The official stressed the importance of working to develop unified regional standards for the production of digital content directed at children, taking into account cultural and religious diversity, and ensuring the provision of appropriate and safe content for all children.

In this regard, al-Jamali said, co-operation should be strengthened between government institutions, civil society organisations, telecommunications and technology companies, and digital platforms.

In conclusion, he stressed the importance of integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into school curricula, supporting safe, ethical design and responsible use, allocating resources to AI-based children's programmes, and developing the capabilities of teachers, administrators and parents in AI.

Organised by the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC), the third National Forum for Human Rights concluded on Wednesday under the theme *Protecting Children's Rights in a Secure Digital Environment: Challenges and Prospects for Empowerment and Protection*.

The forum sessions were enriched by a group of experts and specialists from government agencies, civil society, and the private sector, in addition to the active participation of children themselves.

The forum highlighted the progress made by the state legislatively and technically to enable children to have the right to safe access to the digital space, in line with the national values expressed in the permanent constitution of the state, and in a way that achieves the Qatar National Vision 2030.

The participants praised the efforts of all parties concerned with children's digital rights and presented the following recommendations, including developing the legislative structure to keep pace with digital development, in a manner that includes criminalising all forms of violence and crimes committed against children in the digital environment, including prohibiting inappropriate content that is harmful to the lives and healthy development of children.

In addition, it is necessary to adopt policies and measures to enable children to have safe access to the digital environment and to continuously develop preventative tools to keep pace with the evolving risks and challenges in the digital space, and to encourage innovations in the world of technology, while ensuring high standards of safety, including obligating platforms on the Internet to conduct periodic risk assessments, and ensuring that commercial companies respect children's privacy and protect their interests.

The recommendations included the need for legislative and administrative measures to ensure the protection of children's rights



to digital learning, enhance their ability to control the information they share via the Internet, their right to express their opinions and safe digital participation, including interaction via social media, protect them from exploitation and abuse, protect their personal data, and provide the opportunity to hear children's voices in all measures taken regarding them.

Another recommendation was enabling children and their families to access effective redress mechanisms, by simplifying child-friendly complaint procedures and enhancing the capacities of law enforcement, public prosecution, and judiciary officials to address violations related to the digital environment through various means, including international co-operation.

It also recommended establishing a department for artificial intelligence (AI) and digital rights at the NHRC, developing monitoring tools, and working to include children's rights in the digital environment in its guidelines and annual reports.

The recommendations emphasised the importance of raising awareness and educating parents, as parents must be aware and cognisant of the risks of using technology.

At the conclusion of the forum, HE the Chairperson of the NHRC and Chairperson of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) Maryam bint Abdullah al-Attiyah stressed the importance of building on the conclusions of the third edition of the National Forum for Human Rights.

She emphasised that the forum and its recommendations represent an important build-



ing block in establishing a safe digital environment for children.

HE al-Attiyah said that working to secure the digital world for future generations has become an urgent necessity, and all state institutions, along with parents, must work together to achieve it.

The forum was held in partnership with the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Ministry of Social Development and Family, in addition to the National Cyber Security Agency, and in co-operation with the UN Children's Fund (Unicef) and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

The forum also saw active participation from the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Culture, the Public Prosecution, the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking (NCCHT), Qatar University, Hamad Bin Khalifa University, the UN Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia, and Al Jazeera Media Network. - QNA

Qatar a key supporter of WFP, says top official

UN World Food Programme (WFP) assistant executive director Rania Dagash Kamara (pictured) has affirmed Qatar's unwavering support, saying that the country has been a key supporter of the WFP in light of the economic challenges and the funding gap facing development efforts in the least developed and most needy countries.



In an interview with the Qatar News Agency (QNA) on the sidelines of her participation in the 5th Observance of the UN International Day to Protect Education from Attack event, Kamara said: "In 2022 and 2023, Qatar contributed \$10mn (\$5mn a year), through

the Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD), to the WFP's Immediate Response Account, which allows us to allocate resources in a flexible and timely manner to rapid onset emergencies, and other crises, a testament to Qatar's unwavering support for our mission."

Flexible funding is crucial, she said, because it allows the WFP to be agile and prioritise critical needs, adapt swiftly to evolving crises, and allocate resources where they are most needed.

Given the global funding gap, which has left the WFP facing a need of close to \$18bn to reach its target beneficiaries in 2024, with \$7.2bn needed in the Mena region alone, Kamara noted that Qatar's support is particularly important.

Kamara said that the event is directly relevant to the WFP's own work in school meals, a critical initiative that not only provides children with essential nutrition but also supports schools' retention

rate during times of crisis.

She added that school meals offer a protective space for children, particularly in conflict-affected areas, reduces risks including child labour, early marriage, and recruitment into armed groups.

Kamara said that the global hunger situation in 2024 remains at crisis levels, with 309mn people in 71 countries experiencing acute food insecurity.

Among these, more than 37mn people are facing emergency levels of hunger (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, or IPC, Phase 4), while 1.3mn people are on the brink of famine (IPC Phase 5). - QNA

Qatar consul-general in US participates in groundbreaking ceremony for hospital

Qatar's consul-general in Houston, Texas, Sheikha Tamador bint Abdulrahman al-Thani, participated in the groundbreaking ceremony for the renovation of the Riverside Hospital, funded by the Qatar Harvey Fund with a contribution of \$2.5mn. In her speech at the event, she emphasised Qatar's active role in alleviating human suffering and challenges, highlighting the Qatar Harvey Fund's contribution to the long-term recovery of Hurricane Harvey's victims. - QNA



Qur'anic Botanic Garden delegation at IUCN regional forum

The Qur'anic Botanic Garden (QBG) participated in the 10th Regional Conservation Forum (RCF) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA), in Riyadh on September 9-11.

Through its delegation, the QBG reviewed its flagship plant conservation programme, represented by its initiative to revive Qatari meadows in co-operation with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, as well as its efforts to plant 2.5mn trees as part of Qatar's plans to plant 10mn trees by 2030.

The QBG participated in the exhibition on the sidelines of the Forum by showcasing its scientific publications and documentation of its internal and external plant conservation programmes in Qatar.

It also highlighted the results achieved through technical protocols for the reintroduction of plants mentioned in the Holy Qur'an and



Hadith, focusing on Qatar's native plants and its leading project to revive Rawdat Al Faras on Dukhan Road.

The QBG also showcased its publication about the Qatari Acacia tortilis, published by Hamad Bin Khalifa University Publishing Press (HBKU Press).

The book offers a comprehensive environmental survey and agricultural and ecological

studies on this culturally and environmentally significant tree in Qatar.

Additionally, the QBG's booth featured its social media application, allowing the public to explore the garden's plants across various geographical environments.

The QBG also displayed rare seeds from its seed bank, which contains nearly 3.5mn seeds from these species.

The garden is actively engaged in preserving the genetic resources of these endangered species in their native habitats.

QBG director Fatima al-Khulaifi has said that participation in the regional forum reflects the QBG's efforts to preserve the plant component of the Qatari environment.

IUCN ROWA regional director Dr Hany ElShaer expressed his pleasure at the QBG's participation in the Forum, which brought together more than 400 environmental experts from West Asia. - QNA



Huawei ready to showcase latest innovations at ConteQ Expo24

Huawei will take part in ConteQ Expo24 to showcase its latest technological innovations under the theme *Driven by Innovation Towards a Smarter, Safer, and Greener Era*.

The focus, according to a statement from Huawei, will be on accelerating industrial intelligence across various sectors, including smart cities, smart transportation, and smart campuses.

Huawei will also present its innovative digital infrastructure solutions, featuring intelligent connectivity, intelligent foundations, and intelligent platforms designed to empower enterprise digitalisation and drive digital transformation.

Commenting on the company's participation, Huawei Gulf North Region president Rico Lin said: "At Huawei, we believe that innovation is the key to unlocking the potential of industrial intelligence in Qatar."

"Our participation in ConteQ Expo 2024 is a testament to our commitment to driving digital transformation and sustainability in the region," he continued. "We are excited to showcase how our advanced technologies can empower industries and improve the quality of life for communities."

ConteQ Expo24 all set to open on Monday

The ConteQ Expo24 will open at the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC) on Monday to showcase the latest research and innovative breakthroughs driving transformative improvements in many areas.

HE the Minister of Municipality Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah al-Attiyah will deliver the opening address in the presence of dignitaries and officials from the ministries and government and private entities.

Running until September 18, the exhibition will feature more than 60 speakers and 250 exhibitors and partners with the attendance of global tech giants such as Google, Microsoft, Siemens, Huawei, and IBM.

The event is expected to attract more than 15,000 visitors.

The speakers and the panellists include the University of Doha for Science and Technology's dean of the College of Engineering and Technology Prof Awni al-Otoom, Google Cloud regional general manager Ghassan Kosta, Honeywell chief commercial officer Nabil Cheqroun, Schneider Electric president of Gulf countries Amel Chadli, founding dean of Hamad



Bin Khalifa University (HBKU)'s College of Public Policy Dr Leslie A Pal, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) director of Digital Econ-

omy Faraj Jassim Abdulla, MCIT director of Business Development Ali Ahmad al-Mawlawi, Business Start Up co-founder and entrepreneur developer Steve Mackie, Qa-

tar Science and Technology Park president Dr Jack Lau, MCIT director of Digital Society and Digital Competencies Duha Ali al-Buhindi, Gulf Cluster vice-president of buildings Yasser Ahmed, Siemens Qatar and Siemens Middle East chief executive Hakan Ozdemir, GBM regional general manager Soubhi Chebib, and Dr Eyad Masad, professor at the HBKU's College of Science and Engineering.

The exhibition is a result of the collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, the MCIT, the Ministry of Labour and the Public Works Authority (Ashghal).

The event offers a promising opportunity to explore the latest developments in technology and identify new ways to improve construction and project delivery.

Bringing global experts and consultants together with industry counterparts and leading leaders in the construction, manufacturing and retail sector in Qatar will result in benefits which include the adoption of modern initiatives and technologies to lead in all areas of project implementation and the development of the construction sector in the country.

Fire Station embraces experimentation as AI rises

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

As artificial intelligence (AI) increasingly shapes the art world, The Fire Station: Artists in Residence (AIR) in Qatar is embracing experimentation and digital mediums, fostering a new generation of Qatari artists ready to take the global stage.

"Throughout the residency and mentorship, we try to encourage artists to be as experimental as possible, to try out different mediums. Many of them that are presenting their works have been,

throughout the nine-month programme, working on with new mediums," Saida al-Khulaifi, head of Programmes and Exhibitions at The Fire Station, told *Gulf Times*.

She noted that this approach is evident in the recently opened exhibition, titled 'A House Overlooking the World' at the Garage Gallery, showcasing the diverse works of 17 artists who participated in the 2023-2024 AIR programme.

Al-Khulaifi said one standout artist is Qatari engineer Alkhuzama Alharami, who embraced the residency to develop her artistic practice, integrating her engineer-



Saida al-Khulaifi, head of Programmes and Exhibitions at The Fire Station.
PICTURE: Thajudheen

ing background with her creative vision.

"We are accepting engineers into their residency who would love to experiment with artists well," she said, noting that Alharami's work is building sensors and computers but wanted to explore with art.

Other participating artists include: Somaia Dorzadeh (Iran), Aleksandra Umanska (Ukraine), Charlotte Rodenberg (US), Marco Bruno and Simone Carena (Italy), Ann Mc Nally (Ireland), Alanoud Alghamdi (Saudi Arabia), Maryam AlTajer (Bahrain) and Hannah Fakhri, Abdulla AlSallat, Shuaa al-

Kuwari, Noora al-Hardan, Aljaze AlNaimi, Zainab AlShibani, Aisha al-Abdulla, and Mohammed AlEmadi.

About the future of the AIR programme, al-Khulaifi highlighted the Fire Station's role as a vital hub for nurturing local talent, saying: "We cultivate emerging and mid-career artists, supporting them beyond the residency, even with international opportunities".

She pointed out that the programme's international recognition, including residencies at the Cite Internationale des Art in Paris and Studio 209 NY in New York City, underscores its commitment

to global exposure for Qatari artists.

Al-Khulaifi also underlined the significance of the ongoing exhibition, on view until December 31, as it shines a spotlight on what she described as "the dynamic intersection of traditional and digital art forms". This, she added, showcases the creative potential of Qatari artists in a rapidly evolving art landscape.

By embracing the evolving role of AI and technology, al-Khulaifi pointed out that this empowers artists to push creative boundaries and solidify Qatar's presence on the global art scene.

PHCC provides comprehensive care for pregnant women at health centres

Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) offers a comprehensive care package for expectant mothers, characterised by easy access and adherence to the highest standards of healthcare.

PHCC's specialised women's and babies' clinics at health centres are dedicated to monitoring the health of pregnant women through regular prenatal appointments, ensuring timely medical interventions. This approach aims to support a smooth and positive childbirth experience.

Prenatal care appointments can be scheduled as soon as pregnancy is confirmed at the health centre. Early booking is recommended, ideally before 10 weeks of gestation. These appointments include a thorough review of the patient's medical, surgical, and obstetric history, routine laboratory tests and ultrasounds, and the prescription of necessary supplements.

Dr Rand Silwan About, a consultant family medicine at PHCC's Omar Bin Khattab Health Centre, underscored the importance of continuous monitoring by a family physician during pregnancy. This ensures the birth of a healthy child and reduces any potential risks to the mother.

Regular evaluations help assess the mother's health in terms of risk factors, address any medical concerns, prevent illness, and provide



Dr Rand Silwan About

essential physical and psychological support.

Women considering pregnancy should begin taking folic acid three months prior to conception and continue through the first trimester.

A daily dose of 1 mg, typically prescribed by the family physician, is recommended to prevent brain and spinal cord abnormalities in the developing fetus. In certain cases, a higher dosage may be required.

Dr Rand advises that during the first trimester, the only recommended supplement is folic acid (1 mg daily). After the third month, the introduction of iron, folic acid, calcium, and a daily dose of vitamin D is advised. Alternatively, prenatal multivitamins may be used. Calcium supplementation is typically discontinued between weeks 30-34

to prevent placental calcification, which can restrict blood flow to the fetus.

Dr Rand advises pregnant women with obesity to follow a balanced diet to manage weight gain appropriately. Certain types of fish should be avoided due to their mercury content, and liver consumption is discouraged during the first trimester due to its high vitamin A content, which can cause fetal abnormalities.

She also advises against the consumption of papaya, as some studies suggest it may cause uterine contractions, and raw foods should be avoided to reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

According to Dr Rand, moderate exercise and regular movement are beneficial for pregnant women. At a minimum, she recommends walking 200m daily and avoiding prolonged bed rest, except during normal sleep hours, to prevent blood clots.

Regarding air travel, Dr Rand notes that while research is ongoing, general advice includes wearing a mask in crowded places, maintaining hand hygiene, preparing meals at home, or choosing fresh food to avoid gastrointestinal infections.

Pregnant women should be vigilant for warning signs such as bleeding, decreased or abnormal fetal movement, abdominal pain, or any trauma to the abdomen.

Vodafone Qatar to open pre-orders for iPhone 16 line-up today

Vodafone Qatar announced that customers will be able to pre-order the iPhone 16 line-up online or at retail stores in Villaggio, Doha Festival City, Place Vendome, and City Center Doha from today at 3pm with expected availability on September 20.

Vodafone Qatar will offer iPhone 16 and iPhone 16 Plus featuring the all-new A18 chip, camera control, powerful upgrades to the advanced camera system, the 'Action button' to quickly access useful features, and a big boost in battery life.

It will also offer the iPhone 16 Pro and iPhone 16 Pro Max powered by the A18 Pro chip with industry-leading CPU performance, featuring larger display sizes, camera control, innovative pro camera features, and a huge leap in battery life.

Vodafone Qatar has opened pre-orders for Apple Watch Series 10, the thinnest Apple Watch with the biggest, most advanced display, as well as the Apple Watch Ultra 2 in a stunning new black titanium finish, a brand-new design for AirPods 4 and AirPods 4 with ANC, and a new



array of colours for AirPods Max.

Vodafone will also be offering its customers a one-year extended local warranty on the recently announced Apple products. (Terms and conditions apply)

For complete pricing and availability details, visit <https://www.vodafone.qa/en/apple-preorder-24>

Ooredoo Qatar announces pre-order for iPhone 16

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Qatar Airways expands Saudi Arabia network

Qatar Airways announced expansion of its operations in Saudi Arabia with the resumption of services to Abha, operating two weekly flights to Abha International Airport, with effect from January 2, 2025.

In addition, Qatar's national carrier will also increase its flights to NEOM from two to four weekly flights during the winter season.

This schedule and network enhancement will provide passengers with greater travel choices and seamless access to Qatar Airways' extensive network of over 170 global destinations through Doha's Hamad International Airport.

Abha, renowned for its breathtaking landscapes and rich cultural heritage, marks Qatar Airways' 11th destination in Saudi Arabia.

This addition complements the airline's existing service to cities of AlUla, Dammam, Jeddah, Medina, NEOM, Qassim, Riyadh, Tabuk,



Taif, and Yanbu. Qatar Airways has more than 140 weekly flights to Saudi Arabia.

Qatar Airways Group CEO Badr Mohammed al-Meer said, "We are proud to resume flights to Abha and increase frequencies to NEOM, further strengthening our presence in Saudi Arabia."

Saudi Air Connectivity Programme CEO Majid Khan said: "We are thrilled that the World's Best Airline, as voted by Skytrax, will resume direct scheduled flights to Saudi Arabia's beautiful Aseer region and the city of Abha, as well as increase frequencies to NEOM, a futuristic city unlike any other in the

Red Sea coast of northwest.

"Through Qatar Airways' large network, tourists from 170 destinations globally will fly to Abha and NEOM from the airline's Doha hub. The resumption of this route supports our tourism strategy to bring Saudi Arabia's untouched tourism potential closer to the world."

Cluster 2 Airports Company CEO Ali Masrahi, said: "Cluster 2 Airports Company, managing 22 airports including NEOM and Abha, is proud to partner with Qatar Airways. This move strengthens our global network and highlights our dedication to elevating our airports' status. With 19 accreditations from Airports Council International, we are committed to delivering top-tier aviation services."

Aseer Development Authority acting CEO Hashim al-Dabbagh, said: "This development is expected to enhance connectivity and promote tourism in the region."

MoCI workshop on home business

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), in collaboration with the Social Development Center (Nama), organised a workshop on 'Home Business Licenses and Procedures.'

The aim was to raise awareness and provide home business owners with the necessary knowledge to launch their business projects, specifically targeting small to medium businesses in Qatar, a statement said.

The workshop was designed to support entrepreneurs in this sector, as key contributors to economic diversification, and stimulate investment activity through enhancing the contribution of innovation in line with Qatar's National Vision 2030.

During the workshop, the essential steps for establishing and launching home-based businesses were presented, along with the main benefits and challenges they face, as well as how to grow and develop them. Also covered were the laws governing these businesses, the requirements, and procedures for applying and establishing different types of projects.



The MoCI has facilitated procedures and reduced requirements for Qatari citizens wishing to engage in home business. The ministry also recently announced the addition of 48 new activities to the list of home businesses, bringing the total number of available activities to 63, the highest so far.

QU Health Sector celebrates First IPE Passport Ceremony

Qatar University (QU) Health Sector recently marked a significant milestone in the field of healthcare education with the First Annual Interprofessional Education (IPE) Passport Ceremony.

The event honoured the first group of health professions graduates who successfully completed the IPE Passport Program, a structured initiative that fosters collaboration and integration among healthcare professionals in training. The group included 71 graduates from QU and 15 from University of Calgary - Qatar.

The IPE initiative, spearheaded by the Health Sector at QU, underscores the importance of inter-professional collaboration in ad-

ressing the evolving challenges of healthcare delivery. The ceremony highlighted the students' achievements and the broader impact of interprofessional education on future health practices in Qatar and beyond, said QU in a press release.

Associate Vice-President for Academic Quality and Strategy at QU Health Sector, Prof Mohamed Ahmedna spoke about the history of IPE at the university, saying, "The Interprofessional Education Committee (IPEC) was established in 2014 by the QU College of Pharmacy to provide strategic guidance and support for the integration of IPE within the pharmacy curriculum. Over the years, the initiative expanded to include other health-



care programmes across Qatar, culminating in the creation of QU Health Sector in 2017."

Prof Ahmedna also spoke about the significance of health professions students who have completed the IPE program, saying "graduates of the IPE programme are more than just participants in

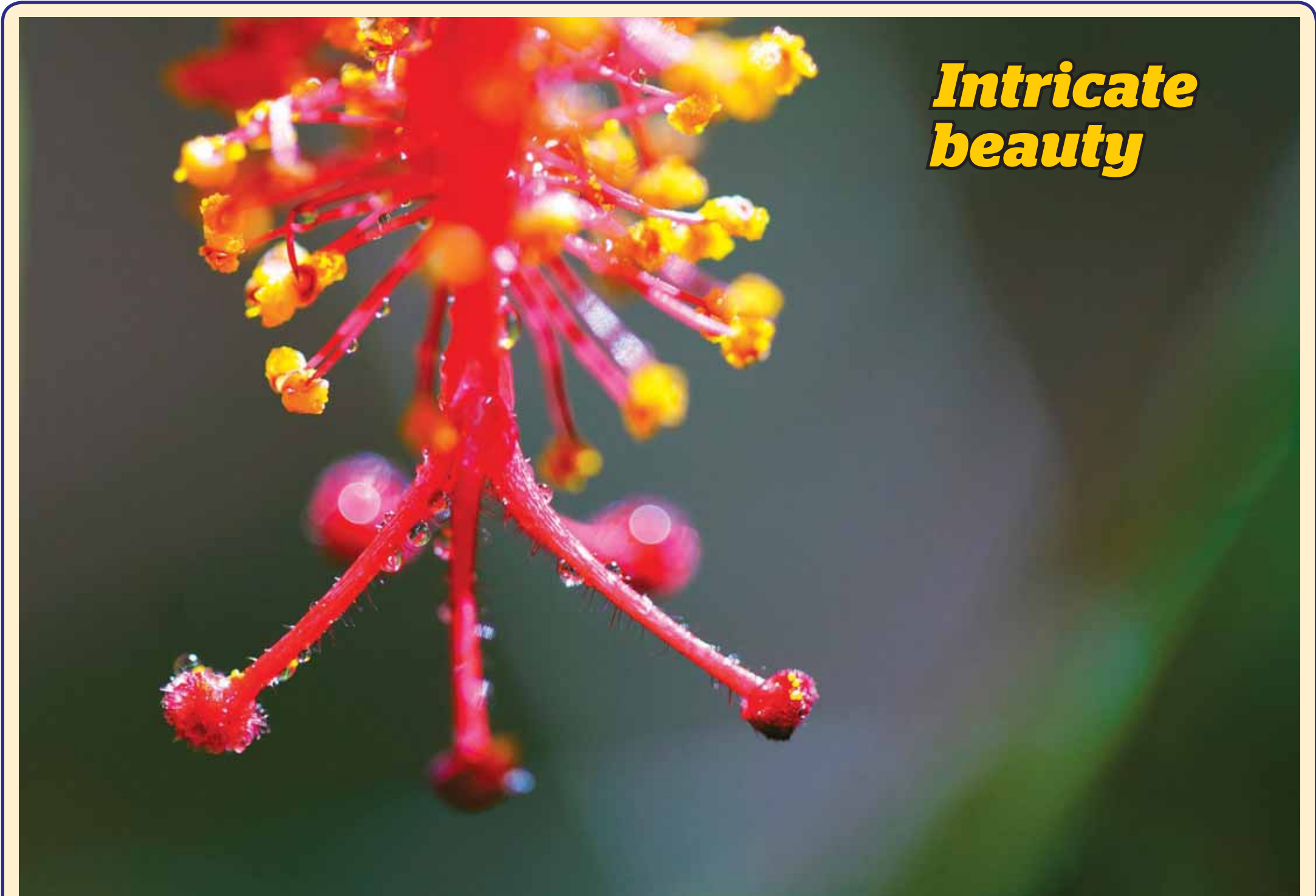
the workforce; they are leaders with the ability to drive meaningful change. As they embark on their professional journeys, the principles they have learned through the IPE programme will guide them in making lasting impacts in their respective fields, whether in clinical practice, re-

search, or policy-making."

Director of Clinical Operations and Engagement at QU Health Sector, Dr Alla El Awaisi highlighted the importance of these graduates in driving change, stating, "You are the empowered generation, future leaders, innovators, and change-makers of healthcare. Through the IPE program, you have not only gained knowledge but also learned the power of collaboration, communication, and teamwork. The IPE programme has equipped you to dismantle traditional silos and foster understanding and cooperation among various health professions. Equipped with a deep understanding of the importance of teamwork and collaboration; you

will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of health." Dr El Awaisi continued, "Integrated care is at the heart of what we do, and as you step out into the world with your IPE passports, know that you are empowered to drive change. The principles of interprofessional education will guide you to improve patient outcomes, shape health policies, and promote a more resilient and responsive healthcare system."

The IPE Passport Program serves as a tool that allows students to progressively engage in IPE activities, tailored to their specific professional year. The programme helps students meet shared IPE competencies, deepen-



Intricate beauty

A close-up study of the style, stigma, anthers and filaments of a Hibiscus rosa-sinensis, a common flower species seen across gardens in Qatar. There are several hundred species in the Hibiscus genus. Hibiscus rosa-sinensis are vigorous growers known for their beautiful flowers. Their size ranges from as small as two inches in diameter to nearly 10 inches, with most falling somewhere in between. They come in a kaleidoscope of colours and shades. The tropical plant require warm temperatures to survive. **PICTURE:** Gulf Times news editor Bonnie James (Instagram: the.explorer7).

QU's Shahad al-Khair tops 2024 National 3MT Competition



Shahad al-Khair from Qatar University (QU) won the first place in the 2024 National 3MT (Three-Minute Thesis) Competition, an academic event aimed to highlight the research conducted by Masters and PhD students. The competition attracted more than 250 attendees in its fourth year.

The second place was awarded to Tara al-Baraznji from QU while Anees Fatima Memon from Qatar Finance and Business Academy with Northumbria University won third place. The People's Choice Award was granted to Noora al-Salem from QU.

The competition challenges participants to explain their research to a non-specialist audience within three minutes.

The event is part of a broader initiative to foster graduate research in Qatar and promote better public understanding of the



valuable work being done by graduate students in various fields.

The other institutions which participated this year were Doha In-

stitute for Graduate Studies, Texas A&M University at Qatar, University of Doha for Science and Technology, Hamad Bin Khalifa University,

Al-Rayyan International University College, Oryx Universal College with Liverpool John Moores University, Joaan Bin Jassim Academy

for Defense Studies and University of Calgary in Qatar.

The 2024 National 3MT Competition was sponsored by Cono-

coPhillips Qatar. Notable attendees included Prof Aiman Erbad, vice-president for Research and Graduate Studies at QU and Eric Thomas, human resources manager at ConocoPhillips Qatar, alongside professors from QU and other universities.

Prof Erbad and Dr Ahmad al-Own, dean of Graduate Studies at QU, presented the awards to the top three winners.

The judges panel comprised engineer Mashael al-Mass (ConocoPhillips), Dr Aisha Jassim al-Kuwari (founder and CEO, Roza Publishing), Dr Hareb al-Jabri (acting assistant undersecretary of Higher Education Affairs, Ministry of Education and Higher Education), engineer Faisal Mohammad al-Ansari (executive director, Qatar Calendar House), and Dr Fatima Qafoud (acting director, Qatar Biobank and 2023 National 3MT winner).

Doha academic in Indian event

Asna Nafees, principal of DPS Modern Indian School, Qatar, was a panellist at the third edition of 'Intersect 3.0', hosted by Masters' Union, India. The event brought together global leaders, educators, and industry experts to explore ways to bridge the academia-industry gap, enhance employability, and tackle India's skills gap.

During a panel discussion titled "Global Best Practices in Bridging the Industry-Academia Divide," Asna Nafees shared innovative strategies for aligning educational curricula with industry demands.

She emphasised the importance of prioritising employability over employment and specifically highlight-

ed the 'Alumni Internship Programme' and 'Alumni Career Guidance Meet', practised at her school, as key initiatives that connect students with global industry practices through the international alumni, offering exposure to diverse professional environments.

She was joined on the panel by notable educators such as Srivalsan Murugan, principal & CEO of GEMS Education, Sharjah; Dr Manish Kr. Semwal from GMIS, Jakarta, Indonesia, and Seema Kaushik of GIIS, Singapore.

The event also featured a series of panels and keynote sessions with prominent educational leaders and industry experts from across the world.



Leadership conclave hosted

District 116 Toastmasters held its inaugural leadership conclave, attracting over 200 participants. The event featured interactive workshops and expert-led sessions designed to enhance leadership both within and beyond Toastmasters. Key sessions were led by Rajesh V C, Christopher Almeida, Alar Mel Mangai and Sabeena M K.

TEACHER'S DAY Celebrations

Ideal teachers' contribution to society celebrated



Ideal Indian School celebrated Teachers' Day as a mark of tribute to the contribution made by teachers to society imparting knowledge and enlightening and shaping the career of students. Teachers Day is celebrated on September 5 in India, in memory of Dr S Radhakrishnan, a distinguished educationalist, philosopher and profound thinker, who once served as the country's first vice-president and later the second president. The campus wore a festive look with students coming to school in their casual dresses. The students warmly greeted their teachers at the school entrance, presenting them with badges and chocolates as tokens of their affection and respect. Various fun-filled activities and cultural programmes were conducted in all sections. Students took charge of the day, organising a diverse range of entertainment and appreciation events in honour of their teachers. Later in the evening, while addressing a gathering of the teaching faculty, principal Shaik Shamim Saheb, emphasised the noble responsibility of teachers, reminding them of their crucial role in shaping both the academic progress and the ethical and societal development of their students. Teachers who played a key role in achieving high levels of academic excellence in the CBSE X and XII class examinations were honoured with merit certificates. Excellence certificates were also presented on the occasion. Teachers from various sections presented an array of cultural performances. Sana Sayeed welcomed the gathering and Bindu Babu proposed a vote of thanks. Sharon and Misha compered the programme.



DPS-Modern Indian School fetes teachers



DPS-Modern Indian School management hosted a celebration to honour the remarkable contributions of its teaching staff in empowering students and upholding the values of quality education, dedication, and innovation. President Yasir Nainar was the

chief guest. Vice-president George Thomas, members of the executive committee, principal Asna Nafees, vice-principals, headmistress, and co-ordinators were present. A video with heart-warming messages from the student council was played.

The teachers shared their experiences, highlighting the school's role in their personal and professional growth. They were gifted customised mugs reflecting the institution's commitment to sustainability and its collaboration with Global Schools Program.

ICC honours DPS-MIS teachers



DPS-Modern Indian School teachers Prabuela Suresh, Ditty Devassy (both TGT Mathematics) and Kakoli Biswas (PGT Biology) were honoured at a ceremony organised by the Indian Cultural Centre, under the aegis of the embassy of India, in connection with Teachers' Day. The event saw select teachers from Indian schools in Qatar honoured for their outstanding contributions. Embassy's deputy chief of mission Sandeep Kumar presented appreciation certificates. DPS-MIS principal Asna Nafees attended the ceremony.



Grand event organised at Noble International School



Noble International School, Doha celebrated Teachers' Day on September 5, 2024, with a grand event honouring the educators. The day began with a special assembly conducted by the teachers, followed by a 'Student Teaching' event

which aimed to provide students with a firsthand understanding of the teaching profession and the responsibilities it entails. Students from grades V to XII participated in the programme. In the evening, the school witnessed

cultural performances by the staff, showcasing their artistic talents. Principal Shibu Abdul Rasheed, along with vice-principals and heads of sections, addressed the gathering, emphasising the pivotal role of teachers in shaping future leaders.

Teachers Unnikrishnan and Farheen, who were honoured by the Indian Cultural Centre, under the aegis of the embassy of India, for their exemplary contributions to education, were congratulated by the management and the principal.

Uniq Medisport 24 badminton tournament concludes

A badminton tournament organised by Uniq (United Nurses of India - Qatar), concluded recently. Around 50 teams from various healthcare institutions participated. Midhun Jose and Abdul Sattar won the men's doubles, with Anas Ibrahim and Dr Shameer as the runners-up. In the women's doubles, Dr Dhanya Prajeesh and Denna Sabi won, with Neethu K Abraham and Merly Abraham as the runners-up. In the men's singles, Jayinto emerged as the winner, with Abdul Sattar as the runner-up, while in the women's singles Ashna Basher won, and Smitha Tony George was the runner-up. In the mixed doubles, Mit-hun Jose and Neethu K Abraham emerged as the winners, with Joseph Johnson and Dr Dhanya Prajeesh as the runners-up. Prominent badminton player, founder and chief coach of New Vision Badminton Academy Manoj Sahibjan, founder and CEO Benazir Manoj, and international



badminton player Pavan Kumar K V were honoured at the closing ceremony. The tournament was inaugurat-

ed by Uniq general secretary Bindu Linson, and the closing ceremony presided over by acting president Smitha Deepu.

An exhibition match featuring prominent badminton singles players from Qatar, including Godwin Olufa, Yuvaraj

Munuswamy, and young players Riya Kurian and Adline Mary Sojan, was also held. Uniq sports member Jayapras-

ad Kottilingal thanked the participants, sponsors, and all those who worked for the success of the tournament.

HEALTHCARE

India raises free health cover for citizens aged above 70 years

India has expanded a government programme to provide citizens aged 70 and above with annual medical insurance coverage of Rs500,000 per family, fulfilling a key poll promise by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The new plan is expected to benefit an additional 60mn people, adding to Modi's 2018 healthcare initiative which already covers more than half a billion citizens. Touted as the world's largest healthcare programme, it offers free treatment for serious illnesses, already providing poor families with an annual cover of Rs500,000. The new measure is Modi's latest attempt to overhaul a struggling public health system.

OFFBEAT

UK crime minister's purse stolen at police officers' meet

Britain's police and crime minister had her purse stolen at a meeting of senior police officers when she spoke about the growing problem of theft and shoplifting, a government official said yesterday. Diana Johnson attended the Police Superintendents' Association in central England where a senior officer told her in a speech that the criminal justice system was broken. The government official said Johnson had her belongings stolen at the conference, but no security risk had been identified. In her speech, Johnson said Britain had been "gripped by an epidemic of anti-social behaviour, theft and shoplifting".

APPEAL

UK military urged to stop using bearskin hats

Animal rights group PETA yesterday renewed its call for soldiers outside Buckingham Palace to stop wearing real bearskin hats after UK government figures revealed they now cost more than £2,000 (\$2,600) each. The tall black hats are worn by elite regiments, including for the Changing of the Guard ceremony outside Buckingham Palace, and are one of the best-known symbols of the UK. The cost of the hats, made from the fur of Canadian Black Bears, rose by 30% in a year to £2,040 in 2023, according to figures revealed in response to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request from animal welfare campaigners.

SETBACK

Tesco loses legal battle over 'fire and rehire' of staff

Tesco was not entitled to terminate some employees' contracts and offer to rehire them on less favourable terms, the United Kingdom's Supreme Court ruled yesterday. Shopworkers' union Usdaw took legal action against Britain's biggest retailer after Tesco sought to remove some warehouse workers' entitlement to increased pay by ending their contracts and offering to re-engage them - a practice often referred to as 'fire and rehire'. The Supreme Court ruled that Tesco was not permitted to use 'fire and rehire' in these circumstances and restored an injunction preventing the retailer from doing so.

Millions in SE Asia battle floods, death toll passes 250

AFP
Hanoi

Millions of people across Southeast Asia struggled yesterday with flooded homes, power cuts and wrecked infrastructure after Typhoon Yagi swept through the region, as the death toll passed 250.

In worst-hit Vietnam, the fatalities rose to 226, with nine confirmed dead in northern Thailand - where one district is suffering its worst floods in 80 years.

Myanmar's national fire service confirmed the country's first Yagi-related deaths after 17 bodies were recovered from flooded villages in the Mandalay region, while more than 50,000 people have been forced from their homes.

Yagi brought a colossal deluge of rain that has inundated a swathe of northern Vietnam, Laos, Thailand and Myanmar, triggering deadly landslides and widespread river flooding.

One farmer on the edge of Hanoi said his entire 1,800 square metre peach blossom plantation was submerged, destroying all 400 of his trees.

"It will be so hard for me to recover from this loss - I think I will lose up to \$40,000 this season," said the farmer, who gave his name only as Tu.

"I really don't know what to do now, I'm just waiting for the water to recede."

The United Nations children's agency (Unicef) said the typhoon

had damaged more than 140,000 homes across 26 provinces in Vietnam.

Floodwaters in Vietnam are receding, draining through the Red River - the main watercourse in the area - into the sea.

Authorities in several districts in the Red River delta ordered more than 50,000 people to evacuate their homes as a precaution while the runoff passes through.

The floods have devastated more than 250,000 hectares of crops and huge numbers of livestock, Vietnam's agriculture ministry said, with farmland around Hanoi hit hard.

In the deadliest single incident, a landslide in Lao Cai province annihilated an entire village of 37 houses, killing at least 42 people with 53 still unaccounted for.

Rescue teams pulled victims from the mud yesterday, carrying them on stretchers to makeshift shelters where neighbours and relatives carefully washed the bodies in readiness for burial.

Survivors picked through the mud and wreckage to retrieve what family heirlooms and possessions they could find.

Fifteen bodies have been recovered in Cao Bang province after a landslide on Monday pushed a bus, along with several cars and motorbikes, into a stream, state media said yesterday. Myanmar's junta government has set up around 50 camps to help people affected by the floods, Lay Shwe Zin Oo, director of the social welfare, relief and resettlement ministry said. *The Global*

New Light of Myanmar, the state-run newspaper, said train services on the main line between Yangon and Mandalay were suspended because some sections were flooded.

The Mekong River Commission, the international body overseeing the crucial waterway, issued a flood warning yesterday for the historic Laotian city of Luang Prabang.

The Mekong is expected to hit flood levels in the coming days in Luang Prabang, a Unesco world heritage site, the commission said in a bulletin.

In Thailand the death toll has risen to nine, the department of disaster prevention and mitigation said, including six killed in landslides in Chiang Mai province.

All flights were suspended in and out of the airport in Chiang Rai, some 145kms northeast of Chiang Mai, aviation authorities said.

Further north, Mae Sai district on the border with Myanmar is suffering its worst floods in 80 years, Suttipong Juljareen, a senior interior ministry official said in a statement. The Jet Ski Association of Thailand has sent 16 jet skis to help with relief efforts, Dechnarong Sutichambancha, the body's president said.

Some of the currents in the floodwaters are too strong for normal boats but jet skis are able to navigate them because of their powerful engines.

A video showing champion jet skier Kasidit Teeraprateep rescuing an old woman from a torrent of murky water circulated on Thai social media.

Anti-war protest in Melbourne



Anti-war groups protested outside the defence exhibition for a second day yesterday, after violent clashes between police and protesters on Wednesday injured several officers. Protesters marched through the city's streets as police set up new barricades to block the crowd entering the roads near the venue hosting the biennial Land Forces International Land Defence Exposition.

China 'will crush any foreign encroachment in S China Sea'

AFP
Beijing

China will "crush" any foreign incursion into its sovereign territory including in the South China Sea, a senior Beijing military official said yesterday on the sidelines of a defence forum.

Washington and Beijing have verbally sparred over China's increasingly assertive approach in disputed maritime regions, including the South China Sea.

In recent months, Chinese vessels have engaged in a series of high-profile confrontations with Philippine ships in the waters, which Beijing claims almost in their entirety despite an international court ruling that its assertion has no legal

basis. Speaking to a small group of journalists at the Xiangshan forum, Chinese army lieutenant general He Lei said: "We hope that the South China Sea will remain a sea of peace."

But, he said, "if the US moves its pawns behind the scenes, if it pushes countries to the front line, or if the US itself ends up on the front line, then we in the Chinese People's Liberation Army... will never have any patience". "We in the Chinese People's Liberation Army will resolutely crush any foreign hostile encroachment on China's territorial, sovereign and maritime rights and interests with firm determination, staunch will, strong capability and effective means," He said.

On Wednesday, China and

the Philippines held what they called "candid" talks on South China Sea issues, in particular over a disputed reef that has become a hotspot for recent bilateral clashes. "Both sides agreed to continue discussions on areas of co-operation, especially on hotline mechanisms, coast guard cooperation, and marine scientific and technological co-operation," a read-out from the Philippine foreign ministry said.

And yesterday, lieutenant general He said a resolution to tensions between Beijing and Washington over the issue "depends on the US".

He also confirmed that US deputy assistant secretary of defence Michael Chase would attend this week's Xiangshan forum in Beijing.

Philippine ex-governor accused of activist's killing surrenders

A former Philippine provincial governor accused of masterminding the 2011 murder of an environmental activist and radio show host has surrendered after more than a year in hiding, a government official said yesterday. In the 13 years since Gerry Ortega was shot dead on the tropical island of Palawan, the region's former governor Joel Reyes, accused of ordering the hit, has remained mostly free due to legal twists and a three-year escape to Thailand. State prosecutors allege 72-year-old Reyes ordered Ortega's shooting, which stands out for its brazenness in a country where hundreds of Filipino journalists and environmental defenders have been murdered. After a court ordered his arrest last year, Reyes again went into hiding but resurfaced, unknown to authorities, after checking into a Manila hospital, the head of the president's media security task force said. Reyes later had his lawyers write to the National Bureau of Investigation "that he really wants to surrender", task force chief Paul Gutierrez said.

Prince William visits air force base



Britain's Prince William, Prince of Wales, speaks with people on the day of the Sovereign's Parade at the Royal Air Force (RAF) College in Cranwell, Britain, yesterday.

Samsung India workers to continue pay row strike

Reuters
Sriperumbudur

Samsung Electronics employees will continue their strike for the fifth day after a meeting yesterday between their union, the company's management and the state government could not reach any settlement, a union leader said.

Appliances including televisions, refrigerators and washing machines are made at the plant, which contributes 20% to 30% of Samsung Electronics' annual revenue of \$12bn in India.

The South Korean group is the biggest player in the consumer electronics industry in India, which is a key growth market for the company.

Tamil Nadu's labour minister held talks with union representatives and Samsung officials in a bid to resolve a strike which has disrupted the plant near Chennai

for four days. Hundreds of workers are seeking higher wages in one of India's biggest incidents of industrial unrest in recent years.

"They (Samsung management) asked us to stop striking, but wouldn't recognise the union or talk to us, so the strike continues," said union leader E Muthukumar.

Many workers wearing Samsung's blue uniform shirt were seen sitting inside a makeshift tent near the factory, which employs around 1,800 people.

The talks yesterday involved the southern Indian state's Labour Minister C V Ganesan, labour secretary K Veera Raghava Rao, union representatives and Samsung officials.

"The government is sincere to resolve (the strike)," Rao had said earlier. Later calls to Rao went unanswered.

Samsung officials did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

N Korea fires short-range missiles in first launch in two months

Reuters
Seoul

North Korea fired several short-range ballistic missiles off its east coast yesterday, South Korea's military said, the first such launch in more than two months.

The missiles lifted off from Pyongyang at around 7.10am and travelled about 360km before plunging into the sea, the joint chiefs of staff said, without specifying how many were fired.

"We strongly condemn North

Korea's missile launch, which is a clear provocation that seriously threatens peace and stability on the Korean peninsula," they said in a statement.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, who last week visited Seoul to reconfirm ties with South Korea ahead of his upcoming resignation, said Tokyo condemned the launch and lodged a protest against North Korea.

"We continue to make utmost efforts for monitoring and co-operation with the US and South Korea," Kishida said.

Nuclear envoys of South Korea,

Japan and the US talked by phone and called the launch a violation of UN resolutions, Seoul's foreign ministry said in a statement. They also pledged to respond to any North Korean provocations.

North Korea last fired a missile on July 1, when it claimed to have successfully tested a new tactical ballistic missile capable of carrying a 4.5-tonne super-large warhead.

The latest launch came days after North Korean leader Kim Jong-un pledged to produce "exponentially" more nuclear weapons and ensure they were ready for use "at any given time."

Kim late last month oversaw a test of an upgraded 240mm rocket launcher system which "proved its superiority in mobility and strike concentration". He also inspected new "suicide drones" and called for the development of artificial intelligence for unmanned vehicles.

Yesterday's launch might be aimed at responding to recent South Korea-US military drills or testing the missiles for export to Russia, a military spokesperson told a briefing.

North Korea faces accusations of supplying Russia with weapons including drones and ballistic missiles

to be used in the war in Ukraine. Ukraine and the US, among other countries and independent analysts, say that Kim is helping Russia in the war by supplying rockets and missiles in return for economic and other military assistance from Moscow.

Conflict Armament Research (CAR), a UK-based organisation that tracks the origins of weapons used in conflicts, said in a report this week that it had found more North Korean ballistic missiles in Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including what it said was first public evidence that missiles produced

this year in North Korea were being used in the conflict.

"The discovery of a 2024 production mark on one of the missiles reveals a short period between the production of these ballistic missiles and their use in Ukraine," CAR said. The report said it was a Hwasong-11, a variant that Kim has said is being mass-produced and deployed to front-line North Korean units, according to state media.

Moscow and Pyongyang have denied the accusations, but pledged to boost military co-operation and signed a comprehensive strategic partnership at a summit in June.



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The water-security crisis confronting the world

When it comes to water, the world confronts an unsustainable situation. Yet fixing the problem is not only within reach; it is also the low-hanging fruit in tackling climate change and generating jobs and growth.

The water crisis is plain to see. Year after year, in one region after another, record-high heat waves and droughts are followed by destructive storms and floods. Food systems are running dry and cities are sinking as we reach the limits of extracting water from the land. More than 1,000 children under the age of five die each day from illnesses caused by unsafe drinking water and a lack of sanitation, and hundreds of millions of women spend hours each day collecting and hauling water.

This is a human-made crisis, and it can and must be resolved through human interventions. But to achieve equity and sustainability everywhere, we will need new approaches to governing water and a wave of vastly higher investment, scaled-up innovation, and capacity-building. The costs of these moves are insignificant compared to the economic and humanitarian harms that will be inflicted by continued inaction. The first step is to recognise that the problems we face are not merely local tragedies. A destabilised water cycle increasingly affects every corner of the world. Current approaches tend to deal with the water we can see – the “blue water” in our rivers, lakes, and aquifers – and assume that the water supply is stable year after year. But this is no longer true, as changes in land use, climate change, and a water cycle out of kilter are affecting rainfall patterns.

Too often, current thinking overlooks a critical freshwater resource, namely the “green water” in our soil, plants, and forests, which transpires and is recycled through the atmosphere. Green water generates around half the rainfall that we receive on land, the very source of all our freshwater. In the same vein, countries are connected not only through flows of blue water (like rivers) but, more critically, through atmospheric flows of moisture. As a critical component of the global water cycle, green water urgently needs to be better managed.

Most dangerously, disruptions to the water cycle are deeply intertwined with global warming and the decline of the world’s biodiversity, with each reinforcing the other. A stable supply of green water in soil is crucial to sustaining the land-based natural systems that absorb 25-30% of the carbon dioxide emitted from fossil-fuel combustion.

The most fundamental policy shift lies in valuing water properly to reflect its scarcity as well as its critical role in sustaining the natural ecosystems that every society depends on

This process represents one of the most significant natural subsidies to the global economy. Yet the loss of wetlands and soil moisture, together with deforestation, is depleting the planet’s greatest carbon stores, with devastating consequences for the pace of global warming. Rising temperatures then trigger extreme heat waves and increase evaporative demand in the atmosphere, which severely dries

landscapes and heightens the risk of wildfires.

Hence, the water crisis impacts virtually every one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and threatens people everywhere. Insufficient food for a growing world population, an accelerated spread of diseases, and increased forced migration and cross-border conflicts are just a few of the predictable outcomes.

Such a large-scale collective and systemic problem can be fixed only with concerted action in every country and through collaboration across boundaries and cultures. A shared understanding of the common good is crucial. Otherwise, what might look good for one country today could easily create problems for that same country tomorrow, as well as for others around the world.

The situation demands not only greater ambition but also a mission-driven approach to water – one that cuts across multiple sectors and focuses on all levels, from managing local river basins to shaping multilateral co-operation. We can and must succeed on the world’s most important water missions:

- Launching a new Green Revolution in food systems to cut back on water use while increasing agricultural yields to meet a growing population’s nutritional needs.
- Conserving and restoring the natural habitats that are critical for protecting green water resources.
- Establishing a “circular” water economy in every sector.
- And ensuring that every vulnerable community has adequate clean and safe water and sanitation services by 2030.

While these missions should drive policy shifts, align the public and private sectors, and spur innovation, they also require new ways of governing. Policymaking must become more collaborative, accountable, and inclusive of all voices, especially those of youth, women, marginalised communities, and the Indigenous Peoples who are on the frontlines of water conservation.

The most fundamental policy shift lies in valuing water properly to reflect its scarcity as well as its critical role in sustaining the natural ecosystems that every society depends on. We must cease the underpricing of water across the economy and the harmful agricultural subsidies that drive unsustainable usage and degrade the land. Rechanneling those funds toward promoting water-saving solutions and providing targeted support for the poor and vulnerable would go a long way. We are only in 2024. If we do not address these problems head on, wildfires, floods, and other water- and climate-driven extreme events will only get more intense and deadly in the years to come. Advancing the water-security agenda may seem more difficult amid growing geopolitical tensions, but it presents an opportunity to prove that collaboration can benefit all countries and enable a just and liveable future for all. We cannot shrink from this challenge. – Project Syndicate

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Rich nations have millions of mpox shots as Africa’s outbreak spreads; Will they share?

By Jennifer Rigby and Julie Steenhuisen
London

Rich countries have several hundred million doses of vaccines that could help fight an mpox outbreak in Africa, where donated shots fall far short of what is needed, according to a Reuters tally of public statements, documents and estimates from non-governmental organisations.

The shots have been stockpiled for years by countries such as Japan, the US and Canada in case smallpox, an eradicated disease that is the more dangerous cousin of mpox, ever makes a comeback. Some of the vaccines were used outside of Africa in 2022 when mpox spread globally.

A small fraction of those doses could help curb what is now the worst mpox outbreak on record in the Democratic Republic of Congo and neighbouring countries, disease experts say.

Less than 4mn doses have been pledged for donation out of an estimated 18mn to 22mn that are needed to vaccinate 10mn people in the next six months, depending on the vaccine, Africa’s Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said in a statement.

“It’s not a technical question, it’s a political one,” Maria Van Kerkhove, acting head of pandemic and epidemic prevention at the World Health Organisation, said.

She is lobbying for more donations alongside Africa’s CDC and other health authorities.

“Vaccines are useless on shelves,” Van Kerkhove said. “Why wouldn’t we get them to the people who need them right now?”

The current outbreak began in early 2023 in Congo, which accounts for most of the 37,500 infections and 1,451 deaths. It has spread to 14 African countries, according to Africa’s CDC. A first inoculation campaign using 265,000 donated shots is due to begin in Congo in early October.

“If we’d had more doses earlier, we could have planned a large-scale campaign and reduced transmission,” said Cris Kacita, head of Congo’s mpox response.

Health officials are concerned about a new strain, known as clade 1b, which was first identified in Congo and appears to spread more easily by close contact. Children are particularly vulnerable to mpox, as well as people with immune system conditions like HIV. The risk outside of Africa appears low at this time.

Other factors have held back the mpox response, including slow regulatory procedures at WHO and in Congo, high vaccine prices and competing health crises exacerbated by conflict in the country.

Mpox shots alone are not a magic bullet and affected countries also need access to testing and awareness-raising to tackle outbreaks effectively, disease experts say.

But the stark divide on vaccine access shows governments are still not prepared to stamp out viral threats where they begin and before they spread.

“The disinterest in mpox and other viral threats where they emerge is a significant danger to people the world over,” said Peter Maybarduk, access to medicines director at the US consumer group Public Citizen.

Three vaccines recommended by the WHO are held in stockpiles worldwide: Bavarian Nordic’s Jynneos (Imvanex or Imvamune outside the US); KM Biologics’ LC16; and Emergent BioSolutions’ ACAM2000. They are all being considered for purchase and donation in Africa, said a spokesperson for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, a global group that helps lower-income countries buy vaccines. The group has up to \$500mn available for the mpox response.

Many wealthy countries declined to say how much vaccine they have, citing national security reasons.

Japan has around 200mn doses of LC16, according to a WHO document from 2022. Unlike rival shots, LC16 can be used

for children, although it is not available outside of Japan and requires special needles to administer.

“Children are the main victims of this epidemic. The first emergency is not really being treated,” Kacita said, adding that Congo is in discussions for up to 3.5mn LC16 doses from Japan.

A Japanese health official and KM Biologics declined to comment.

Canada may have up to 2mn doses from Bavarian Nordic in its stockpile, said Adam Houston, medical policy and advocacy adviser for Medecins Sans Frontieres Canada, based on previous years’ announcements from the company. This shot was used to curb the 2022 mpox outbreak outside of Africa. This week, the Canadian government said it would donate up to 200,000 doses.

US officials declined to disclose how much vaccine is in its stockpile, but two senior Biden administration officials said it is enough to protect its population.

That includes around 100mn doses of Emergent’s vaccine, according to Maybarduk, as well as an unspecified number of Jynneos shots, which experts say have fewer side effects. The US has donated 60,000 Jynneos doses to the current outbreak.

Spain is among the largest confirmed donors, pledging in August 20% of its mpox vaccine stockpile, or 500,000 doses. The country has urged all European Union member states do the same.

The European Commission has a joint procurement contract with Bavarian Nordic to buy vaccines for donations, and has sent 215,000 doses to Congo.

“Some of the vaccines could cost around \$150 for a person to be fully vaccinated, a price that is unaffordable to most African countries,” a spokesperson for the Africa CDC team in DRC said. “So donated vaccines from countries is all the more important.”



Suspected mpox patients wait for consultation at the mpox treatment centre at the Kavumu hospital in Kabare territory, South Kivu province of the Democratic Republic of Congo.



Celebrating Prophet's birthday is an innovation

By Shaykh Muhammad Saalih
bin al-Uthaymeen (rahimaullah)

O people! Fear Allah the Almighty and know that the greatest favour He has ever conferred upon His servants is sending them Prophets as warners and bearers of glad tidings. Allah sent these prophets with scriptures so that He would judge between people in their disputes. The most effective and esteemed message of all of these was that of the Prophet Muhammad, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, whom Allah sent to guide all of mankind – and to seal prophethood.

Allah sent Muhammad, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, after a break in the series of His messengers, when people were in dire need of His guidance. It was through him that Allah guided people after they were astray; united them after their disunity; and sufficed them after they were needy. They thus became brothers and supported the religion of Allah, due to his grace and bounty. It was due to this that nations submitted to this religion and its adherents became a luminous series in the annals of history.

Due to the wholeheartedness of the early Muslims with regard to the comprehensive implementation of Allah's laws in personal issues, financial transactions, and social and community affairs in accordance with the precepts laid down by this religions guide and leader, Muhammad, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, it naturally followed that they would be victorious in all their undertakings.

However, when the Muslims deviated from the correct path, the order and stability which they enjoyed collapsed, turning the Muslim nation into groups of disputing factions, whose enemies held as insignificant.

This nation will never regain its past power and dignity, nor will it re-live its glorious history, until and unless its people return to their religion and practice it in word as well as in deed, in compliance with the methodology of the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, and his companions, may Allah be pleased with them.

As a consequence of the comprehensive implementation of the religion of Islam, no devotional act or religious ceremonies can be initiated into it unless it has a basis in the conduct of the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*. Mankind have been commanded by Allah to do no more than the following: to worship Allah alone; to offer him sincere devotion; and to be true in faith. Thus, whoever attempts to worship Allah with any act that He has not



prescribed will have that act rejected by Him. The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "He who performs any deed which is not according to what we are upon (i.e., the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, and his companions) then it is rejected." Such acts are held as innovations in the sight of the lawgiver and every innovation is misguidance.

Among the innovations introduced into this religion is the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, which is celebrated in the month of Rabee' Al-Awwal. People gather in the mosques or stay within their homes on the 12th night of that month and send salutations upon the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, with innovated phrases as well as reciting laudatory poems and prose which concern him. These poems and prose are excessively commendatory and exceed the limits that were defined by the Prophet *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*. Some people even spend their

nights cooking certain types of food, to be served on this occasion. Thus, they uselessly spend their time and money in matters that are not prescribed either by Allah or His Messenger, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, nor were practiced by the four rightly-guided caliphs after him, nor any other of the Muslims who were from the first three distinct generations, whose merit was attested to by the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*.

If these innovations were of any benefit, then surely the pious early Muslims would have preceded us in them? If they were meritorious then surely Allah would never have deprived the early Muslims, including the rightly-guided caliphs of them? The fact of the matter is that this practice was first introduced by people who lived during the fourth Hijri century.

Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy upon him, said in his book *Iqtidaa' As-Siraat Al-Mustaqeem Mukhaalafatu Ashaabu Al-Jaheem* [The

Implication of the Straightforward Way Is to Contradict the Companions of the Fire]: "Some people, due to their imitation of what the Christians do on the claimed birth-date of 'Eesaa (Jesus), peace be upon him, or because of their love of the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, or out of their wish to glorify him, celebrate the Prophet's birthday. This is despite the fact that there is controversy among the scholars regarding the exact date of his birth. The early Muslims did not practice this, although there was good reason to honour and express their love of the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, and no preventing factors existed. Thus, if the celebration of the Prophet's birthday was something meritorious, they would have had a better right to precede us in this, as their love and esteem of the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, was far greater than ours. Also, they were far keener to perform good deeds in general than we were.

Loving and esteeming the Prophet, *sal-*

lallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, was thus represented by the early Muslims in following his methodology, obeying him, applying his *Sunnah* inwardly and outwardly, propagating his mission and striving in this cause with their hearts, bodies and tongues.

Most of those who instigate religious innovations are heedless when it comes to the application of the well-known principles that were brought by the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*. They are like those who ornament the Qur'an but do not recite it, or recite it but do not follow its teachings."

O Muslims! The innovation of celebrating the Prophet's birthday, which is done on the 12th night of the month of Rabee' Al-Awwal, has no historical basis. In fact, historians have differed greatly on the actual birth date of the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*. Some have said that it was on the second of Rabee' Al-Awwal, others said the eighth, ninth, 10th, 12th, 17th or 22nd; thus making up seven different opinions. None of these opinions have any evidence which would make them take priority over others.

Moreover, the innovation of celebrating the birthday of the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, has no religious basis. Neither the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, nor any of his Companions or the followers did so. In fact, the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "You must hold fast to my *Sunnah* and the *Sunnah* of the four Rightly-Guided Caliphs – cling to it stubbornly. Beware of innovations, for every innovation is misguidance." (Abu Daawood, Tirmidhi).

Religious celebrations, festivals and other such occasions which glorify Allah and His Messenger are acts of worship. Only that which Allah has prescribed among these is considered to be from the pure Shari'ah, or Islamic law. None of these events can be taken as a means of devotion to Allah except those that have been sanctioned by Allah and His Messenger, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*.

The Shari'ah already contains the sufficient means with which a believer can glorify the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, and show his love to him. So fear Allah, O servants of Allah, and limit yourselves to Allah's obligations and the Prophet's *Sunnah*, to the exclusion of innovations.

Allah the Exalted and Almighty said that which translates as: "And verily this is my Straight Path, so follow it, and follow not (other) paths, for they will separate you away from His Path. This; He has ordained for you that you may become the pious." (Al-An'aam: 153).

Nullification of ablution

Before offering prayers and other particular acts of worship, one must be in a state of ritual purity. It is necessary therein to wash the parts of the body that are generally exposed to dirt or other impurities. This cleansing is called *Wudhoo'* (Ablution) and is performed as follows:

1. Have the intention that the act is for the purpose of worship and purification. Then, begin by saying '*Bismillaah*' (ie, 'I begin in the Name of Allah').

2. Wash your hands up to the wrists, three times starting with the right hand.

3. Rinse your mouth with water, three times.

4. At the same time, cleanse your nostrils by sniffing water and expelling it, three times.

5. Wash your whole face three times with both hands, if possible, from the top of the forehead to the bottom of the chin and from ear to ear.

6. Wash your right arm three times up to the far end of the elbow, and then do the same with the left arm.

7. Wipe the whole head, or any part of it, with a wet hand from the front to the back, once.

8. Wipe the inner sides of your ears with the forefingers and their outer sides with the thumbs. This should be done with wet fingers once.

9. Wash your two feet up to the ankles, three times, beginning with the right foot.

The following acts render ablution null and void:

Natural Bodily Discharges

These include urine, stools, gas from behind, etc. Concerning the cases which necessitate ablution, Allah Almighty Says (what means): "... or (if) one of you comes from the place of relieving himself..." [Qur'an 5:6] This proves that such an act obligates new purification.

Abu Hurairah who was one of the outstanding Companions, reported that the Messenger of Allah said: "Allah does not accept the prayer of a person who has released gas until he performs a new ablution." A person from Hadramawt (in Yemen) asked Abu Hurairah: "What does releasing gas mean?" He answered: "Passing wind, with or without sound." [Al-Bukhari & Muslim]

He also narrated that the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "If one of you finds

a disturbance in his abdomen and is not certain if he released any gas or not, he should not leave the mosque (i.e., quit his prayer) unless he hears its sound or smells its odour." [Muslim]

Hearing the escaping gas or smelling it is not the condition that nullifies the ablution, but the certainty that passing gas has occurred. As for a discharge of *Al-Mathi* (prostatic fluid), the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "Perform ablution." Concerning *Al-Mani* (sperm), Ibn 'Abbaas who was another outstanding Companion, said: "It requires *Ghusl* (ritual bathing) and for *Al-Mathi* and *Al-Wadi* (which is secreted from the sexual organ due to sickness or fatigue), wash your sexual organs and perform ablution." [Al-Bayhaqi]

Deep Sleep that Makes a Person Completely Unaware of his Surroundings

If the person did not keep his buttocks firmly seated on the floor while sleeping, he must make a new ablution. Safwaan Ibn 'Asal said: "The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, used to order us while we were travelling not to take our socks off unless we were in post-sex impurity (i.e. not for defecation, urination or sleep)."

If one's buttocks remained firmly on the floor during his sleep, no new ablution is necessary. This is implied by the narration of Anas who said: "The companions of the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, were waiting for the delayed 'Ishaa' prayer until their heads began nodding up and down (from drowsiness and sleep). They would then pray without performing ablution." [Muslim, Ash-Shafi'ee, Abu Daawood & At-Tirmidhi]

The wording that At-Tirmidhi recorded from the chain of Shu'bah is: "I have seen the companions of the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, sleeping to the extent that one could hear some of them snoring, but, they would stand for prayer without a new ablution." Imaam Ibn Al-Mubaarak said: "In our view, this happened when they were sitting."

Loss of Consciousness

This nullifies the ablution, regardless of whether it was due to insanity, fainting, drunkenness, or medication. It also does not matter if one was unconscious for a short or long period of time,

or if one was sitting, or fell to the ground, and so on. The aspect of unawareness here is greater than that of sleeping. The scholars all agree on this point.

Touching the Sexual Organ without Any 'Barrier' (clothing, and so on) between the Hand and the Organ

Busrah Ibn Safwaan (a female companion) narrated that the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "Whoever touches his sexual organ cannot pray until he performs ablution." [Maalik, Ash-Shafi'ee, Ahmad & Others]

Imaam Abu Daawood said: "I asked Ahmad: 'Is the *Hadith* (prophetic narration) of Busrah authentic?' He replied: 'Certainly it is authentic.'" In the narration of Imaams Ahmad and An-Nasaa'i Busrah heard the Prophet saying: "Ablution is to be made by the one who touches his sexual organ."

This is general and encompasses touching one's own sexual organs or touching anyone else's. Abu Hurairah reported the Prophet as saying: "Whoever touches his sexual organ without any covering (over it) must perform ablution." [Ahmad, Ibn Hibbaan & Al-Haakim]

Imaam Ibn As-Sakan who was a *Hadith* scholar, said: "This *Hadith* is from the best of what has been related on this topic." Imaam Ash-Shaafi'ee related: "Any man who touches his penis must perform ablution. Any woman who touches her vagina must perform ablution."

The scholars of the Hanafi school are of the opinion, based on the following *Hadith*, that touching the sexual organ does not nullify the ablution: "A man asked the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, if a man who touches his penis has to perform ablution. The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, replied: "No, it is just a part of you."

In addition to this issue (touching the sexual organ), there are other issues that are also controversial in this regard among Muslim scholars, such as excretion of pus or blood, vomiting and eating camel meat.

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



The authority of the Prophet

Is the scope of the authority of Prophet Muhammad (*sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*) limited only to the doctrinal affairs and the matter of worship, and not to worldly affairs? By some Western circles, the function of the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*) is restricted to correct the doctrinal beliefs of the *Ummah* and to teach them how to worship Allah. According to them, worldly affairs are not governed by the prophetic authority. Nevertheless, the authority of the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*) is clearly established by the Holy Qur'an for all people and all times.

These worldly affairs include, in the view of those who would limit the scope of the Prophet's authority, all the economic, social and political affairs which should be settled according to the expediency at each relevant time, and the Prophetic authority has no concern with them. Even if the Holy Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*) gives some directions in these fields, he does so in his private capacity, and not as a Messenger. So, it is not necessary for the *Ummah* to comply with such directions.

A report which is often misquoted to support the above-mentioned fallacious view is as follows from Imam Muslim: The blessed Companion Talha (*radiallahu 'anhu*) says: "I passed along with the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*) across some people who were on the tips of the palm-trees. The Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*) asked, What are they doing? Some people said, "They are fecundating the tree. They insert the male into the female and the tree stands fecundated." The Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*) said, I do not think it will be of any use.

The people were informed about what the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*) said. So, they stopped this operation. Then the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*) was informed about their withdrawal. On this, the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*) says, If it is in fact useful to them, let them do it, because I had only made a guess. So, do not cling to me in my guess. But when I tell you something on behalf of Allah, take it firm, because I shall never tell a lie on behalf of Allah. Further, According to Anas (*radiallahu 'anhu*), the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*) has also said on this occasion, You know more about your worldly affairs.

If the *Ummah* was to take the above-mentioned *hadith* literally, Islam, like some other religions would only be restricted to doctrines and rituals, and having no concern with the day-to-day affairs of the human life. Once one has observed the prescribed doctrines and rituals, he is free to run his life in whatever way he likes, not hindered in any manner by the divine imperatives. However, it is an established fact that Islam, unlike some other religions which can coincide and co-exist with the secular concept of life, is not merely a set of doctrines and rituals. Islam is a complete way of life which deals with the political, economics and social problems as well as the theological issues. Allah states in the Holy

Qur'an: O those who believe, respond to the call of Allah and His Messenger when he calls you for what gives you life (8:24).

There are vast fields in our day-to-day worldly affairs which are not directly commented upon by the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, where people have been allowed to proceed according to their needs and expedience on the basis of their knowledge and experience. However, for these worldly affairs that are not directly addressed by the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, the Muslim must align his decision with existing principles laid down by both, to ensure that they are guided Islamically in the performance of that affair, and most importantly, avoiding the major sin of committing shirk.

For, if Allah and His Messenger (*sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*) are to call people towards life, the affairs of life must totally be within the jurisdiction of Allah and His Messenger (*sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*). Otherwise, vital branches of human life will always fall prey to satanic desires leading the people toward disaster.

Furthermore, none who has studied the Qur'an can endorse that its teachings are limited to worship and rituals only. There are specific injunctions in the Qur'an about sales, purchase loans, mortgages, partnership, penal laws, inheritance, matrimonial relations, political, social and family affairs, problems of war and peace and other aspects of worldly relations. Likewise, the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*) also deals with the economic, social, political and legal problems in such details that voluminous books have been written to compile them. The injunctions of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* in this field (worldly affairs) are so absolute, imperative, and of mandatory nature that they cannot be imagined to be personal advises lacking any legal (divine) reference.

Finally, there are numerous verses from the Qur'an which enjoin the obedience of Allah and the authority of the Messenger (*sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*) upon the believers, in particular Chapter 4 Aayat 65 which says: But no, by your Lord! They could not be believers, until they make you (Muhammad) judge in all disputes between them and find in their souls no resistance against your decisions, but accept them fully with submission. Hence, to accept the fallacy that the Prophet's (*sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*) authority does not encompass worldly affairs, is to denounce the second source of Islamic Law, the *Sunnah*. This authority of the *Sunnah* is based on the revelation the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*) received from Allah. This obedience to the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*) has nowhere been limited to some particular field. It is an all-embracing obedience which requires total submission from the believers, having no exception whatsoever, neither by limiting its tenure, nor by exempting the worldly affairs from its scope.

[Compiled from *The Authority of Sunnah*, by Justice Muhammad Taqi Usmani.]



Qatar and Saudi ministers visit S'hail 2024 at Katara

HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani and Saudi Minister of Interior Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz al-Saud visited the Katara International Hunting and Falcons Exhibition, S'hail 2024, held at Katara - the Cultural Village, yesterday. The ministers toured the exhibition, where they reviewed a range of displays featuring weapons, hunting and shooting gear, as well as outdoor and marksmanship sports equipment from local, Arab, and international specialist companies. They also explored activities and artistic works related to hunting. - **QNA**



Huge crowds at S'hail 2024

The third day of the Katara International Hunting and Falcons Exhibition (S'hail 2024) saw the visit of several dignitaries and a huge turnout from the visitors. According to a statement from Katara - the Cultural Village, the latest edition has witnessed remarkable attendance, with visitors praising the extensive range of exhibits, from hunting gear to four-wheel-drive vehicles modified for desert expeditions. The exhibition is not only attracting seasoned hunters and falconers but also art lovers, collectors, and those passionate about Qatar's cultural traditions. "What sets this year's S'hail apart is the strong presence of global companies specialising in hunting and outdoor equipment, alongside the significant participation of emerging and established Qatari companies," said Mohammed bin Abdulatif al-Misnad, vice-chairman of the Organising Committee for S'hail 2024. S'hail 2024 has also become a platform for artistic expression, with 26 artists painting live, inspired by the desert landscapes and Qatar's falconry tradition. The exhibition also hosted a well-attended poetic and cultural session yesterday evening. The event concludes tomorrow (Saturday).



Katara holds seminar on 'Modern Methods of Falcon Production'

On the sidelines of the 8th edition of the Katara International Hunting and Falcons Exhibition, a seminar was held to review modern methods of producing falcons and houbara bustards, titled "Modern Methods of Falcon Production". It was presented by Dr Marcio Nunes, who reviewed the most important modern methods of producing falcons and bustards using artificial insemination, and methods of examining the semen of male falcons and bustards. He stressed that many studies have indicated that the process of breeding and propagating falcons is currently facing the problem of a significant decline in fertility and hatching rates. Therefore, Dr Nunes said, there is an urgent need to adopt new procedures and ideas to reduce and overcome this problem, by using the

artificial insemination process to overcome the problem of deteriorating fertility in falcons. Veterinary experts indicate that according to a hypothetical schedule, the female houbara lays eggs daily in the morning at rates ranging from 5-20 eggs, and they are inseminated after being examined to determine their readiness for reproduction. The semen collections of the male houbara used in the breeding process are evaluated in terms of quality and quantity - colour, size, mobility and concentration, as well as viability. The concentration of sperm required to achieve optimal fertility depends on several factors such as age, genetic potential, sperm viability, the time difference between collection and insemination, and the skill of insemination.

