

Protect your home from many risks

Visit **qic.online**

QIC
*Regulated by CCB

GULF TIMES

SUNDAY Vol. XXXXV No. 13162

October 13, 2024
Rabia II 10, 1446 AH

www.gulf-times.com 2 Riyals

Published in QATAR since 1978

Introducing our new **Unlimited+ plans**

UNLIMITED+ PLANS

vodafone

HABARI REAL ESTATE
CR No: 174949

AL KHOR / INDUSTRIAL AREA, UMM BIRKA, AL SHAMAL, DOHA

+974 3030 0880
+974 3341 9475

Workers/Staff Accommodations
Warehouse/Stores
Commercial Shops
Villa's & Residential Apartments

Al Meera Anniversary Festival

TODAY ONLY GET BACK 25%

MEERA REWARDS

DELICATESSEN

Sky Vision Real Estate Offer

Labor Room For Rent
1,150/- Per Room
Industrial Area Street # 38,43,44 & 47

Warehouse /Store 300sqm
In Industrial Area Street # 38
Monthly Rent - 11,000/- QR
Call: 33598672, 50576993

TAP to school with talabat up to 60% off

Digitize

Amwaj
BOTTLED DRINKING WATER

FEEL THE DIFFERENCE

Available in 1500ml | 500ml | 330ml | 200ml

CALL NOW!
7794 9967 | 7061 5604
+974 30454443

Cityscape & Real Estate Forum begin today

Cityscape attendees will have entry to three more co-located exhibitions - The Big 5 Qatar, Index Design Qatar, and the Qatar Real Estate Forum

Cityscape Qatar 2024 and the Qatar Real Estate Forum (QREF) kick off today at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC). The 12th edition of Cityscape will feature more than 60 developers and is expected to attract more than 10,000 attendees, covering more than 110 projects. The event will be held under the patronage of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani and will showcase Qatar's thriving real estate market.



Together a diverse array of exhibitors, including Qetaifan Projects, Platinum Sponsor; UDC, Official Registration Sponsor; and Qatari Diar, Barwa Real Estate, and Al Waab City showcasing their flagship projects and latest offerings. Exhibitors from Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, the UAE, and the UK will showcase their offerings, providing attendees with a global perspective. "For the home buyers and end-users, we will showcase thousands of unique offers from ready-to-move-in apartments to villas, plus off-plan real estate launches and highly lucrative investment opportunities from around the world," said Alexander Heuff, Exhibition Director of Cityscape. **To Page 3**

The event is a must-attend for anyone looking to gain insights into a wealth of investment opportunities and discover the latest in Qatar's real estate. With 96% of previous visitors rating Cityscape Qatar as crucial for their business, the 2024 edition promises to deliver even more value. Event timings are as follows: October 13 (10.15am-8pm), October 14 (12pm-8pm), and October 15 (12pm-10pm). Cityscape Qatar brings to-

PM, Egyptian FM stress de-escalation in region

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani received yesterday a phone call from Minister of Foreign Affairs, Immigration and Egyptian Expatriates Affairs of the sisterly Arab Republic of Egypt Dr Badr Abdelaaty. The call dealt with discussing bilateral relations and ways to support and enhance them. It also discussed the latest developments in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon, especially facilitating the entry of

humanitarian and relief aid to all areas of the Strip without obstacles, in addition to a number of topics of joint interest. During the call, HE Sheikh Mohammed reiterated the need for concerted regional and international efforts to de-escalate and avoid the expansion of the circle of violence in the region, noting in this context Qatar's full readiness to do everything possible to enhance security and stability at the regional and international levels. **(QNA)**

Gaza massacre toll goes up to 42,175

Reuters
Cairo

Israeli military strikes on Gaza overnight killed at least 19 Palestinians, medics said yesterday, while forces continued to push deeper into the Jabalia area, where international relief agencies say thousands of people are trapped. Residents said Israeli forces continued to pound Jabalia, which is in the north of the enclave and is the largest of the enclave's historic refugee camps, from the air and ground. The Israeli military published new evacuation orders yesterday to two neighbourhoods on the northern edge of Gaza City. In a statement, Gaza's Hamas-run interior ministry urged residents not to relocate within northern areas of the enclave and also to avoid heading south. Palestinian health officials



People protest against aircraft carrying weapons flying over Irish airspace, during a demonstration in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza, near Shannon Airport, Ireland, yesterday.

put the number of people killed in Jabalia over the past week at around 150. On Friday, Israeli strikes hit four houses in Jabalia, killing around 20 people and wounding dozens, medics said. They have also voiced con-

cerns over severe shortages of food, fuel, and medical supplies in northern Gaza, and said there is a risk of famine there. The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said that at least 42,175 people have been killed in the war since October 7, 2023.

متننى قطر العقارى الثانى
2nd Qatar Real Estate Forum

الهيئة العامة لتنظيم القطاع العقاري - عقارات
Real Estate Regulatory Authority - Aqarat

2ND QATAR REAL ESTATE FORUM 2024

13-15
OCTOBER
2024

AQARAT'S FUTURE

Platinum sponsor: QATARI DIAR, BARWA, مصرف الريان MASRAF AL RAYAN, مشغري العقارية NOBEBIS PROPERTIES, AL WAAB CITY, KATARARA HOSPITALITY, EZDAN

Golden sponsor: visit QATAR, UDC

Silver sponsor: QATAR FINANCIAL CENTRE, QFBA

Academic sponsor: QFBA

Official Communication Sponsor: ooredoo

Media sponsor: أراضى, جهر, business class

Hospitality sponsor: QETAIFAN PROJECTS

Co-located: Cityscape Qatar

Doha Exhibition and Convention Center

Supported by: informa tharawat

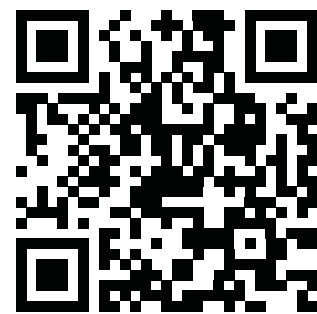
OPENING TODAY



 NORTH PLAZA
نورث بلازا



Open for shopping from 2 PM onwards



SCAN FOR LOCATION

LULU HYPERMARKET, NORTH PLAZA, UMM AL AMAD, QATAR. TEL: +974 44530888

  luluhypermarket.com  [luluhypermarket](https://www.facebook.com/luluhypermarket)  [luluhyperqa](https://twitter.com/luluhyperqa)  [luluhyperqa](https://www.instagram.com/luluhyperqa)

HMC appeals to public to get free seasonal flu shot

Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) has called on the public to get the seasonal flu vaccine, especially those at higher risk of complications, as they need to protect themselves against influenza this year.

"Flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat and sometimes the lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death," according to Dr Muna al-Maslamani, medical director of Hamad General Hospital, and chief executive officer of Communicable Disease Center at HMC.

Dr al-Maslamani said that while the flu can affect all of us, there are some groups in our community who are more vulnerable to the virus and complications than others. This includes people aged over 50; people with chronic conditions regardless of their age; children aged between six months and five years; pregnant women; healthcare workers and caregivers.

"We're all susceptible to the flu. People who are very young, very old or who have chronic medical conditions are at risk for more complications and more severe flu," Dr al-Maslamani said. "So, while it's important for all of us to get vaccinated, it's essential for young children, pregnant women, older people, and people who have illnesses to get vaccinated as soon as possible." Dr al-Maslamani said the best way to prevent flu is by getting the flu vaccine every year, as early as possible to ensure you are protected before winter hits.

"The annual flu vaccine has been shown to reduce flu related illnesses and the risk of serious flu complications that can result in hospitalisation or even death," Dr al-Maslamani said. "Getting vaccinated before the peak of flu season allows the body to build immunity, which is vital in preventing the spread of influenza, particularly among those at high risk of complications."



Chief Executive Officer of the Communicable Disease Center at HMC Dr Muna al-Maslamani.

The free seasonal influenza vaccines are available at all primary health centres, HMC outpatient clinics and at more than 30 private and semi-private clinics and hospitals across Qatar. "It's available at most healthcare facilities across the country, and the process to get vaccinated is quick and efficient," Dr al-Maslamani said. "The vaccine is thoroughly tested and proven to protect against the flu, ensuring the health and wellbeing of individuals and the wider community. We encourage everyone, especially those at higher risk, to take advantage of this free service."

It is noteworthy that seasonal flu vaccines are available free of charge at all PHCC centres, outpatient clinics of HMC, and at more than 30 private and semi-private clinics and hospitals throughout Qatar. (QNA)

Cityscape & Real Estate Forum begin today

From Page 1

He said: "Last year, Cityscape Qatar facilitated hundreds of millions of dollars in deals covering residential, commercial, and mixed-use projects. Building on this success, this year's event aims to surpass those achievements, reflecting the ever-expanding investment landscape. Whether you're an investor, homebuyer, or simply curious about the latest developments, don't miss the region's premier real estate event." Visitors can register for free through Cityscape Qatar's website. Event attendees will have entry to three more distinct exhibitions, co-

located with Cityscape, including The Big 5 Qatar, Index Design Qatar, and the Qatar Real Estate Forum. This year, the Qatar Real Estate Forum will take place under the theme 'Aqarat's Future', focusing on transparency in the real estate sector, sustainable development, digital integration, and alignment with global best practices to boost investor confidence. Moreover, the event will explore how effective partnerships and a strong dispute resolution mechanism can enhance benefits for investors and global firms attracting foreign investments to this sector in Qatar. The high-level event is sponsored

by Barwa Real Estate, Masraf Al Rayan, and Qatari Diar, and will see the participation of key speakers, such as Engineer Khalid bin Ahmad al-Obaidi, president of the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (Aqarat); Abdullah al-Saleh, co-founder and CEO of Sakan; Yousuf Mohamed al-Jaida, board member and CEO at the Qatar Financial Centre Authority, amongst others. Registration is available through the Qatar Real Estate Forum's website and attendance is free for all visitors. Hosting Cityscape and the Qatar Real Estate Forum in the same venue creates an integrated platform for learning, networking, and discovering the latest in real estate.



DOHA CHAPTER OF THE INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS OF INDIA
(REGISTERED WITH QATAR FINANCIAL CENTER)



10TH DCICAI ANNUAL CONFERENCE



startup surge
Igniting Innovation, Transforming Future
10TH DCICAI ANNUAL CONFERENCE

17th & 18th
October 2024

Hilton Doha
Diplomatic St.

Doha Chapter of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India proudly presents its 10th Annual Conference on the theme **Startup Surge : Igniting Innovation, Transforming Future**

This two-day event promises to be an exceptional gathering of accounting professionals, entrepreneurs, and industry leaders from Qatar, India, and across the GCC region.

Join us for a dynamic conference filled with insightful sessions from eminent entrepreneurs, investors and experts from the startup ecosystem, opportunity to network with industry leaders, and a chance to explore emerging trends and gain a competitive edge.

INAUGURAL SESSION: 17TH OCTOBER 5:45 PM TO 7:45 PM

Guest of Honor



CA RANJEET KUMAR AGARWAL
President ICAI

Chief Guest



H.E. SHRI VIPUL
Ambassador of India To the State of Qatar

Guest of Honor




H.E. MR SALEH MAJED AL-KHULAIFI
Deputy Undersecretary for Industrial Affairs and Business Development, Ministry of Commerce and Industry

To register please contact:


CA Kamlesh Tibrewal, Chairperson @ 5592 8942
CA Kishore Alex, Vice-Chairperson @ 5504 6010






Annual Gold Sponsors		Insurance Partner	Annual Silver Sponsor
Aster	Morison Qatar	QIC	cinvin
Conference Silver Sponsors		Realty Partner	Technology Partner
KPMG	forvys mazars	FUSION	Deloitte
Annual Support Sponsors		Conference Support Sponsors	
CAPITALE	GLOBAL	FOCUS	KRESTON SVP
			MOORE
			AL MINSAD



A development by





LIVE BRILLIANT LIVE CRYSTAL

CRYSTAL RESIDENCE
1-3 bedroom apartments
4-bedroom duplexes

Connect with us [+974 4409 5155](tel:+97444095155)

 Various Financing Options

 Handover Soon

*Terms and conditions apply

Visit us at Cityscape Qatar

13-15 October

Doha Exhibition and Convention Center

Stand C10

Cityscape Qatar

Minister flags off Qatari Cultural Week in Tashkent

HE the Minister of Culture Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-Thani inaugurated the Qatari Cultural Week in Uzbekistan. The opening was attended by Uzbekistan's Minister of Culture Nazarbekov Ozodbek Ahmedovich, Qatar's ambassador in Tashkent Hassan bin Hamza Hashem, and a number of Uzbek ministers, in addition to several ambassadors, and a large crowd of the public.

The Qatari Cultural Week comes within the framework of bilateral cultural co-operation between Qatar and Uzbekistan, with the aim of highlighting Qatari heritage and culture and enhancing cultural exchange.

In this context, Assistant Undersecretary for Cultural Affairs at the Ministry of Culture Dr Ghanem bin Mubarak al-Ali, said that the Qatari Cultural Week is one of the weeks held by the Ministry of Culture in a number of friendly coun-

Culture minister in Tashkent meetings

HE the Minister of Culture Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-Thani held separate meetings in Tashkent on Friday with Uzbekistan's Minister of Culture of Nazarbekov Ozodbek Ahmedovich and Minister of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change and chairperson of the state committee for tourism development Abdulkhakimov Aziz. The meetings, which were held on the sidelines of the Qatari Cultural Week in Uzbekistan, focused on aspects of co-operation and ways to support and develop them in the cultural field. **(QNA)**

tries within the framework of cultural relations. He noted that the aim of the cultural week is to intro-



duce Qatari arts, culture and heritage, adding that culture has always been a bridge of communication, and that the basis of rapprochement between peoples, based on the exchange of their cultures. During the opening ceremony, the Qatar Philharmonic Orches-

tra presented a number of musical pieces, in addition to the oud trio, which embodies a mixture of classical music and traditional Qatari art, in addition to musical pieces with the participation of artist Mansour al-Mohannadi.

The Qatari Cultural Week fea-



tures authentic examples of Qatari cultural heritage through a traditional market and several buildings inspired by Qatari architecture, reflecting traditional Qatari crafts and industries such as shipbuilding, traditional clothing, the Qatari Majlis, the house of poetry, fal-

conry, and popular foods, in addition to performances of the Qatari Ardha, and sea arts and songs. The cultural week also features film screenings produced by the Doha Film Institute (DFI) with the participation of Qatar Tourism (QT) and Qatar Airways. **(QNA)**

NHRC, EOI join forces for international conference

QNA
Doha

The National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) said that preparations are set for the launch of the International Conference on the Protection of Children and Other Vulnerable Groups tomorrow, organised in partnership with the European Ombudsman Institute (EOI).

The conference will see the opening speeches of HE Chairperson of NHRC Maryam bint Abdullah al-Attiyah, President of EOI Prof Dragan Milkov, and Head of Analysis and Outreach Hub at the Office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict Dawood al-Masri.

The conference will consist of three sessions, the first of which will discuss protecting children and other vulnerable

The conference will consist of three sessions, the first of which will discuss protecting children and other vulnerable groups during migration and war

groups during migration and war.

The 1st session will see presentations by: Chief Ombudsman of Turkiye Seref Malkoc on the role of the ombudsman in protecting children's rights during migration and war; Human Rights Commissioner in the Russian Federation Tatyana Mosalkova on issues related to protecting children and other vulnerable groups in the work of the Russian Federation's Human Rights Commissioner; Ombudsperson of the Turkish Speaking Com-



munity of Cyprus Ikan Varol on the protection of children and vulnerable groups during migration and war; Chief of the International Organization for Migration Mission in Qatar Ewa Naqvi on the protection of children and vulnerable groups in the context of migration.

The 2nd session will focus on protection from cyber-threats: children and adolescents in the digital age, which will see presentations by: President of the European Ombudsman Institute (EOI) Prof Dragan

Milkov on the Internet new challenges for the ombudsman; Ombudsperson in Sverdlovsk oblast Tatyana Merzlyakova on protecting children and adolescents from cyber-threats in today's world; regional ombudsperson of Serbia's City of Nis Katarina Mitrovski on protecting children's rights in the digital environment.

The 3rd session will focus on the role of ombudsmen in protecting the rights of children and vulnerable groups, with presentations by: Chairperson of the Bulgarian Commission for Protection against Discrimination Ana Dzhumalieva on the right of migrant children to education; Commissioner for Human Rights in Yaroslavl Region - Russia Sergey Baburkin on the role of the ombudsman in protecting children and other vulnerable groups; Head of Legal Affairs Department at NHRC Nasser Sultan al-Marri on National Human Rights Institutions' best practices in protecting children and other vulnerable groups.

Amir congratulates King of Spain, Equatorial Guinea president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent cables of congratulations to King Felipe VI of Spain on his country's National Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a similar cable of congratulations to Prime Minister Dr Pedro Sanchez.

His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Deputy Amir sent cables of congratulations to President of Equatorial Guinea Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo on his country's Independence Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs also sent a similar cable of congratulations to Prime Minister Manuel Osa Nsue Nsua. **(QNA)**

MoL organises awareness workshop on occupational safety and health

The Ministry of Labour (MoL), represented by the Occupational Safety and Health Department, organised an awareness workshop for workers and employees of the Four Seasons Hotel, with the aim of educating them on the principles and requirements of occupational safety and health in workplaces and residential areas.

The workshop comes as part of the Ministry of Labour's efforts to take care of workers and employees at work sites and places of residence, train them and raise their awareness of ways to protect them from risks while performing their duties

and work, consolidate the concepts of occupational safety, and provide a safe and healthy work environment for all.

During the workshop, representatives of the ministry's Occupational Safety and Health Department reviewed how to avoid risks related to the work environment, and sensitised workers' supervisors to the need to ensure the availability of personal protective equipment, such as gloves and masks, during the use of cleaning chemicals, in addition to training participants on how to deal with guests professionally.


The workshop also included educating workers and employ-

ees on fire safety procedures, prevention of electrical hazards, methods of avoiding stress and mental health, and protection from infectious diseases as a result of direct contact with guests, and the importance of committing to using personal protective equipment during work.

The ministry's Occupational Safety and Health Department emphasised the importance of applying effective safety policies, providing comprehensive and integrated care for workers and employees, through regular training, and a commitment to protect them, to minimise the risks they may be exposed to during work.



Some of the participants at the workshop.




The Transport Company
MOWASALAT (KARWA)


Mowasalat (Karwa) announces the following tender:

Tender Ref. No.	Tender Title	Tender Fee	Electronic Tender Fee Payment Dates	Tender Bond	Bid Closing Date
TC-044-EGS-2024	Supply of Packed Meals on Call-off Basis	QAR 2,000	13 to 17 October 2024	QAR 70,000	17 November 2024






CONDITIONS:

- ▶ Interested bidder shall pay the tender fee to Mowasalat Bank Account details as shown:
- ▶ Bidder must submit proof of tender fee payment (Bank Deposit Slip + a Signed & Stamped Expression of Interest (indicating Tender Ref. No. and Title / Company Name and details of nominated contact person i.e., Tel. No., Fax No., and Email address) + Copy of valid Commercial Registration to Mowasalat Secretary - Tender Committee at email: tenders@mowasalat.com
- ▶ Tender documents will be released via email on the next working day after the tender fee payment date to all bidders who have submitted the bank deposit slip and other documents requested (i.e., 20 October 2024)
- ▶ **Bonds: Tender Bond & Performance Bond:** Bids must be accompanied by Bonds issued by a local bank operating in the State of Qatar as per the Qatar Central Bank template. Further details of bonds can be found in the tender documents. **Bids without Tender Bond shall not be considered.**
- ▶ **Tender validity:** Bid validity period shall be 180 days from the bid closing date.
- ▶ **Tender documents submission:** Bids must be submitted in 3 separate sealed (IN RED WAX) envelopes addressed to **Secretary - Tender Committee** clearly highlighting the Tender Ref. No. & Tender Title:
 - **Envelope 1#** must include the Technical Bid submission (1 Original + 1 non-Editable copy in a USB)
 - **Envelope 2#** must include Commercial Bid submission (1 Original + 1 Editable MS Excel spreadsheet copied in a USB)
 - **Envelope 3#** must include the Tender Bond (1 Original)
- ▶ **Bid Closing Date:** Bid submission deadline is **12.00 noon Doha Local Time** as on the Bid closing date shown above. The 3 envelopes must be handed over to the Office of The Secretary - Tender Committee, located at Mowasalat Head Office, Industrial Area. Any tender submitted after the deadline will not be considered.


Supplier Registration


Mowasalat Location

Tel.: 4458 8724 Fax: 4458 8850

Public Prosecution launches 'Smart Assistant'

The Public Prosecution announced yesterday the launch of the first interactive version of the "Smart Assistant", developed using artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, as part of its ongoing efforts to enhance electronic services and facilitate access to legal information. In a statement, the Public Prosecution said that the assistant aims to provide accurate and comprehensive information related to legal matters and assist users with inquiries regarding available electronic services through the Public Prosecution's online portal. The initiative represents the first phase of an ambitious project aimed at offering an integrated and user-friendly experience supported by AI technologies. The Smart Assistant will provide users with instant responses to legal inquiries, making it easier for them to obtain reliable information without the need for traditional research. The Public Prosecution clarified that users can interact with the Smart Assistant either by typing or via direct voice communication. Responses will be delivered in written form and through an avatar character developed by the Public Prosecution. It also noted that in the first phase, the outcomes and responses will be evaluated, with improvements made to the model. In the second phase of the project, the range of services will be expanded, allowing users to inquire about their cases and submit requests directly through the Smart Assistant. **(QNA)**



شركة الكهرباء والماء القطرية ش.م.ع.ق.
QATAR ELECTRICITY & WATER CO. Q.P.S.C

PRE-QUALIFICATION OF CONTRACTORS FOR SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND COMMISSIONING OF HYDROGEN GENERATORS (INCLUDING FEED WATER SYSTEM AND ALL RELATED AUXILIARIES)

Qatar Electricity and Water Company Q.P.S.C is inviting Leading Companies registered in the State of Qatar to submit pre-qualification documents for Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Hydrogen Generators (including feed water system and all related auxiliaries).

The pre-qualification documents must contain the following:

- Commercial registration
- Related licenses and certificates
- Corporate Organization Chart
- Financial Statement for the last 3 years
- List of Clients for the last 5 years
- Details of Company's Health, Safety and Environmental Policy
- Company Profile
- RAF Contractor Health and Safety Qualification Form duly filled in and signed.

Required documents should be uploaded to www.qewc.com/qewc/tenders before 11:00 AM on 22-Oct-2024.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT US VIA EMAIL
amit.dave@qewc.com

Italian envoy says Qatar is 'strategic partner' for regional stability, growth

By Peter Alagos
Business Reporter

Italian ambassador Paolo Toschi has highlighted the robust and growing relationship between Italy and Qatar, emphasising their shared commitment to regional stability, particularly in addressing the conflict in Palestine and Lebanon.

"This is an important time in the relationship between Italy and Qatar because of several conversations that are maturing and bearing fruit," Toschi told *Gulf Times* in an exclusive interview, where he discussed the role of regional diplomacy and crisis management, humanitarian efforts, bilateral re-

lations between Italy and Qatar, economic co-operation, and cultural exchange and dialogue in addressing regional challenges.

According to the ambassador, Italy views Qatar as a strategic partner and values its role in promoting peace and dialogue. Both countries are actively engaged in humanitarian efforts, providing substantial aid to Gaza and Lebanon through various UN agencies, Toschi pointed out.

"His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni are engaged as actors of peace by supporting dialogue, diplomacy, and the peaceful resolution of disputes at a time when the region is going through a tragic and



Italian ambassador Paolo Toschi.
PICTURE: Shaji Kayamkulam

deep crisis," he emphasised.

The ambassador also said: "Italy has been very clear that there needs to be a state for Palestine. There must be continuity between Gaza and the West Bank, and a

sustainable security platform for Palestine, to which Italy is ready to contribute."

"We continue to call upon all parties to end violence against civilians and to respect both international and humanitarian law. We are taking action also as chair of the G7 as we continue to support Qatar's diplomatic work to identify a solution in accord with the other involved parties," Toschi noted.

Similarly on Lebanon, Toschi recalled that Italy has taken the lead in a G7 initiative calling parties to uphold UN Security Council Resolution 1701, "which is the foundation of a sustainable asset for Lebanon."

"We are engaged to support

Lebanese authorities, which is very much in line with what Qatar is doing, strengthening the foundation of Lebanese institutions," the ambassador further stressed.

"Both in Gaza and Lebanon, like Qatar, we are engaged in delivering humanitarian and food assistance, in co-ordination with UN agencies like the World Food Programme, UNHCR, and UNRWA, to provide food and other forms of support," Toschi explained, adding that Italy's recent assistance includes a €17mn emergency aid for Lebanon and two packages of food aid respectively worth €35mn and €12mn for Gaza.

The ambassador also noted that the Italy-Qatar bilateral relationship extends beyond diplomacy

and continues to expand collaboration in sectors like investment, energy (including gas markets and renewables), defence, and military co-operation. "Both countries are also exploring opportunities in food security, biotech, life sciences, and urban management," Toschi said.

According to Toschi, cultural exchange is also seen as a crucial element in fostering understanding and peace, "especially during times of crisis."

He added: "Italy and Qatar view culture as a unifying factor and a means for dialogue. We believe culture can provide context, build bridges between people, and contribute to conversations about peace."

Extended warranty for Aston Martin



Alfardan Luxury Motors Co, the official dealer for Aston Martin in Qatar, is providing a comprehensive warranty extension package, a statement said. Available on the full line-up of models, the extension programme gives owners the reassurance that their car will receive world-class service by a team of highly skilled, factory-

trained technicians - using only genuine parts. "Delivering the highest levels of customer service is paramount to us, and our Aston Martin Extended Warranty programme ensures that customers not only receive the best care from our team, but that they have absolute peace of mind when it comes to maintaining their

prized cars," said Charly Dagher, general manager for Alfardan Luxury Motors. "Coverage is extensive, and cars are repaired in our state-of-the-art service facility that was developed to meet the marque's stringent international guidelines," he explained. Issam Jahchan, aftersales manager for Alfardan Luxury Motors, added: "The



Extended Warranty package for Aston Martin has a very high level of coverage and continues the protection that the brand offers from new, safeguarding against unexpected repair costs. Anyone that has owned their Aston Martin three or more years from the first day the car was registered is eligible, and we have differing duration options

of either 12 or 24 months for up to 15 years." The Alfardan Luxury Motors five-star after sales facility, located in the Industrial Area, Street 2, features the latest in cutting-edge technology, machinery, and tools, with numerous working bays, approved diagnostic equipment and genuine spare parts, the statement added.

Official

Qatar condemns Israel's seizure of UNRWA HQ

Qatar strongly condemned the Israeli occupation's seizure of the headquarters of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in occupied East Jerusalem. In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs warned that the continuation of Israel's systematic targeting campaign against the agency aims to dismantle it and deprive millions of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria of its essential services, in addition to liquidating the issue of Palestinian refugees and their right to return to their areas and homes, which is guaranteed by international law and relevant UN resolutions, specifically UN General Assembly resolutions 194 and 237. The ministry also stressed that the Israeli occupation's efforts to dismantle UNRWA are a link in a chain of reprehensible targeting of the UN itself, including workers in its various organisations, affirming in this context that this dangerous situation places the international community before a true test, which requires immediate action to confront it firmly. The ministry renewed Qatar's full support for UNRWA, based on its firm and supportive position towards the legitimate rights of the brotherly Palestinian people, foremost of which is their right to establish their independent state on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. (QNA)

QCRI concludes 2024 internship programme

Hamad Bin Khalifa University's (HBKU) Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI) held the closing ceremony for its 2024 Summer Internship Program, where they celebrated 87 undergraduate participants and handed awards to the most promising projects and their teams.

Throughout the eight-week programme, the students collaborated in teams to conduct research on 25 projects that addressed national priorities in the fields of Arabic language technologies, social computing, data

analytics, and cybersecurity. The students hailed from local and international institutions including HBKU, Qatar University (QU), the University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST), Oryx Universal College (OUC), Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar (CMU-Q), Texas A&M University at Qatar, Northwestern University in Qatar (NU-Q), Princeton University, and more.

At the end of the programme, the teams presented their research projects to a jury panel composed of 15 experts from QCRI, QU, UDST, and NU-Q,

who evaluated the quality of the methodology, execution, and creativity of their research work, the real-world relevance of their findings, the clarity of their poster designs and their communication skills.

Steve Shema Ndayam Baje, CMU-Q, received first place for his project "A Reinforcement Learning (RL) Model for AI-based Decision Support in Oral Cancer," conducted with the guidance of Dr Mohamed Elsharif, Postdoctoral Researcher, QCRI.

The jury awarded second place to two teams - Elaa Bouazza,

SUP'COM for "Met-P-SVG: Scalable Variational Inference with convergence guarantees via Parametrized Stein Variational Gradient Descent with Metropolis Hastings"; and Mohamed Bayan Kmainasi, QU; Rakif Khan Pathan, UDST; Ali Shahroor, OUC; and Boushra Bendou, CMU-Q, for their project "Native vs Non-Native Language Prompting: A Comparative Analysis". Third place went to Malak Ibrahim, CMU-Q; Anas Madkour, QU; Talha Javad, UDST; Mylesha Hoque, QU; Fagr Amar Tahir, QU; Arwa Elaradi, QU; and Bryson

Jandawa, Princeton University, for their project "Mapping the Evolution of Scientific Legacy".

Dr Eman Futuri, director of Educational Initiatives, said: "QCRI designs opportunities for Qatar's promising young talents to engage with a diverse array of fields in the computer sciences and learn from our experienced researchers."

"The Summer Internship Programme demonstrates our commitment to providing a knowledge hub for Qatar to retain, attract and develop top talent in computer science."

New livestock yards to be opened in Al Shamal, Al Khor, Abu Nakhla

The new livestock yards are set to go functional in Al Shamal, Al Khor and Abu Nakhla where the public can buy livestock at moderate prices before the end of this year.

Engineer Abdulaziz al-Ziyara, director of the Department of Animal Resource at the Ministry of Municipality, told local Arabic daily *Arrayah* that these yards will be dedicated to selling livestock under the supervision of veterinarians in the ministry. "These yards will help livestock breeders sell directly to consumers without the intervention of any intermediary. This would lead to selling livestock at a fair price for both the breeder and the consumer, noting that the three yards are currently ready," he said.

The opening of these yards comes within the framework of developing the local marketing system for animal products. The yard at Al Shamal includes 11



Engineer Abdulaziz al-Ziyara

barns and Al Khor has 30 barns while the yard at Abu Nakhla will be dedicated to selling livestock in vehicles under the supervision of veterinarians from the department.

The department, according to al-Ziyara, recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Group of

Agriculture and Animal Product to collect and market local eggs from traditional farms and ranches. The initiative aims to find organised and regular marketing outlets that provide a new source of income for the breeder and ensure the sustainability of the activity.

"The department is making great efforts to encourage local production of local sheep in ranches and farms. There is a special programme which includes purchasing local sheep from breeders in ranches and farms at special prices," he said noting that the programme aims to raise the rate of self-sufficiency in red meat and maintain a strategic stock of red meat in the country.

He added that three veterinary centres are currently being established in the northern complexes, Abu Nakhla and Al Wakra. He said that the construction will be completed by next year.



Routes of migratory birds should be protected: environment ministry



The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change has stressed the importance of protecting the routes of migratory birds on the occasion of the World Migratory Bird Day. In addition, the Ministry pointed out that the ecosystems that these birds depend on while coming to Qatar or passing through the country should be protected to help enable these birds continue their journeys.

The Ministry noted that the protection of migratory birds in a joint

international responsibility that requires collaborative efforts among the stakeholders to maintain biodiversity and the sustainability of the natural environments. Qatar annually receives a wide range of migratory birds that play a vital role in maintaining ecological equilibrium, and represent an integral part of the natural heritage of the country. Some of these migratory birds include the swallow, the osprey and the greater flamingo.



TENDER ADVERTISEMENT

ORYX GTL Limited is pleased to announce the following tender(s):

S. No.	Tender Ref.	Tender Title:	Tender Bond QAR	Bid Closing Date & Tender Bond Validity Period
1	STC-CN-022-24-IT	Call-off Contract for Photocopier/Printing Devices (MFPs)	45,500/-	06 Nov 2024 at 12.00 noon & 180 days
2	TC-CN-034-24-MT	Call-off Contract for Maintenance of Fire Fighting Equipment	45,500/-	06 Nov 2024 at 12.00 noon & 180 days
3	TC-CN-032-24-MC	Call-off Contract for Maintenance of Rotating Equipment	590,000/-	06 Nov 2024 at 12.00 noon & 180 days

Companies wishing to register their interest and obtain Tender Document(s) for the above Tender(s) must pay a non-refundable registration fee and register with ORYX GTL as detailed below:

Tender Registration Fee	QAR 500/- (Non-refundable) per Tender
Payable to	ORYX GTL Limited
IBAN (29 Digits)	QA23QNBA00000000013010705001
Bank	Qatar National Bank - HQ or any branch (cash only)
Registration Dates	From 13 th October 2024 to 17 th October 2024 8:00 am to 1:00 pm
Registration Process and Requirements:	Write an e-mail to oryxgltenders@oryxglt.com.qa with the following attachments: 1. Copy of Commercial Registration (CR) 2. Copy of bank deposit slip of the Tender Registration Fee. 3. Copy of ICV Certificate

COMPANIES WHO HAVE PAID THE NON-REFUNDABLE REGISTRATION FEE BUT FAILED TO FORMALLY REGISTER AT THE DATE AND TIME STATED ABOVE WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED AS ACCEPTABLE TENDERER.

TENDER BOND SHALL BE ISSUED BY A BANK REGISTERED IN THE STATE OF QATAR.

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

For more information about ORYX GTL and its tenders, please visit our website: <http://www.oryxglt.com.qa>



Inspection drive conducted at Birkat Al Awamer logistics area



By Ayman Adly
Doha

A broad inspection campaign was carried out at Birkat Al Awamer Logistics Area within the jurisdiction of Al Wakra Municipality during September 29-October 10.

The campaign was undertaken by the Ministry of Municipality, represented by the Municipal Control Department of Al Wakra Municipality, in co-operation with the Mechanical Equipment Department, the Abandoned Vehicles Removal Committee, the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya), and the Seashore Group. Accordingly, the campaign covered 320 food establishments and 56 industrial companies, facilities and resulted in the removal of 170 abandoned vehicles and pieces of equipment. Besides, 56 violation reports were issued for building regulation violations.

Dr Nawal Mohamed Abdullah, assistant director of the Municipal Control Department at Al Wakra Municipality, explained that this campaign was the first-of-its-kind, as all departments collaborated in the same campaign. The goal was to spread awareness among institutions, companies, and factories in Birkat Al Awamer area to comply with the municipal laws to maintain a clean, exemplary city, considering the area's im-

■ The campaign covered 320 food establishments, 56 industrial companies, facilities and resulted in the removal of 170 abandoned vehicles and pieces of equipment

portance as a key logistics hub. During the campaign, notifications were distributed to lots and establishments to implement and apply the municipal laws and regulations.

Earlier, engineer Mohamed Hassan al-Nuaimi, director of Al Wakra Municipality, formed a control team to carry out comprehensive inspections within the Logistics Area (Birkat Al Awamer), led by Hamad al-Sheikh, head of the team, alongside the heads of general, health and technical control sections under the Municipal Control Department.

In the meantime, Salem Mohamed al-Hajri, Head of the General Control Section at Al Wakra Municipality, said that as part of the ministry's efforts to enhance the aesthetic appearance of Al Wakra city, the municipality co-ordinated with the joint committee for removing abandoned vehicles and Lekhwiya to conduct an extensive inspection campaign. This campaign aimed to remove aban-

doned equipment, cabins and vehicles in all areas of Birkat Al Awamer.

Al-Hajri added that after completing work in Birkat Al Awamer, the campaign would cover other areas such as Aba Saleel and Barwa Al Baraha, with the goal of covering all areas under Al Wakra Municipality. Further, he stressed that the municipality would continue to address the issue of abandoned vehicles through more campaigns and awareness efforts, urging vehicle owners not to neglect their cars, as abandoned vehicles are found in many residential, industrial and other areas. Al-Hajri explained that once an abandoned vehicle is spotted, a warning sticker is placed on it. If the vehicle is not removed within a certain period, the relevant authorities take legal action to remove and transfer it to designated areas. After the warning sticker is placed, vehicle owners have three days to remove their vehicles before the municipality removes them.

Qatar Charity initiative promotes humanitarian values in schools

Qatar Charity has launched the 'Generational Impact Maker Challenge' initiative in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE).

The initiative aims to promote humanitarian values and behaviours, encouraging both school students and staff to actively participate in charitable efforts. Through competitions in fundraising, raising awareness of humanitarian issues, and emphasising the importance of social responsibility, the initiative engages participants through innovative and interactive activities.

The initiative supports Qatar National Vision 2030 in achieving social development by drawing inspiration from the noble values and ethics of Qatari society in its interactions with other communities. It raises awareness among students about global humanitarian challenges, fostering empathy for those in need and contributing to impactful humanitarian and development projects.

It provides an opportunity for humanitarian efforts through donation boxes that will be distributed to students to encourage daily contributions. An online donation link for participating schools will also enable academic staff and parents to support the initiative. It also allows participating school students to organise



The Qatar Charity's 'Generational Impact Maker Challenge' initiative supports Qatar National Vision 2030 in achieving social development by drawing inspiration from the noble values and ethics of Qatari society.

events and activities that promote awareness of humanitarian work and social responsibility, fostering competition in support of the initiative's goals.

Registration is open to all schools in Qatar until the end of October and so far, 100 schools have registered.

Amer Mohammad AlBesiri, head of the Collection Section at Qatar Charity, stated that the initiative aims to instill values of giving in students and foster their participation in charitable activities. He expressed hope for strong involvement from school students and staff, as well as parents, with donations supporting educational projects for needy students worldwide.

Khalid Alsaadi, programmes and activities specialist at MoEHE, stressed that education is a tool for serving society and

achieving sustainable development. He affirmed the ministry's support for the initiative in partnership with Qatar Charity, noting it will equip students with new skills in humanitarian work, boost social awareness, and engage them in community service projects.

The initiative aims to raise QR5mn through donations from participating schools for educational projects in underprivileged regions.

The competitive challenge will run from October to April next year, and concluded with an award ceremony for the winning schools. Three prizes will be awarded: the first for the school that collects the most donations, the second for the school that organises the best event during the challenge, and the third for the best school in submitting monthly reports and updates.

Aman concludes social protection awareness drive



The Protection and Social Rehabilitation Center (Aman), a part of the Qatar Social Work Foundation under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Development and Family, concluded the Awareness Campaign events held in collaboration with Hamad Medical Corporation.

The campaign aimed at educating the community on social protection and its connection to mental health, coinciding with the celebration of World Mental Health Day.

Executive Director of Aman Sheikh Dr Nasser bin Ahmed al-Thani pointed out that the events were held at the Women's Wellness and Research Center (WWRC), and witnessed the allocation of a pavilion to introduce the centre's services provided to the targeted groups of women, children, and victims of family disintegration, with the aim of raising the level of public awareness of mental health problems.

He explained that the mental health of women and children is an integral part of their general health condition.

When a woman or child is exposed to psychological violence, this negatively affects their be-

haviour, thinking and health. It is necessary to co-operate and work together with the relevant authorities to clarify the importance of mental health for the target groups and to work on providing all appropriate solutions for them in order to create a strong and cohesive family environment, far from mental health problems.

On the other hand, the Executive Director of Aman Center pointed out the increase in the number of beneficiaries of the centre's services during the activities of the centre's introductory pavilion in health centres and the WWRC, where the number of beneficiaries over three days reached more than 2,500 people, from different groups in society, including females and males from different nationalities.

The executive director added that the services are provided free of charge to all women, children, and victims of family disintegration due to violence, and the centre's goal is to raise their awareness and provide them with social protection.

Dr Hilal al-Rifai, WWRC acting CEO and medical director expressed his happiness with the

partnership with Aman Center.

He said that the WWRC will have an effective role in integrating Aman's programmes with the centre's training programmes and awareness and safety programmes, and said this co-operation will extend and expand to conduct joint research to achieve Qatar's ambition to lead in protecting human rights.

Head of the Communication and Information Office at Aman Center Hanan al-Ali highlighted the importance of celebrating international days to activate the principle of community and international partnership through co-operation with the health sector in Qatar, represented by Hamad Medical Corporation and the Primary Health Care Corporation, to contribute to raising awareness and educating society about the dangers of psychological stress.

She added: "Aman Center aims to create a safe environment for women, children, and victims of family violence by hosting awareness events in collaboration with health centres and sharing educational messages on social media, highlighting the importance of mental health and ensuring protection for these groups." (QNA)

QRCS enhances food security, livelihoods in Afghanistan

With funding from the Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD), the Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) has proceeded with the project to enhance resilience among the families most affected by conflicts and natural disasters in Afghanistan, by enhancing food security and livelihoods.

Co-implemented by QRCS' representation office in Afghanistan and the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS), the project aimed to make the communities most affected by conflicts and natural disasters in Faryab, Farah and Helmand provinces more resilient, by distributing basic food supplies to 800 families, about 5,600 people, from the most vulnerable families in the target provinces, as well as helping them start productive, income-generating enterprises.

The first component of the project has been recently launched with five-month vocational and



technical training workshops for 150 trainees. The areas of train-

ing offered include electricity, carpentry, auto/engine mechan-

ic, A/C and refrigeration, and others. (QNA)





A drone view shows a destroyed beach house after Hurricane Milton made landfall in Manasota Key, Florida, on Friday.

Biden: Hurricane Milton losses estimated at \$50bn

US President Joe Biden has announced that Hurricane Milton caused losses estimated at \$50bn after hitting the state of Florida.

Biden told reporters on Friday at the White House that “experts estimate that it caused damages of nearly \$50bn.” The death toll from Hurricane Milton has risen to at least 17, according to officials in the state of Florida, as residents began to return to their homes and work

to restore their normal routine.

The previous death toll from Hurricane Milton, which hit the state of Florida, was 14, in addition to massive destruction of facilities and homes and the cancellation of thousands of flights in the state, according to what the US authorities announced.

The hurricane also caused widespread flooding and unexpected tornadoes that increased the extent of the damage. (QNA)



A swimming pool's handrails are seen after it was filled with beach sand as Hurricane Milton passed through the area on Friday, in Manasota.

SpaceX Starship 5 flight launch set for today

Reuters
Washington

The Federal Aviation Administration approved a licence yesterday for the launch of SpaceX's Starship 5 set for today after earlier saying it did not expect to make a decision until late November.

Reuters first reported this week the faster than expected timetable after the FAA in September had suggested a much longer review.

SpaceX is targeting Sunday for the launch and said a 30-minute launch window opens at 7am CT (1200 GMT). The FAA said yesterday SpaceX had “met all safety, environmental and other licensing requirements for the suborbital test flight” for the fifth test of the Starship and has also approved the Starship 6 mission profile.

The Starship spacecraft and Super Heavy rocket are a fully reusable system designed to carry crew and cargo to Earth orbit, the Moon and beyond.

The fifth test flight of the Starship/Super Heavy from Boca Chica, Texas, includes a return to the launch site of the Super Heavy booster rocket for a catch attempt by the launch

The Starship spacecraft and Super Heavy rocket are a fully reusable system designed to carry crew and cargo to Earth orbit, the Moon and beyond

tower, and a water landing of the Starship vehicle in the Indian Ocean west of Australia.

The FAA said if SpaceX chooses an uncontrolled entry “it must communicate that decision to the FAA prior to launch, the loss of the Starship vehicle will be considered a planned event, and a mishap investigation will not be required.”

On Friday, the FAA approved the return to flight of the SpaceX Falcon 9 vehicle after it reviewed and accepted the SpaceX-led investigation findings and corrective actions for the mishap that occurred on Sept 28.

SpaceX CEO Elon Musk has harshly criticised the FAA, including for proposing a \$633,000 fine against SpaceX over launch issues and for the delay in approving the licence for Starship 5, which the company says has been ready to launch since August. Musk has called for the resignation of FAA Administrator Mike Whitaker and threatened to sue the agency.

Floridians vow to rebuild after two hurricanes

Reuters
Siesta Key, Florida

Chris Fiore was supposed to be accepting delivery of new household appliances and furniture, replacing items that were swamped by Hurricane Helene just a few weeks ago. Instead, the resident of Siesta Key, the Florida barrier island town where Hurricane Milton made landfall this week, was using a broom to push muck and seawater out of her ground-floor condo, a dream home she purchased just four years ago.

“There is no chance I’m pulling up stakes,” Fiore said on Friday, pointing out the waterline where ocean water earlier this week was 2ft (60cm) up a wall. “I’m doubling down, thinking about hurricane windows and doors, figuring out how to stop this water from coming in.” This sentiment was echoed by several residents of Siesta Key who spoke with Reuters on Friday. Residents were outnumbered by clean-up workers and people handing out cards advertising roofing and other construction services following two

major hurricanes in two weeks.

All were feeling down but none seemed defeated, despite the threats of more and stronger hurricanes in the future.

Pat Hurst, who along with her husband Bill has lived on Siesta Key since 2011 and has been visiting for over two decades, was upbeat “despite this mess.”

“That said, cleaning up from one hurricane while trying to prepare for another was really stressful.” While those living outside hurricane-prone zones may wonder why their residents choose to stay, it is easy to see Siesta Key's appeal, even after a hurricane. The place is a Jimmy Buffett song come to life. The mix of low-slung homes and three-storey condos are painted in pleasant pastels, and downtown is lined with appealing restaurants and bars.

After Milton, fine white beach sand covered roads several blocks inland. Homes were turned inside-out, with every imaginable household possession ruined by Helene heaped along roads. Coconut trees were blown from trees and thrown asunder.

Boats normally docked in canals were tossed on land. Dump-

sters already full from the Helene cleanup were being topped by Milton's debris.

Elsewhere in the state, workers yesterday were rescuing people trapped by rising floodwaters, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis said, and electricity and fuel was still unavailable in many areas. He said the Biden administration had approved federal aid to help residents and local governments cover their expenses.

At least 17 deaths were attributed to Milton.

DeSantis said on Friday he was not inclined to prevent people from rebuilding in vulnerable areas. “People work their whole lives to be able to live in environments that are really, really nice, and they have a right to make those decisions with their property as they see fit,” he told reporters.

Florida has led the nation in population growth since 2021 despite a low-lying topography that leaves it vulnerable to hurricanes and rising sea levels. Florida ZIP codes account for 78 of the 80 riskiest areas in the country, according to Weather Source, an environmental risk consultancy. Residents paid an average of

\$4,060 for property insurance in 2023, nearly \$1,000 higher than any other state.

Sherry Tom, 49, convinced her husband and three daughters to leave Pittsburgh's cold winters and move to Siesta Key in 2021.

“This place is my whole heart,” she said. “But I will admit – I’m worried about living in fear that this will happen again. But if we can, we’re staying.” Tom said she thinks they will have to knock down what remains of their home and build from scratch. She was resolute about staying.

Marko Radosavljevic, 54, owns one of the original homes built by Siesta Key's first developer, Frank Archibald, which was built with water-resistant pecky cypress wood. Water and wind have nonetheless done damage in the past two weeks.

As he worked to clean out debris from the house he has owned since 2017, Radosavljevic said he was not even considering leaving behind a place “with a special island vibe.” “I refuse to be pushed out,” Radosavljevic said, referring to both storms and drives to put up hotels in place of older homes like his.

A Journey Filled with Achievements and Excellence



Charly Dagher: “Alfordan Luxury Motors offers a unique experience to customers that reflects the essence of British luxury. Our after-sales center provides services that meet the highest international standards.”

Alfordan Luxury Motors has quickly made a significant mark in the Qatari automotive market, operating under the umbrella of Alfordan Group, one of the largest economic entities in Qatar. The group has a diverse portfolio of projects contributing to Qatar's development and its Vision 2030, including the automotive sector, with Alfordan Luxury Motors being one of its key companies.

To learn more about their strategy, future vision, and the latest offerings from the Aston Martin brand, we spoke with Mr. Charly Dagher, General Manager of Alfordan Luxury Motors.

Can you share a brief overview of your career path and what led you to becoming the General Manager of Alfordan Luxury Motors?

I have been involved in the Middle East automotive industry for over 24 years now and taking

the helm at Aston Martin with Alfordan Luxury Motors is an honour. Having held the role of General Manager over the past 10 years, I have managed a portfolio of iconic automotive brands in Qatar and beyond, and have a wealth of experience of delivering outstanding customer experiences in the luxury motoring space.

Having been a car enthusiast for as long as I can remember, Aston Martin is a brand one aspires to – an acclaimed crafter of automobiles with a captivating and rich heritage, strong racing pedigree, and endless engineering and design feats that place it at the pinnacle of automotive luxury.

How does Alfordan Luxury Motors aim to differentiate itself from other luxury car dealerships?

As the official dealer of Aston Martin in the State-of-Qatar, Alfordan Luxury Motors represents the pinnacle of British

luxury – and we are proud to offer an entirely unique customer experience to match.

Our state-of-the-art showroom at Alfordan Towers in West Bay is the largest of the brand's dealerships in the Middle East; this stands to underline our commitment to Aston Martin and dedication to offering the finest in retail concepts in Qatar. We are proud to present clients and prospects with an immersive brand experience, a well-rounded journey from start to finish.

In terms of line-up, can you tell us about the latest offerings?

When DB12 was introduced to the line-up last year, it heralded a new era as the first of the marque's Next Generation sports cars. It is the world's first Super Tourer and sets the benchmark for performance, ultra-luxury and style. With DB12 came the introduction of an



all-new infotainment system – entirely bespoke and designed and developed by Aston Martin.

Vantage is the quintessential Aston Martin sports car, engineered for real drivers. The second of Aston Martin's Next Gen of sports cars, the new Vantage was unveiled in February and is the most driver-focused and fastest ever created.

DBX707's incredible performance, dynamics and style saw it launch to huge success in 2022, as the fastest SUV in the world. With this enhanced interior and suite of connected car technology, DBX707 is now our single powertrain in the ultra-luxury performance SUV portfolio.

What role does innovation play in Aston Martin's product lineup, and can you share any exciting upcoming projects?

Aston Martin never ceases to innovate, and pushing boundaries is central to everything it does – from cutting-edge innovations in Formula 1® technology with the AMR24, the exclusive Valiant special edition, the most extreme front-engine road car it has ever built (and a personal commission by driver Fernando Alonso), the hugely powerful Vantage and the potent new V12 flagship Vanquish, to mention just a few recent showcases.

Innovation is evident in each and every detail, across each and every model in the range.

What specific features do you



believe set your dealership apart in terms of customer experience and service efficiency?

At Alfordan Luxury Motors, we have decades of luxury retail experience behind us and are innovators in Qatar's automotive industry. Customer service has always been at the core of the Alfordan ethos; our team is welcoming, extremely knowledgeable, and trained to the highest standards to ensure top notch servicing throughout a customer's journey. This, combined with our state-of-the-art showroom and aftersales facilities ensures we remain pioneers. In line with our goal of providing these levels of service, we have a breakdown truck available exclusively for our customers.

Can you describe your approach to training and development within Alfordan Luxury Motors?

Through Alfordan Automotive's Training Academy, we run a variety of employee development programmes and comprehensive training across all functions, from product knowledge to technical skills, customer support and beyond. In addition to this, team members are fully immersed within the brand universe at various points. Training is a continuous pursuit while we send employees to the factories and training academies in the region and we conduct in-house trainings in our state-of-the-art Training Academy, ensuring that we are always at our best skills level.



Palestinian support gatherings in Turkiye, Italy



Demonstrators shout slogans as they attend a protest to express support for Palestinians in Gaza, amid the Israel-Hamas conflict, in Istanbul, Turkiye, yesterday. **Right:** Protesters hold banners and flags during a rally calling to "Stop the genocide of the Palestinian people, and free Palestine", in central Rome, Italy, yesterday.



Iran's Ghalibaf visits Beirut site of deadliest strikes

AFP
Beirut

Iran's parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf yesterday denounced Israel's "crimes" as he visited the site of the deadliest Israeli strikes on central Beirut in recent weeks, an AFP photographer said.

A source close to Hezbollah had said Thursday night's strikes in the densely populated Basta neighbourhood and the nearby Nweiri district had targeted the Lebanese group's security chief Wafiq Safa.

While neither Israel's military nor Hezbollah confirmed Safa was the target or commented on his fate, Lebanon's health ministry said the strikes killed at least 22 people — the deadliest inside the capital in weeks of escalation.

Speaking to reporters in Basta, accompanied by two Hezbollah lawmakers, Ghalibaf denounced what he called Israel's "crimes".

"International organisations and the UN Security Council have the capability (to stop Israel) but they are unfortunately keeping silent," he said.



Iran parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf (centre) waves as he returns to his car after visiting the site of an Israeli air strike that targeted Beirut's Basta neighbourhood, yesterday.

Earlier yesterday, Ghalibaf met Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati, who told him his government's priority was "to work towards a ceasefire", Lebanon's official National News Agency (NNA) said. Mikati had on Friday urged the United Nations to pass a resolution calling for an "immediate" ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah. Ghalibaf told reporters after meeting his counterpart Na-

bih Berri, a key Hezbollah ally, that Iran "will certainly support the decisions of the Lebanese government, the Lebanese people, and the resistance (Hezbollah) in this period".

When Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi visited Lebanon last week, he said Tehran backed efforts for a simultaneous ceasefire with Israel in both Gaza and Lebanon.

Lebanon leader says ending political deadlock key to war truce

The head of a major Christian party in politically deadlocked Lebanon said yesterday that electing a new president was key to obtaining a ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah, AFP reported from Beirut. Lebanon has been without a head of state for almost two years amid a crushing economic crisis and, now, as Israel heavily bombards the country saying it is targeting Hezbollah sites.

Hezbollah allies and their adversaries including the Christian Lebanese Forces (LF) party have been deadlocked over the presidency, unable to reach a consensus. "The urgency first and foremost is a ceasefire to end the catastrophe that our people are enduring," said Samir Geagea, who heads the LF and parliament's largest Christian bloc.

Iran 'sends satellites to Russia for rocket launch'

Reuters
Dubai

Iran has sent two locally made satellites to Russia to be put into orbit by a Russian space vehicle, the semi-official news agency Tasnim reported yesterday, in the latest space co-operation between the two US-sanctioned countries.

The development of Kowsar, a high-resolution imaging satellite, and Hodhod, a small communications satellite, is the first

substantial effort by Iran's private space sector, the report said.

Russia sent Iranian satellites into orbit in February and in 2022, when US officials voiced concern over space co-operation between Russia and Iran, fearing the satellite will not only help Russia in Ukraine but also help Iran monitor potential military targets in Israel and the wider Middle East.

Kowsar could be used in agriculture, natural resource management, environmental monitoring, and disaster man-

agement, Tasnim said. Hodhod is designed for satellite-based communications and could be used in remote areas with little access to terrestrial networks.

In September, Iran carried out its second satellite launch this year using a rocket built by its Revolutionary Guards.

The launch came as the United States and European countries accuse Tehran of transferring ballistic missiles to Russia that could be used in its war with Ukraine. Iran has denied this.

UN warns of catastrophe as Israel fights a two-front war

AFP
Beirut

UN peacekeepers in Lebanon warned yesterday against a "catastrophic" regional conflict as Israeli forces battled Hezbollah and Hamas fighters on two fronts.

Israel has faced a fierce diplomatic backlash over incidents in south Lebanon that saw five Blue Helmets injured.

Yesterday, the Lebanese health ministry said Israeli air strikes on two villages located near the capital Beirut killed nine people. Official media later reported an Israeli strike targeted a market in Nabatiyah, an important southern city.

Israel had earlier told residents of south Lebanon not to return home, as its troops fought Hezbollah fighters in a war that has killed more than 1,200 people since September 23, and forced

more than a million others to flee their homes according to Lebanese authorities.

"For your own protection, do not return to your homes until further notice... Do not go south; anyone who goes south may put his life at risk," Israeli military spokesman Avichay Adraee posted on X.

Hezbollah said yesterday it launched missiles across the border into northern Israel, where air raid sirens sounded and the military said it had intercepted a projectile.

Israel's military said Hezbollah fired about 320 projectiles into Israel over the weekend of a holiday day for its people, which ended at nightfall.

For the third time, it declared a "closed military area" along the Lebanese border in northern Israel, this time including Shtula and nearby areas.

Such measures since late September have preceded ground

operations inside Lebanon.

In an interview with AFP, UN-til spokesman Andrea Tenenti said he feared an Israeli escalation against Hezbollah could soon spiral out of control "into a regional conflict with catastrophic impact for everyone". There was "no military solution" to the conflict, Tenenti said.

"The situation needs to be discussed at the political and diplomatic level."

The UN force said five peacekeepers have been injured by fighting in south Lebanon in two days, and Tenenti said "a lot of damage" had been caused to its posts there. Around Israel, markets were closed and public transport halted as the observant fasted and prayed during a holiday.

After the holiday, attention is likely to turn again to Israel's promised retaliation against

Iran, which launched around 200 missiles at Israel on October 1.

Ivory Coast sees creche boom as women boost workforce

AFP
Abidjan

Creches and nurseries are springing up in Ivory Coast, marking a break from tradition for those who can afford it, as women increasingly go out to work.

Even if the number of establishments is still low in relation to the West African country's four million pre-schoolers, the provision has shot up recently. There are now 254 private creches and nurseries across Ivory Coast — more than 200 in the economic hub, Abidjan, alone — compared to 174 last year, according to the women, family and children's ministry.

That's on top of nearly 300, and counting, state-run establishments.

"It allows you to breathe," said Chimene Guissou, 31, dropping off her daughter at the Baby Joy nursery in Abidjan's trendy Cocody neighbourhood.

Guissou stopped working when Neriah was born two years ago. But now, she takes advantage of the few hours her daughter is at the nursery to look for a new job.

Mum of two and lawyer Fatoumata Bamba said creche offered "an educational setting" for her

daughter and allowed her to be "more peaceful and productive at work".

Johana Yoboue, who manages Baby Joy which opened in 2018, said that the creche provided "relief" for women.

"It allows them to go about their business, to be much more fulfilled in their work, to be much more relieved on a physical and emotional level too," she said.

The boom comes as the number of Ivorian women in the job market is also on the rise — 51% were actively seeking employment in 2022, compared to 46% the previous year, the latest official data showed.

The vast majority work in the informal sector but more and more women are employed in salaried professions and, according to the government, they are increasingly holding leading positions in the economy.

Businesses owned by women jumped by a quarter in five years and account for more than 20% of formal enterprises, figures from late 2022 showed.

Women also head more than one in three small and medium-size businesses.

BENEFITS OF SOCIALISING
Ivorian children are traditionally looked after by a childminder at home or another family mem-



A pre-school teacher plays with children in the nursery of the Papyrus school group in the popular commune of Yopougon in Abidjan.

ber if their parents can't care for them before they begin school at the age of six.

Salimata Bambara, who manages the newly opened Sally Kids Care private creche in the popular Yopougon neighbourhood, said some people preferred a childminder who could also do housework but that the children ended up "suffering".

For his three-year-old son Hazaria, Pierre Desire Boga has switched from a childminder to the Baby Joy nursery.

In a sandpit filled with building blocks and other toys in its brightly coloured courtyard, the smallest children babble away, while the older ones are beginning to talk.

"At least here he can be around

other children" and learn to read, write or even speak other languages, Boga said.

NEED FOR TRAINED STAFF
The growing demand for structured pre-school care has shone a light on the need for specialised staff.

Ivory Coast has a few state-run early-years training colleges, as well as a handful of private ones, including the Training School for Early Childhood Careers in Abidjan.

It opened in 2019 and turns out about 100 qualified graduates every year.

"We saw that creches and nurseries lacked staff and that the staff had no qualification," head of training Omer Boua Boidi said. He said the school had looked

UNREST

At least 18 killed in Kenya clashes

Inter-communal clashes in southeastern Kenya have killed at least 18 people in the past two weeks, police said yesterday, as security was boosted in the affected areas, AFP reported from Nairobi. Interior Minister Kithure Kindiki on Friday declared 12 areas of Tana River County "dangerous and disturbed" due to the clashes, which have pitted communities of pastoralists against resettled flood victims. Kenya's national police chief Douglas Kanja ordered residents to surrender their firearms to prevent a further escalation of violence.

SECURITY

'Extra police for Haiti in early Nov'

An extra 600 Kenyan police officers set to join a UN-backed mission to try to quell rampant gang violence in Haiti will be ready for deployment in early November, Kenya's police chief said yesterday, AFP reported from Nairobi. President William Ruto had on Friday pledged the additional officers following a meeting with Haiti's interim Prime Minister Garry Conille, as the two leaders appealed for the international community to do more.

March for the Palestinians



A woman stands in the rain during a protest in support of Palestinians in Trafalgar Square in London, Britain, yesterday.

In the spotlight



From left: US actor John David Washington, US actress Danielle Deadwyler, US executive producer Katia Washington and US director Malcolm Washington pose on the red carpet upon arrival to attend the Special Presentation of *The Piano Lesson* at the Royal Festival Hall, during the 2024 BFI London Film Festival in London, yesterday.

Britain's flagship investment event suffers bumpy build-up

AFP
London

The UK government hosts international business leaders tomorrow to try and secure much-needed investment for Britain but the build-up has been chaotic with a major firm reportedly threatening to shelve a project.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer, the leader of the new Labour government, hopes the International Investment Summit in London will show the UK is "the best place in the world to do business". Starmer has been in power for just three months after securing a thumping majority in the general election.

But he is already on the back foot, with a YouGov poll show-

ing only 18% of Britons approve of his government's record to date. Labour sees Monday's event as an opportunity to demonstrate its pro-business agenda and to stabilise the economy after 14 years of chaotic Conservative rule and Britain's departure from the European Union. Starmer is expected to announce billions of pounds in investments.

He has already unveiled £24bn (\$31.4bn) in green energy projects, including £12bn by Spanish giant Iberdrola and £8.0bn by Danish firm Orsted. But his attempts to woo investors suffered a blow when an expected announcement by P&O Ferries of a £1.0-bn port expansion was reported by UK media to be under threat. This came after transport minister Louise

Haigh and Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner issued a joint press release calling P&O's employment practices "unscrupulous" and "exploitative".

Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, the chairman of P&O owner DP World, then threatened not to attend the investment summit.

Last-ditch talks with the UK government ensued and the *Times* reported yesterday that Bin Sulayem would take part after all and an announcement about the P&O investment was still expected. Starmer has placed great importance on the summit and will open the event in conversation with Eric Schmidt, the former CEO of Google. Yet he has struggled to attract the top names.

While around 200 private sector

executives are expected to attend, many multinational bosses and tech-titans have decided to give it a miss.

Even the opportunity to meet King Charles III at the closing reception, planned for Monday evening, failed to convince them. In a critical article on Friday, the *Financial Times* partly attributed the summit's poor turnout to concerns over its "quality and organisation".

Five days before the event, the start time and venue had still not been confirmed.

Two foreign companies seeking urgent information were reportedly astonished to receive an "out-of-office" message from the organisers, added the *FT*. Then the highly secret guest list was

revealed by mistake, when the organisers sent an email to all confirmed participants without hiding their addresses.

"This was caused by an administrative human error and we apologise to those affected," a spokesperson for the business ministry said in a statement sent to AFP.

The timing of the summit - which meets the government's promise to organise the event before its 100th day in office - has also caused unease. It falls two weeks before the first Labour budget, when businesses are steeling themselves for a possible rise in capital gains tax. "Taxing shareholders more on gains...is hardly likely to incentivise stock market participation," Susannah Streeter, analyst at Hargreaves Lansdown, told AFP.

China threatens Taiwan with more trade measures

Reuters
Beijing

China is studying further trade measures against Taiwan, the Ministry of Commerce said yesterday, two days after Beijing slammed a speech by Taiwan President Lai Ching-Te. The Democratic Progressive Party, Taiwan's ruling party, has not taken any practical measures to lift "trade restrictions" on mainland China, the commerce ministry said in a statement on its official website.

"At present, relevant departments are studying further measures based on the conclusions of the investigation into trade barriers from Taiwan (against mainland China)," it added. China, which views democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory, detests Lai as a "separatist". Lai and his government reject Beijing's sovereignty claims, saying only Taiwan's people can decide their future.

On Thursday at his keynote national day speech, Lai said the People's Republic of China had no right to represent Taiwan, but that the island was willing to work with Beijing to combat challenges like climate change, striking both a firm and conciliatory tone, drawing anger from China. The Saturday announcement from China's commerce ministry could portend tariffs or other forms of economic pressure against the island in the near future.

China's Taiwan Affairs Office, which on Thursday said that Lai's speech promoted "separatist ideas" and incited confrontation, responded to the announcement by saying the fundamental reason behind the trade dispute was the "DPP authorities' stubborn adherence to the stance of 'Taiwan independence'".

UK govt urged to raise pro-democracy tycoon's case with China

AFP
London

The UK government was urged to raise the case of jailed pro-democracy media tycoon Jimmy Lai with China, after reports that foreign minister David Lammy is heading to Beijing. Lai, 76, is the founder of the now-shuttered popular Chinese-language tabloid *Apple Daily*, which supported mass pro-democracy protests in the economic hub.

Detained in 2020, he is awaiting trial on charges including colluding with foreign forces and sedition.

In London, his legal team said they hoped Lammy would put Lai's case "front and centre" during his visit, which has not been confirmed by his department. Lawyer Caoilfhionn Gallagher told reporters it had been "made crystal clear to the UK government" that if it is looking to reset relations with China, they "need to use that as leverage to ensure that Jimmy Lai is released".

At a Reporters Without Borders (RSF) event in London, Lai's son Sebastien said his father, who holds British citizenship, was in deteriorating health after being in prolonged solitary confinement for nearly four years.

"His health could get much worse at any moment," he added. Lai's delayed trial began in December 2023 and he is due to testify for the first time on November 20.

"The (UK) government does need to stand behind him. Much stronger than they even have before," said Sebastien Lai.

Both the legal team and Sebastien have met UK foreign ministry officials, but Gallagher said they were disappointed neither Lammy nor Prime Minister Keir Starmer had yet met Lai's son. "If this is a top-priority case for the UK government, why is Sebastien not being met by the foreign secretary directly?" asked Gallagher. "Why

is Sebastien not being met by the prime minister directly?"

Gallagher works for law firm Doughty Street Chambers, where Starmer made his name as a human rights lawyer before entering politics. The UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) in response said Lammy had raised Lai's case when he met his Chinese counterpart in July.

"British national Jimmy Lai's case is a priority for the UK Government," an FCDO spokesperson added. "We continue to call on the Hong Kong authorities to end their politically motivated prosecution and immediately release Jimmy Lai. Lai denies the charges, which

were brought under sweeping national security laws to quell dissent in the former British colony, which was returned to China in 1997. If convicted, he could face life imprisonment. Six other senior *Apple Daily* staff are also in prison. Britain has been critical of China's crackdown on press freedom and protests in Hong Kong, which has strained diplomatic ties.

RSF head of campaigns Rebecca Vincent said no one from the charity would be able to attend Lai's trial.

A staff member was detained and deported while trying to enter Hong Kong to monitor the trial previously.

Head-on collision



India railway workers restore the accident site following derailing of several coaches of the Mysuru-Darbhanga Bagmati Express train after collision with a goods train at the Kavaraipeeta Railway Station, located near Gummidipundi, some 40km north of Chennai, yesterday.



Nobel prize a timely reminder, Hiroshima locals say

AFP
Hiroshima

Just like the dwindling group of survivors now recognised with a Nobel prize, the residents of Hiroshima hope that the world never forgets the atomic bombing of 1945 - now more than ever. Susumu Ogawa, 84, was five when the bomb dropped by the United States all but obliterated the Japanese city 79 years ago, and many of his family were among the 140,000 people killed.

"My mother, my aunt, my grandfather, and my grandfather all died in the atomic bombing," Ogawa told AFP a day after the survivors' group Nihon Hidankyo was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Ogawa himself recalls very little but the snippets he garnered later from his surviving relatives and others painted a hellish picture. "All they could do was to evacuate and save their own lives, while they saw other people (perish) inside the inferno," he said.

"All nuclear weapons in the world have to be abandoned," he said. "We know the horror of nuclear weapons, because we know what happened in Hiroshima." What is happening now in the Middle East saddens him greatly. "Why do people fight each other?...hurting each other won't bring anything good," he said.

On a sunny Saturday, many tourists and some residents were strolling around the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park to the bomb's 140,000 victims. A preserved skeleton of a building close to ground zero of the "Little Boy" bomb and a statue of a girl with outstretched arms are poignant reminders of the devastation.

Jung Jaesuk, 43, a South Korean primary school teacher visiting the site, said the Nobel was a "a victory for (grassroots) people". "Tension in East Asia is intensifying so we have to



Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organisations (Nihon Hidankyo) co-chair Toshiyuki Mimaki, who survived the 1945 atomic bombing of Hiroshima, walks to attend a press conference via an online video call in Hiroshima, western Japan.

boost anti-nuclear movement," he told AFP. Ki-yoharu Bajo, 69, a retired business consultant, decided to take in the atmosphere of the site after the "great thing" that was the Nobel award.

With Ukraine and the Middle East, the world "faces crises that we've not experienced since the Second World War in terms of nuclear weapons," he told AFP. The stories told by the Nihon Hidankyo group of "hibakusha", as the survivors of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are known, "have to be known to the world", he said.

He said he hopes that the Nobel prize will help "the experiences of atomic bomb survivors spread further spread around the world" including by persuading people to visit Hiroshima. Kiwako Miyamoto, 65, said the Nobel prize was a "great thing, because even some locals

here are indifferent" to what happened.

"In Hiroshima, you pray on August 6, and children go to school," even though the date is during summer vacation, she told AFP. "But I was surprised to see that outside Hiroshima, some people don't know (so much about it)," she said.

She said that like many people in Hiroshima, she personally knows people whose relatives died in the bombing or who witnessed it. With the average age among members of the Nihon Hidankyo over 85, it is vital that young people continue to be taught about what happened, added Bajo. "I was born 10 years after the atom bomb was dropped, so there were many atom bomb survivors around me. I felt the incident as something familiar to me," he said. "But for the future, it will be an issue."



CHAIRMAN

Abdullah bin Khalifa al-Attiyah

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Faisal Abdulhameed al-Mudahka

Deputy Managing Editor

K T Chacko

- 📍 P.O.Box 2888, Doha, Qatar
- ✉ editor@gulf-times.com
- ☎ 44350478 (News),
- ☎ 44466404 (Sport),
- ☎ 44466636 (Home delivery)
- ☎ 44350474
- 📘 facebook.com/gulftimes
- 🐦 twitter.com/gulftimes_Qatar
- 📷 instagram.com/gulftimes
- 📺 youtube.com/GulftimesVideos

GULF TIMES

Global co-operation essential for tackling future pandemics

To tackle future pandemics on the scale of Covid-19, the world needs to adopt a multifaceted approach that involves international co-operation, stronger healthcare infrastructure, and proactive measures.

Countries around the world need resilient healthcare systems capable of handling surges. This includes sufficient medical supplies, well-trained staff, and the ability to ramp up intensive care facilities.

Investing in global early-warning systems, especially in areas with high potential for zoonotic diseases, will help identify outbreaks at their source. Rapid reporting mechanisms and surveillance tools need to be upgraded globally.

Since many pandemics originate from animal populations, integrating human, animal, and environmental health into policy frameworks is crucial to minimise zoonotic disease outbreaks.

A centralised body with adequate resources and authority should be empowered with more authority to lead, co-ordinate, and enforce health responses globally. Nations must commit to better transparency and information sharing.

Recently, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank Group (WBG), and World Health Organisation (WHO) have agreed on broad principles for co-operation on pandemic preparedness.

This co-operation, signed recently, will allow a scaling up of support to countries to prevent, detect and respond to public health threats through the IMF's Resilience and Sustainability Trust (RST), the WBG's financial and technical support, and WHO's technical expertise and in-country capabilities.

Countries need to diversify supply chains and create stockpiles for essential medical goods

The RST allows eligible member countries to access long-term financing at low interest rates to help implement reforms that address structural challenges to the stability of the economy, such as those posed by pandemics, and to enhance countries' health systems resilience.

Operating within their respective mandates and policies, the IMF, the WBG,

and WHO will leverage their expertise to enhance pandemic preparedness in their member countries, building on the synergies and complementarity of each institution's in-country analysis and operations.

This collaboration will strengthen the design and articulation of effective policy, institutional and public financial management reforms supported by the IMF's Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF), the policy reforms and investments supported by the WBG, and the technical and operational support provided by WHO. In strengthening the pandemic preparedness framework, member countries will also work to improve the resilience of their health systems and their ability to respond better to all health emergencies.

Undoubtedly, more funding and co-operation are required to develop vaccines swiftly. Establishing global platforms for sharing research, manufacturing, and distribution of vaccines is key to faster response times.

Governments and health organisations also need to improve the way they communicate with the public, counter misinformation, and foster trust. Transparency in decision-making processes is essential to ensure compliance with public health measures.

The world's reliance on limited supply chains for critical items like personal protective equipment (PPE) and vaccines was exposed during Covid-19. Countries need to diversify supply chains and create stockpiles for essential medical goods.

Every country should have detailed pandemic preparedness plans that include emergency funding, logistics for lockdowns or quarantines, and rapid mobilisation of resources.

Low- and middle-income countries need better access to vaccines, treatments, and healthcare resources. International organisations and wealthier nations should support equitable distribution, ensuring no region is left behind.



NATURAL DISASTER



MAN-MADE DISASTER

Creating a 'Goldilocks' business climate

By Indermit Gill
Washington, DC

Whenever the odds seem stacked against human progress – when economic growth looks set to remain feeble, when too many countries appear destined to grow old before they become rich, when climate change seems out of control – it is worth remembering the distinctive virtue of our species. Human ingenuity is the reason why predictions of global doom, which have proliferated throughout our history, have never materialised.

It was ingenuity that defused the so-called "population bomb", the 1970s threat that "hundreds of millions of people" would starve to death as rapid population growth exhausted finite supplies of food. Instead, agricultural innovations such as high-yield, pest-resistant crops caused global food production to grow faster than the population in nearly every part of the world. Equally, it was human ingenuity that brought deadly diseases – from HIV/Aids to Covid-19 – under control. If climate change is tamed by the middle of this century, you can bet that human ingenuity will have been the main factor.

But progress is seldom the fruit of a "eureka" moment. Instead, human ingenuity delivers when governments, private enterprises, and individuals act in ways that benefit entire societies consistently over time. Such outcomes depend on conducive conditions, cultivated by the appropriate mixture of rules and practices. Recognising that sustained economic development usually reflects system-wide business success, we at the World Bank Group describe these conditions as "the business climate" or "the business-enabling environment."

For too long, though, we focused more on what

governments can do for the good of business than on what governments and businesses can do together for the good of all. Thus, in a crucial first step to correct the imbalance, our new Business Ready report aims to build a comprehensive dashboard that, by 2026, will allow anyone to dial in the precise settings needed for vibrant private-sector development across 180 economies. Using this tool, policymakers can start to create the conditions to reduce poverty, advance shared prosperity, and accelerate the transition to a low-carbon economy.

The goal is to encourage healthy competition among businesses and countries, and to discourage "a race to the bottom" (one of the unintended consequences of Doing Business, our previous effort to help countries establish the right conditions for private-sector development). Our new analytical framework recognises that there is more to a healthy business environment than the "ease of doing business". It accounts for the possibility that reducing the "cost of doing business" can unintentionally raise the costs for society at large.

Accordingly, Business Ready assesses not just the regulatory burden on enterprises – how long it takes to start a business, for example – but also the quality of regulations. Do labour laws protect workers from being arbitrarily fired? Do they inadvertently make women workers less competitive than men and discourage them from seeking work?

Beyond assessing the rules and regulations that govern business, Business Ready examines the public services needed to transform intentions into reality. Do public utilities provide reliable water and electricity? Do governments make it easy for businesses to fulfil their tax obligations and comply with environmental and social safeguards?

The result is a breathtakingly detailed dataset that encompasses nearly 2,000 data points per economy. One can now zero in, for example, on the frequency of power outages suffered by firms, how long it takes to file and pay taxes, or the average cost to settle a commercial dispute. Since comparable data of this quality are unavailable anywhere else, Business Ready is an essential public good. The trove of insights it offers will enable businesses to make better decisions about where and how they operate, spur governments to adopt better policies by learning from one another, and help researchers everywhere to join the effort to get global private-sector development right.

While this year's edition covers just 50 economies, next year's will include 100, and our coverage in 2026 will expand to about 180. With each iteration, we will refine the report's design and methods to reflect lessons learned. Why not wait for the methods to be perfected before publishing the data? Simply put, the world lacks the luxury of time – development delayed is development denied – and getting feedback from the intended beneficiaries of an assessment is a big part of getting the assessment right. In any case, in a dynamic global economy, accuracy will always be a moving target.

The data and methods used are more rigorous and more transparent than used in Doing Business. They consolidate the judgments of more than 2,500 business-climate experts, as well as the survey responses of more than 29,000 businesses. They are more exhaustive than anything that has been attempted so far by an international institution, and they are of immediate value to the 50 economies covered. Moreover, all data collected for this report are now publicly available – and verifiable – on our website.

Analysis of this year's data leads

to two general observations. First, there is a sizeable implementation gap. Countries tend to be better at enacting regulations to improve the national business climate than at providing the public services needed to ensure actual progress. Fortunately, the gap shrinks when the quality of regulations improves.

Second, while richer economies tend to be more business-ready, a country need not be wealthy to create a good business environment. Among the 50 economies assessed this year, several developing economies rank among the top ten in several categories: Rwanda for public services and operational efficiency; Colombia for its regulatory framework and public services; and Georgia for its regulatory framework and operational efficiency.

This suggests that progress is possible for most countries, and that governments should step up their efforts to become business ready. But they should do so not merely to win national bragging rights or to chase the uncertain promise of a big surge in foreign investment. The rewards are far more encompassing. When correctly chosen and carefully sequenced, business reforms can simultaneously accelerate economic growth, boost productivity, and help reduce carbon emissions. Establishing a "Goldilocks" business climate will create the conditions for human ingenuity to flourish, and that is exactly what the world needs at a time of slowing growth, rising debt, and accelerating climate change. – Project Syndicate

[This commentary has been adapted from the World Bank's October 2024 Business Ready report.]

• Indermit Gill is Chief Economist and Senior Vice-President for Development Economics at the World Bank.



(Picture: pixabay.com)

To Advertise

✉ gtadv@gulf-times.com

Display

☎ 44466621 ☎ 44418811

Classified

☎ 44466609 ☎ 44418811

✉ gtcad@gulf-times.com

Subscription

✉ circulation@gulf-times.com

Venezuela 'cancels passports of activists and journalists'

Venezuela has cancelled the passports of dozens of journalists and activists since President Nicolas Maduro claimed a re-election victory, part of what rights groups say is an intensifying campaign of repression against the authoritarian president's opponents, the *Financial Times (FT)* reported yesterday.

At least 40 people, mostly journalists and human rights activists have had their passports annulled without explanation, the newspaper reported, citing Caracas-based rights group Laboratorio de Paz.

The group warned that the number of people who have had their passports cancelled is likely to be much higher due to Venezuelans' fear of reporting cases, the *FT* said.

Laboratorio de Paz could not be immediately reached for the report.

People have had their passports confiscated by authorities while attempting to board flights from the country's main airport, the newspaper reported, citing the rights group.

Unlike murder or torture, which have a higher political cost, the government has found that passport cancellation is an effective way of neutralising and muffling critical voices with minimal effort, the newspaper reported citing Rafael Uzcátegui, co-director of the rights group. - **Reuters**

Four killed in Chechnya petrol station fire

A fire at a petrol station in Russia's Chechnya killed four people, including two children, emergency services said yesterday.

Authorities released images of more than two dozen firefighters extinguishing the blaze at an almost totally destroyed petrol station with burnt-out cars in Chechnya's main city, Grozny.

"Unfortunately, four people died, including two children," Russia's emergency ministry said.

It said the fire had been put out. Officials said the petrol station is on Grozny's Mohammad Ali Avenue, close to the centre of the Chechen capital.

Russia's North Caucasus has seen several deadly blasts at service stations recently.

Last month, an explosion at a petrol station in the neighbouring Dagestan region killed 13 people. In August 2023, a similar explosion killed 35 people in Dagestan and injured dozens. - **AFP**

Harris releases medical report, drawing contrast with Trump

Reuters/AFP
Washington

Vice-President Kamala Harris, the Democratic presidential nominee, released a letter from her doctor yesterday that pronounced her in good health and fit for high office, in an effort to draw a contrast with her counterpart, Donald Trump.

In a memo distributed by the White House, the vice-president's physician, Joshua Simmons, said that Harris's most recent physical exam in April was "unremarkable"; that she maintains an active lifestyle and "very healthy diet" despite a busy schedule, suffers from seasonal allergies and sporadic hives, does not use tobacco and drinks alcohol only in moderation.

"She possesses the physical and mental resiliency required to successfully execute the duties of the Presidency, to include those as Chief Executive, Head of State and Commander in Chief," the doctor wrote.

Harris, 59, is running against Republican Trump, 78, for the White House.

She made her medical information public yesterday in an effort to draw attention to his refusal to

Poland to suspend right to asylum

Reuters/AFP
Warsaw

Poland plans to temporarily suspend the right to asylum as part of a strategy to limit illegal migration amidst tensions with Belarus, which Warsaw accuses of channelling migrants across its border.

"One of the elements of the migration strategy will be the temporary territorial suspension of the right to asylum," Prime Minister Donald Tusk said yesterday.

"I will demand this, I will demand recognition in Europe for this decision," he told a congress held by his liberal Civic Coalition (KO) grouping, the largest member of Poland's coalition government.

Tusk said the right to asylum was being used by Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, Russian President Vladimir Putin and by people smugglers in a way that goes against the essence of the right to asylum.

"We know perfectly well how (Belarusian President Alexander) Lukashenko, (Russian President Vladimir) Putin, migrant brokers and human traffickers use it," he said of the asylum system.

"The way asylum rights are being used is completely contrary to the actual essence of the right to asylum," said Tusk, a former European Council president who became premier after ousting Poland's right-wing Law and Justice (PiS) party in elections last year. "We are not going to respect or apply any European idea that ... hinders our security. I'm thinking here of the (EU) migration pact."

Poland, a North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) and European Union member, accuses Russia and Belarus of orchestrating a flood of asylum-seekers migrants in a "hybrid" attack to destabilise Europe, an accusation Lukashenko's government denies.

Migration has been high on the agenda in Poland since 2021, when large numbers of people, mainly from the Middle East and

Africa, started trying to illegally cross the border with Belarus in what Warsaw and the European Union said was a crisis orchestrated by Minsk and its ally Russia.

Russia and Belarus have denied responsibility.

In May, Poland announced that it would spend more than €2.3bn to reinforce its border with Belarus, the European Union's eastern flank.

On Wednesday Poland and the Czech Republic called for tougher EU migration restrictions than those in the bloc's new pact on migration and asylum, which is due to come into force in 2026.

Both countries have seen an influx of refugees from the war in Ukraine.

Tusk said he would present the migration strategy at a government meeting on October 15, the first anniversary of the election which brought the coalition he leads to power.

Since taking office in December 2023, Tusk has pursued a tough policy towards migration, a strategy which has won broad

public support but which has dismayed activists who had hoped he would abandon the previous, nationalist administration's approach.

Marysia Zlonkiewicz from Grupa Granica, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) that helps migrants at the border, said suspending the right to asylum was against the constitution and would push migrants into the hands of people smugglers.

"Prime Minister Tusk is violating the constitution that he promised to defend ... you cannot selectively exclude or deprive people of constitutional rights," she said.

According to Amnesty International: "Seeking asylum is a human right. This means everyone should be allowed to enter another country to seek asylum."

"The people are not the problem," the rights group says on its website. "Rather, the causes that drive families and individuals to cross borders and the short-sighted and unrealistic ways that politicians respond to them are the problem."



Students participate in an event to attempt to break the Guinness Record for the world's largest computer programming lesson at a university in Lisbon. - **Reuters**

Portuguese school sets record for largest programming class

Nearly 1,700 students aged between 12 and 67 gathered at the University of Lisbon's IST school of technology yesterday to set a new Guinness World Record for the largest computer programming lesson in a single venue.

The previous record grouped 724 participants in Dallas, in the United States, on October 31, 2016.

"The final total was counted on how many people were here and 1,668 participants were achieved," said Guinness World Records adjudicator Paulina Sapinska.

Organisers sought to draw more international attention to Portugal as a growing hub for information technology and to generally popularise computing.

IST chief Rogerio Colaco said computing literacy these days was the same as the ability to read and write 100 years ago, adding this meant "everyone must know a little bit about computer science, about programming, to live in the present world". - **Reuters**

Navalny 'knew he would die in prison': memoir

AFP
New York

Russian dissident Alexei Navalny, who was President Vladimir Putin's top political opponent before his death in February, believed he would die in prison, according to his posthumous memoir which will be released on October 22.

The *New Yorker* published excerpts from the book, featuring writing from Navalny's prison diary and earlier.

"I will spend the rest of my life in prison and die here," he wrote on March 22, 2022. "There will not be anybody to say goodbye to ... all anniversaries will be celebrated without me. I'll never see my grandchildren."

Navalny had been serving a 19-year prison sentence on "extremism" charges in an Arctic penal colony.

His death on February 16 at 47 drew global condemnation, with many blaming Putin.

Navalny was arrested in January 2021 upon returning to Russia after suffering a major health emergency from being poisoned in 2020.

"The only thing we should fear is that we will surrender our homeland to be plundered by a gang of liars, thieves, and hypocrites," he wrote on January 17, 2022.

The diary reveals the punishing toll that the prison regime and his hunger strike exerted on his body, according to further extracts published in the *London Times*.

"Today I feel crushed. We went to the bathhouse. I could hardly tolerate standing under the hot shower. My legs gave way. It's evening now and I have no strength at all. I just want to lie down, and for the first time I'm feeling emotionally and morally down," he wrote in one entry.

The excerpts capture the loneliness of imprisonment, but also a touch of humour.

For instance, on July 1, 2022, Navalny outlined his typical day: wake up at 6am, breakfast at 6.20am and start work at 6.40am.

"At work, you sit for seven hours at the sewing machine on a stool below knee height," he wrote. "After work, you continue to sit for a few hours on a wooden bench under a portrait of Putin. This is called 'disciplinary activity'."

The book, entitled *Patriot*, will be released

by US publisher Knopf, which is also planning a Russian version.

"It's impossible to read Navalny's prison diary without being outraged by the tragedy of his suffering, and by his death," wrote *New Yorker* editor David Remnick.

In the last excerpt published in the magazine, dated January 17, 2024, Navalny responds to the question asked to him by his fellow inmates and prison guards: "Why did he return to Russia?"

"I don't want to give up my country or betray it. If your convictions mean something, you must be prepared to stand up for them and make sacrifices if necessary," he said.

Speculating on the fallout of any attempt to assassinate him, Navalny said his memoirs "will be my memorial."

"If they whack me, my family will get the advance and royalties that, I hope, there will be," he wrote.

"Let's face it, if a murky assassination attempt using a chemical weapon, followed by a tragic demise in prison, can't move a book, it is hard to imagine what would," he joked. "What more could the marketing department ask for?"

US DOJ sues Virginia for violating federal election law

The US Department of Justice (DOJ) said on Friday that it is suing the state of Virginia for violating the federal prohibition on systematic efforts to remove voters within 90 days of an election.

On August 7, Republican Governor Glenn Youngkin signed an executive order requiring the commissioner of Department of Elections to certify that the department was conducting "daily updates to the voter list" to remove, among other groups, people who are unable to verify that they are citizens to the Department of Motor Vehicles.

US citizens who were identified and notified, and did not affirm their citizenship within 14 days would be removed from the list of registered voters, the Justice Department said.

It said this practice has led to citizens having their voter registrations cancelled ahead of the November 5 election.

"By cancelling voter registrations within 90 days of Election Day, Virginia places qualified voters in jeopardy of being removed from the rolls and creates the risk of confusion for the electorate," said Assistant Attorney-General Kristen Clarke.

"Congress adopted the National Voter Registration Act's quiet period restriction to prevent error-prone, eleventh hour efforts that all too often disenfranchise qualified voters," Clarke added.

The department said it is seeking injunctive relief to restore the ability of impacted eligible voters to vote unimpeded on election day and prohibit future violations.

Youngkin called the move politically motivated and an attempt to interfere in the election.

"With the support of our Attorney-General, we will defend these common sense steps that we are legally required to take with every resource available to us," he said in a statement on Friday.

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump described the department's lawsuit as "an unconstitutional and illegal attack on America's democracy".

Republicans across the US have pushed against non-citizen voting, which is already illegal, ahead of the November election. - **Reuters**



Trump watches a video featuring US Vice-President Kamala Harris during a campaign rally at the Grand Sierra Resort in Reno, Nevada. - **AFP**

medical records since then.

A White House doctor said in 2018 when Trump was in office that he was in overall excellent health then but needed to shed weight and start a daily exercise routine.

Simmons said Harris's aller-

gies had been well-managed with over-the-counter and prescription medications.

Her urticaria or hives were "sporadic and transient and do not seem to be triggered by any particular exposure nor are they associated with other symptoms"

and respond well to antihistamine treatment.

Harris has been on allergen immunotherapy for the last three years, dramatically improving her allergy and urticaria symptoms and negating her need for medication other than occasional nasal spray, he said.

Harris wears contact lenses. Her family history includes her mother's colon cancer.

She was up to date on preventative health procedures including colonoscopy and annual mammograms, he said.

Yesterday Trump's campaign republished statements from his former White House doctor, Ronny Jackson, that were released following the July assassination attempt on Trump in which a bullet grazed his right ear.

In the statement dated July 26, Jackson, who is now a Republican congressman from Texas, said Trump was doing "extremely well" and "rapidly recovering" from the wound.

Trump's campaign also republished a note from another doctor who examined Trump in September 2023. In the note, Bruce Aronwald declared him to be in "excellent" health but provided few details and did not say what tests Trump had undergone.

US soldier who sought to aid IS jailed 14 years

A US soldier who tried to provide information to the Islamic State (IS) to help it attack American troops in the Middle East was sentenced to 14 years in prison on Friday. Cole Bridges, 24, pleaded guilty in June last year to attempting to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organisation and attempting to murder US military service members. - **AFP**

Lula's approval rating in Brazil rises to 36%

Approval of Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's government slightly rose to 36% in October from 35% in July, pollster Datafolha said on Friday.

Polls have been showing Lula's support far below his previous term, which he finished in 2010 with an approval rating of more than 80%.

He is expected to run for re-election in 2026 but the political landscape in Latin America's biggest country remains uncertain as far-right former president Jair Bolsonaro, who could be

his main rival, is barred from public office until 2030 and currently resides in the US.

According to Datafolha, Lula's government disapproval was 32%, also down from 33% in their prior poll in July.

At the same point of his term, Bolsonaro had an approval rating of 37%, and a disapproval rating of 34%, according to Datafolha's data.

The Datafolha survey of 2,029 voters was conducted on October 7-8 and had a margin of error of plus or minus two percentage points. - **Reuters**

Strong quake hits Costa Rica coast

A 6.2-magnitude earthquake shook Costa Rica's northwest Pacific coast yesterday, according to the US Geological Survey (USGS), causing buildings to sway in the area but there were no immediate reports of any damages or injuries.

The epicentre of the quake was located about 26 miles (41km) northwest of the coastal town of Tamarindo, at a relatively shallow depth of 11 miles (18km), the USGS said.

Costa Rica's national emergencies agency CNE said it had no reports of damages associated with the quake.

"It was really intense. My house has two floors and you could hear it very loudly. We are really scared," said Lidiethe Vasquez, a resident of Playa Potrero, located a short distance north of Tamarindo.

She added that since Friday, there have been other earthquakes felt in the area but no damage. - **Reuters**

Big 5 Construct Qatar and INDEX Design Qatar open today

Big 5 Construct Qatar and INDEX Design Qatar open today and will run until October 15 at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC).

Thousands of attendees are gearing up to explore innovations, cutting-edge technologies, products and services as well as networking opportunities.

Construction and design professionals visiting the events will explore the entire value chain from inception to completion as Big 5 Construct Qatar and INDEX Design Qatar co-locate with Cityscape Qatar, enhancing benefits and opportunities for visitors and potential buyers.

The events unite stakeholders to explore emerging trends, capitalise on mar-



The exhibition will run until October 15.

ket opportunities, and chart the course towards sustainable growth, bringing together exhibitors from over 25 countries,

such as Bahrain, Finland, France, India, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia.

This year, Big 5 Construct Qatar and INDEX Design Qatar address the evolving needs of the Qatari construction and design markets through dedicated product sectors.

Attendees can also benefit from CPD (Continuing Professional Development) points by participating in certified educational panels and discussions.

Big 5 Talks will cover key topics such as collaborative contracting models, sustainable construction, the future of investment in mega projects and leveraging digital transformation to mitigate urban heating.

The events feature INDEX Design Talks,

a series of discussions among industry leaders.

Key topics include designing the future, which focuses on navigating evolving trends and cultural impacts in architecture and design; iconic landmarks, offering a behind-the-scenes look at a FIFA stadium; and designing for human experience, which explores the psychology of spaces.

More than 250 brands will be showcasing their products, services, systems and solutions at the events.

The events will feature industry networking sessions hosted by the Chartered Institute of Building, bringing together construction stakeholders, professionals, and thought leaders.



Dignitaries at the ribbon-cutting and cake-cutting ceremony.

PICTURES: Thajudheen

Left: Spanish ambassador Javier Carbajosa Sanchez and his spouse, along with dignitaries from the Spanish Business Council, officials from the Chamber of Commerce of Spain in Qatar, and other distinguished guests.



Dr Mohamed Althaf with the ambassador and his spouse during the tour.

'Festival of Spain' at LuLu

Leading regional retail chain LuLu Hypermarket has announced the launch of its "Festival of Spain" promotion, which will run until October 16 across all LuLu outlets in Qatar.

The week-long festival recently kicked off with a grand inauguration at LuLu Hypermarket in LuLu Giardino, The Pearl Qatar.

The event was attended by Spanish ambassador Javier Carbajosa Sanchez and his spouse, along with dignitaries from the Spanish Business Council, officials from the Chamber of Commerce of Spain in Qatar, and other distinguished guests.

The inaugural ceremony was enhanced by live musical performances from students of King's College Doha, creating a vibrant and lively atmosphere.

A key feature of the festival is the exclusive offers on a wide range of Spanish-branded products.

The event showcases eye-catching displays of iconic monuments and creatively arranged Spanish products, adding to the festive ambience, and providing a fully immersive experience for visitors.

The festival includes Spanish food stalls and free sampling booths, allowing shoppers to taste Spanish dishes.

Additionally, a diverse selection of Spanish imports, including fresh foods, such as cheeses, bread, and other produce, are prominently featured in the promotion.

The ambassador expressed excitement during the launch.

"This is my second time visiting, and I'm pleased to see even more exhibitors this year," Sanchez said. "This success is the result of the combined efforts of the commercial office, LuLu, and the chamber of commerce."

"The number of Spanish companies participating, particularly in gastronomy, continues to grow, and it's wonderful to see such a wide range of Spanish products showcased here," he said.

"Tourism and gastronomy are central to Spain's economy, with tourism alone contributing 12-15% of our GDP," the envoy added. "Last year, we welcomed 82mm tourists, many of whom fell in love with our culinary specialties, like paella."

"Spain is thrilled to see its presence expanding here in Qatar, and we look forward to strengthening

our ties with LuLu," Sanchez said.

"Additionally, with LuLu already established in Spain, it's no stranger to us," he added. "We're eager to further strengthen the connection between our two countries. We extend our gratitude to LuLu for their ongoing efforts in promoting Spanish products and fostering this valuable relationship."

Dr Mohamed Althaf, LuLu Group director of global operations, highlighted the group's growing footprint in Spain.

"Our consolidation has grown significantly," he said. "We now operate two sourcing facilities in Spain and have direct partnerships with local producers, especially in fruits and vegetables. This expanded presence enables us to source products from Spain across all regions."

"You may have noticed that despite sourcing premium products from Spain, we ensure they remain affordable," he continued. "For example, we offer high-quality bakery items for just QR3 and European-grade organic oats for QR10."

"This strategy allows us to manage inflation and maintain price stability, even amid global geopolitical tensions or adverse weather events," Dr Althaf said. "Our goal is to ensure a robust supply chain that keeps products available at competitive prices."

"Having successfully navigated challenges like the (coronavirus) pandemic without any major disruptions, we are confident in our ability to expand further," he added. "Spain is a key exporter of premium food products, and we are eager to continue growing our presence there."

"The demand for Spanish products at LuLu is strong," the official said. "What sets Spanish products apart is not just the retail aspect

but also the bulk supply - whether it is olive oil, meat, or vegetables like broccoli."

"Spanish products, particularly olive oil, fruits, and vegetables are significant contributors to our offerings and have been very well received by our customers in this region," he said.

LuLu Hypermarket's state-of-the-art logistics and warehousing centre in Madrid, Y International, supports its entire chain of hypermarkets, ensuring a broad selection of Spanish products at highly competitive prices.

Additionally, LuLu Group operates an extensive network of export distribution centres across 22 countries, with advanced facilities in the UK, the US, and Italy.



More Spanish products are on display at LuLu Hypermarket shelves.

UDC elevates luxury living standards with Crystal Residence at Cityscape

The United Development Company (UDC), the master developer of The Pearl Island and Gewan Island, is showcasing its most anticipated project, Crystal Residence, as the centerpiece of its participation in Cityscape.

Situated at the heart of Gewan Island, Crystal Residence exemplifies luxury, lifestyle, and sustainability, and stands as one of the most significant additions to the UDC's growing portfolio of premium developments.

Crystal Residence offers a unique blend of opulence and modern convenience.

Designed to cater to the discerning needs of its residents, the development includes a variety of luxurious units ranging from one to three-bedroom apartments and spacious four-bedroom duplexes.

The residences boast spectacular sea or city views, with meticulously designed interiors that reflect the UDC's commitment to brilliance in every detail.

Each unit is fitted with state-of-the-art appliances, premium materials, and energy-efficient systems that cater to a high standard of living.

The rooftops of these low-rise buildings are transformed into luxurious oases, offering exclusive amenities such as swimming pools, gyms, and leisure areas, ensuring residents can enjoy an elevated living experience, surrounded by lush landscapes and beautifully crafted spaces.

Residents of Crystal Residence will have access to an array of amenities that support both convenience and leisure, from the expansive rooftop pools and state-of-the-art fitness centres to shaded walkways and the climatized commercial district "Crystal Walkway", offering a selection of premium dining and shopping options within walking distance.

Additionally, the nearby Corinthia Hotel, Solymar Beach Club, and Gewan Golf Club provide further leisure and hospitality options.

With 15 buildings and a total of 586 residential units, Crystal Residence offers an



The interior of a Crystal Residence apartment.

exclusive family-friendly community designed for comfort, privacy, and a seamless blend of indoor and outdoor living.

Residents and guests will also benefit from a smart underground parking facility, ensuring convenience and ease of access.

One of the highlights of Crystal Residence is its range of attractive financing plans, which make it easier than ever to invest in one of Qatar's most prestigious addresses.

In addition to competitive in-house financing options as well as mortgage loans through Commercial Bank, buyers of Crystal Residence units are eligible for residency in Qatar, along with a range of benefits that make the development a highly attractive investment for both residents and international investors.

The UDC has already achieved 46% sales of the residential units, underscoring the strong demand for luxury living at Gewan Island.

The UDC continues its leadership in sustainable development with Gewan Island, incorporating eco-friendly technologies and resource conservation practices throughout the island.

From energy-efficient LED lighting to smart ventilation systems, sustainability considerations are woven into the very fabric of Crystal Residence.

Crystal Residence's underground parking, covering an area of 71,000sq



Crystal Walkway at Gewan Island.

m and with a capacity of 1,442 parking spaces for residents, visitors and retail, is equipped with advanced technology, including CCTV surveillance, intercom systems, and environmentally friendly lighting.

The underground parking also includes provision for future electric vehicle charging stations, as part of the UDC's vision to promote sustainable living.

In addition to green building design, the UDC has prioritised the conservation of the marine environment surrounding Gewan Island.

By working closely with the Ministry of Municipality and Environment, the UDC has taken measures to ensure the



The Seaside Promenade located at Gewan Island.

wan Island are fully completed, elevating the overall living experience.

Retail leasing at Crystal Walkway has experienced exceptional demand, with 84% of the retail space already leased.

Fit-out works are well underway, setting the stage for the island's upcoming inauguration.

The UDC's participation in Cityscape Qatar with Crystal Residence showcases the company's unwavering commitment to enhancing the quality of life in Qatar through innovative and sustainable real estate solutions.

As a key part of Gewan Island, Crystal Residence is poised to become an iconic symbol of modern living, combining luxury, sustainability, and convenience in one breathtaking destination.

Through its focus on urban innovation, resource preservation, and environmental stewardship, Crystal Residence and Gewan Island as a whole set a new standard for luxury living, offering a unique opportunity to be part of an exclusive community that embraces the future while simultaneously enhancing the social, cultural, and environmental landscape of Qatar.

For more information on Crystal Residence, visit the UDC Stand No C10 at Cityscape Qatar until October 15 inside the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC).

construction activities protect, and even enhance, the marine ecosystem.

This has resulted in new habitats for marine life and a significant increase in biodiversity in the waters around the island.

The development of Crystal Residence has achieved major milestones, with significant construction works now finalised and handover scheduled to begin next month.

The island's infrastructure is fully in place, including operational substations and advanced outdoor cooling systems, ensuring seamless and efficient living for residents.

Additionally, all utility services for Ge-