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WEDNESDAY Vol. XXXV No. 13165

October 16, 2024
Rabia II 13, 1446 AH

www.gulf-times.com 2 Riyals

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Constitutional, legislative amendments will ensure unity, equal citizenship: Amir



The inauguration was attended by His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, His Highness Personal Representative of the Amir Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad al-Thani, His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Khalifa al-Thani, and HE Sheikh Jassim bin Khalifa al-Thani.

Amir inaugurates Shura Council's new session

QNA
Doha

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani patronised the inauguration of the fourth ordinary session of the first legislative term, corresponding to the 53rd annual session of the Shura Council, at Tamim bin Hamad Hall at the Shura Council's headquarters yesterday.

The inauguration was attended by His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, His Highness Personal Representative of the Amir Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad al-Thani, His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Khalifa al-Thani, and HE Sheikh Jassim bin Khalifa al-Thani.

In attendance were HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, and a number of Sheikhs, ministers, heads of diplomatic missions accredited

Shura Council holds first meeting

The Shura Council held yesterday its first meeting of the fourth ordinary session of the first legislative term, corresponding to the Shura Council's 53rd annual session at "Tamim bin Hamad Hall", headed by HE Speaker of the Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem. At the outset of the session, HE al-Ghanem, on his behalf and the members of the Council, extended his deepest thanks and appreciation to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, for his kind opening of the session. **Page 9**

"After all this spree of killing and destruction, Israel will have no choice but to comply with the two-state solution"

to the state, and dignitaries. His Highness the Amir delivered a speech on the occasion.

Following is an unofficial translation of His Highness the Amir's speech.

Israel implementing 'pre-existing plans' with Lebanon and West Bank escalation

In the Name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Dear Brothers and Sisters, I extend my sincere greetings and congratulations to you on the occasion of the start of the annual session of your esteemed Council, wishing you a successful legislative term. I also commend the efforts you made in your previous

session in all fields within the framework of the state's legislative system.

Brothers and Sisters, As is customary in our annual meeting, I start my talk with you today by tackling the economic affairs.

Despite the expected growth decline between 2022 and 2023 for known reasons related to the completion of World Cup projects and the accomplishment of basic infrastructure projects and other reasons, the local economy continued to grow during 2023. Estimates indicate that the GDP at constant prices has grown by 1.2%, supported by the growth of the hydrocarbon sector by 1.4% and the non-hydrocarbon sector by 1.1%.

The International Monetary Fund estimates that the local economy will grow by 2% at



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani patronised the inauguration of the new session of the Shura Council, at Tamim bin Hamad Hall at the Shura Council's headquarters yesterday.

the end of the current year, with growth rates jumping to 4.1% annually during the medium term (2025-2029) propped up by gas production expansion projects, manufacturing projects, and the Third National Development Strategy initiatives.

The constitutional amendments, proposed by the Shura Council, will be put to a popular referendum

The inflation rate also continued to fall during the current year, reaching 1.4% by the end of July, against 5% and 3% during 2022 and 2023, respectively, reflecting the success of the fiscal policies and measures implemented by the state to ensure the stability of supply chains, the availability of basic commodities, and price control. The International Monetary Fund expects inflation rate

The International Monetary Fund estimates that the local economy will grow by 2% at the end of the current year

to stabilise at 2% during the medium term.

The state continues to direct its general budget surpluses towards reducing public debt and increasing financial reserves to maintain ability and resilience to respond to financial challenges that may arise as a result of energy price fluctuations, or any other economic challenges.

The state has managed to reduce public debt level from nearly 73% of GDP in 2020 to less than 44% by the end of 2023.

The policies pursued have contributed to upgrading the state's credit rating according to international agencies while maintaining a stable outlook. **To Page 8**

Amendments aim to ensure unity, equality: Amir

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani stressed that two goals incorporate the constitutional and legislative amendments: Ensuring the unity of the people on the one hand, and equal citizenship in terms of rights and duties on the other. In a post on his official X account, His Highness the Amir said: "Two goals incorporate the constitutional and legislative amendments: Ensuring the

unity of the people on the one hand, and equal citizenship in terms of rights and duties on the other." His Highness the Amir also stressed: "Equality before the law and to be treated on an equal footing under the law is the foundation of a modern state, as well as a legal, moral, and constitutional obligation." His Highness added: "It is the justice that Allah has enjoined us to do, and we do not accept anything else." **(QNA)**

Amir arrives in Belgium



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani arrived yesterday in Brussels, the Kingdom of Belgium to chair Qatar's delegation participating in the first GCC-EU summit, scheduled for today at the headquarters of the European Union. His Highness the Amir was welcomed upon arrival at Abelag international airport by Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs, Foreign Trade and Federal Cultural Institutions of the Kingdom of Belgium Hadja Lahbib, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell, Secretary-General of the Co-operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) Jassem Mohamed Albudaiwi, ambassador of Qatar to Belgium Khalid bin Fahad al-Hajri, ambassador of Qatar to the European Union Abdulaziz bin Ahmed al-Malki, and members of Qatar's embassy. His Highness the Amir is accompanied by an official delegation. **(QNA) Pages 2, 11**

Our Say



Faisal Abdulhameed al-Mudahka,
Editor-in-Chief of Gulf Times

Wise steps for a stronger Qatar

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's directive for constitutional and legislative amendments, in his address during the inauguration of the 53rd annual session of the Shura Council, marked a significant shift in Qatar's governance framework.

The proposed changes aim to promote equal citizenship, ensuring that all members of Qatari society are treated equally in terms of rights and duties. This move is a reflection of the Amir's commitment to justice and fairness, grounded in both Islamic principles and modern constitutional values. Moreover, the proposed changes to the Constitution reflect a forward-thinking vision grounded in wisdom and national unity. The revision of the nationality law to ensure equal rights and duties for all citizens will strengthen social cohesion, fostering a more unified and harmonious society.

Abolishing the election system, which has inadvertently fuelled tribal divisions, represents a proactive step towards preserving Qatar's values of solidarity, mutual respect, and social harmony. This decision aligns with the principles of Qatar's traditions, promoting lasting unity and fostering goodwill among all members of society.

Through these amendments, Qatar ensures a brighter future, maintaining its cultural heritage while embracing progress. The people's voice will be central in shaping this future through a popular referendum, demonstrating the nation's commitment to collective wisdom and mutual trust. Advanced and thriving nations are those that continually review and revise their laws to align with the best interests of their citizens. **To Page 8**
falmudahka@gulf-times.com

Qatar keen to maintain equal rights of citizens and regional stability: PM

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

The proposed constitutional and legislative amendments are set to achieve justice and equality for all Qatari citizens, said HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani.

Speaking to Qatar TV yesterday on the occasion of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's address during the inauguration of the 53rd annual session of the Shura



HE Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani

Council, he said that while the members of the Shura Council will be appointed according to

the new amendments, the jurisdiction of the Council will remain untouched and the Council will continue to exercise its usual tasks.

He said that when His Highness the Amir took the decision to go ahead with electing the designated numbers of Shura Council members in 2021, there was no external or internal compulsion or pressures to do so.

There some voices among the elite decision makers that did not favour elections, but His Highness the Amir wanted to launch the experiment and see the outcome. **To Page 11**



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CELEBRATING TWO
DECADES IN QATAR

**Qalam: Great Writers in Conversation
with Kamila Shamsie**

Hisham Matar, Pulitzer Prize Winning Author

Wednesday, October 23 | 5:30-7:00 PM | Auditorium, Georgetown University in Qatar



Photo Credit: Diana Matar

Hisham Matar was born in New York City to Libyan parents. He is the author of the novels *In the Country of Men*, which was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize, and *Anatomy of a Disappearance*. His two memoirs are: *The Return*, winner of a Pulitzer Prize and the PEN/Jean Stein Award, and *A Month in Siena*, a meditation on grief, art and human intimacy. His most recent book, published in January 2024, is the novel *My Friends*. Longlisted for the Booker Prize and the National Book Award, it has won the Orwell Prize for Political Fiction.



Photo Credit: Alex von Tunzelmann

Kamila Shamsie
Women's Prize for Fiction winner, *Home Fire*
Inaugural Writer-in-Residence
Georgetown University in Qatar



REGISTER

Amir in Brussels for GCC-EU summit



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani arrived yesterday in Brussels, Belgium to chair Qatar's delegation participating in the first GCC-EU summit, scheduled for today at the European Union headquarters. The Amir was welcomed upon arrival at Abellag international airport among others by Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs, Foreign Trade and Federal Cultural Institutions Hadja Lahbib and GCC Secretary-General Jassem Mohamed Albudaiwi. The Amir is accompanied by an official delegation. (QNA)

Qatar takes part in World Humanitarian Forum in UK

Qatar participated in the World Humanitarian Forum held yesterday in London, organised in collaboration with the Doha Forum. Qatar was represented at the forum by HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater.

The forum discussed the challenges and opportunities for humanitarian diplomacy in today's world. It aimed to summarise the global polarisation and division landscape and explore the role of humanitarian diplomacy in mitigating conflicts and crises, while exchanging best strategies for effective humanitarian intervention and enhancing co-operation and dialogue among stakeholders.

Attendees included Qatar's ambassador to the United Kingdom Sheikh Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Saud al-Thani and representatives from Qatar Fund for Development, Qatar Red Crescent, Qatar Charity, and Education Above All.



Participants in the forum also included CEO of the World Humanitarian Forum Feraye Ozfescioglu, member of the House of Lords and advisory council member of the forum Baroness Gohir, Lord Tariq Ahmad, who served previously as Minister of State for the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia, Commonwealth and UN at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office,



and First Lady of Sierra Leone and advisory council member of the World Humanitarian Forum Fatima Maada Bio. (QNA)

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«And yet, it moves»

Galileo

Coined in 1633. Possibly said around November 2, perhaps

Al-Muraikhi meets Dutch FM

HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi, met yesterday with Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Caspar Veldkamp, on the sidelines of the ministerial meeting between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the European Union (EU), held in Brussels. The meeting discussed co-operation relations between the two countries, and a several of issues of common interest. (QNA)



Health minister holds meetings with Tunisian and Djiboutian counterparts

HE the Minister of Public Health Dr Hanan Mohammed al-Kuwari held separate meetings yesterday with Tunisia Health Minister Dr Mustapha al-Ferjani and Djiboutian Health Minister Dr Ahmed Robleh Abdilleh, who are both currently visiting to participate in the 71st session of the World Health Organisation Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean. The meetings discussed areas of co-operation between Qatar and Tunisia and Djibouti respectively, as well as exploring ways to enhance and further develop collaboration in the health sector. They also reviewed key topics being addressed during the sessions of the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean. (QNA)



AlKhater meets UK official



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater met with UK Foreign Secretary's Representative for Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territories Mark Bryson-Richardson, on the sidelines of the World Humanitarian Forum in London. The meeting discussed the co-operation relations between the two countries and ways to support and enhance them. They also discussed the latest developments in the Gaza Strip, the occupied Palestinian territories, and Lebanon, as well as the Strip's reconstruction efforts and strengthening humanitarian partnerships. In addition, they discussed a number of topics of common concern. Qatar's ambassador in London HE Sheikh Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Saud al-Thani attended the meeting. (QNA)

Leabaib Health Centre announces integrated care for older people

The Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) has announced the introduction of Integrated Care for Older People (ICOPE) services at Leabaib Health Centre. This makes Leabaib the third health centre to offer the pilot elderly care service, following its successful launch at Al Wajbah and Rawdat Al Khail Health Centres.

The pilot ICOPE clinic operates as part of the ICOPE programme, developed by the World Health Organisation, with the aim to help healthcare systems better manage the health and well-being of older adults by addressing early declines in intrinsic capacity.

The programme focuses on maintaining and improving functional ability, enabling older people to live independently for as long as possible. Through ICOPE, PHCC aims to enhance healthy ageing by identifying risks early and offering timely interventions that prevent or slow down the progression of frailty and functional decline.

Qatar takes pride in being the first pilot site in the Middle East for ICOPE, which reflects our commitment to providing world-class healthcare. This new clinic is part of our efforts to integrate specialised services for older adults into primary care.

Patients and their families understand that the elderly face increasing



Leabaib is the third health centre to offer the pilot elderly care service.

risks of experiencing declines in their physical and mental capacities. To address this, PHCC has collaborated with Hamad Medical Corporation and the clinic targets elderly individuals aged 60 and above, and care will be provided through a person-centred, integrated approach coordinated by a multidisciplinary team. This approach ensures that older patients receive appropriate care at the right time. The screening tool will assess visual impairment, hearing loss, cognitive decline and depressive

symptoms, malnutrition, and mobility loss and falls. Initially, this pilot service will be available to registered patients at Leabaib Health Centre, and patients will be identified and invited to benefit from it. Beneficiaries will be informed when the service begins accepting referrals from all health centres.

The clinic will operate every Monday from 8am-1pm, and the goal is not only to treat medical issues but also to support the elderly in remaining active and engaged in their communities.

OPEN TENDER INVITATION FOR ANNUAL CONTRACT FOR PRODUCTS:

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For further details on Submission Requirements Please contact:
Mr. Asela - 50721444

Milipol set to host opening summit on AI

Milipol Qatar 2024, to be held from October 29-31 at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre, will host an Opening Summit on artificial intelligence (AI). Titled 'Artificial intelligence serving homeland security: mix of challenges and opportunities', the summit will focus on various topics including 'use of drones', 'toward a trusted AI: governance' and 'Metaverse/VR'.

According to Milipol Qatar official website, apart from AI, cybersecurity and cyberthreats, the seminars will focus on a wide range of topics including fire safety, rescue operations, challenges in protecting high-rise buildings, advancements in fire prevention methods and enhancing road safety and security. Also, the event will address securing ports, airports, borders, and transportation projects within Qatar National Vi-



sion 2030 along with border protection programmes and the challenges faced by coastguards.

The sessions will explore the latest advancements in digital biometrics designed to modernise policing and streamline criminal identification and investigative processes. The focus will be on adopting physical and cybersecurity measures to protect critical infrastructure, utilising modern technology for smart and safe cities, and developing forensic sciences used in investigations.

Additionally, Milipol Qatar 2024 is set to welcome over 222 exhibitors, 11,500 visitors and 389 official delegates worldwide, showcasing the latest in state-of-the-art security strategies, communication systems, and emergency response tools.

The 15th edition of the event, with the theme 'Technology in the service of security', promises to surpass the achievements of previous editions.

The event will see the signing of agreements between government entities and private companies. Organised by the Ministry of Interior in collaboration with Comexposium Security, representing the GIE Milipol under Civipol, the co-operation implementer of the French Ministry of the Interior and Overseas, the event plays a crucial role in addressing Qatar's growing security needs and supports the security goals outlined in Qatar National Vision 2030.

Nama Centre launches award to honour social entrepreneurs

The Social Development Centre (Nama), affiliated with the Qatar Foundation for Social Work, announced the launch of its Social Entrepreneurship Award, the first of its kind in Qatar and the Gulf.

The award aims to promote social entrepreneurship in Qatar, honour social entrepreneurs who have provided innovative solutions to social challenges, and encourage young people to develop entrepreneurial projects that contribute to creating solutions for society.

Registration for Nama's Social Entrepreneurship Award will remain open until October 30. Applicants must be over 18 years old. Submitted projects must have a tangible and measurable social impact. In recognition of a successful and sustainable project, the first category of the award is for the best existing project with a prize of QR200,000.

The second category is for the best project idea with a prize of QR100,000



with the condition of completing the project. Executive Director of Nama Centre Ghanim Salah al-Ali stated that the Social Entrepreneurship Award comes as part of the centre's ongoing commitment to support social entrepreneurship in line with Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV 2030) which focuses on sustainable development and the role of youth in achieving this vision. Al-Ali expressed his hope that the award will contribute

to enabling young people to realise their innovative ideas and transform them into projects that support Qatari society. Nama's Social Entrepreneurship Award also falls in line with the Third Qatar National Development Strategy 2024-2030 (NDS3) as it aims to support young social entrepreneurs and provide them with the tools and skills necessary to face social challenges and achieve sustainable development goals. (QNA)

مؤسسة قطر
Qatar Foundation

INVITATION TO TENDER

| Tender Reference | Description | Tender Fee (QAR) | Tender Bond Value (QAR) | Bid Closing Date |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| CO-RFQ-193 | Provision of Maintenance Support Contract for Security Systems to Qatar Foundation on Call-off Basis for 5 Years | 1,000.00 | 100,000.00 | 17 th November 2024, 2:00PM |
| QF-RFQ-639 | Provision of Freight Forwarding, and Clearance Services to Qatar Foundation on Call off Basis for 3 years with option to extend for 1 more year | 1,000.00 | 100,000.00 | 14 th November 2024, 2:00PM |
| QF-RFQ-641 | Build and Manage Web Summit 2025 Pavilion | 1,000.00 | 100,000.00 | 11 th November 2024, 2:00PM |

Qatar Foundation (QF) Procurement Directorate is inviting companies to participate in the above listed public tenders. To receive the tender documents, please follow the below steps:

- Supplier Registration** It is mandatory to be registered as a supplier with QF in order to participate in the above tender(s). Only QF registered suppliers will be allowed to pay the tender fees online. Therefore, please visit QF website at <https://www.qf.org.qa/supplier-registration> to complete the Supplier Registration process.

Tender Fee: Interested bidders can Sign in by visiting this link <https://suppliers.qf.org.qa/abstract> and pay the respective non-refundable and non-transferable tender fee online.

All Tender Fees are to be paid using credit cards only.

Tender Fee Payment Dates: Payment of Tender Fee online will be from **16th October until 22nd October 2024.**
- All bidders, who are registered and have paid the required tender fees online to QF, will then be granted access to download the Tender Document.
- Technical and commercial bids need to be submitted and attached online in QF Supplier Portal as per instructions provided in the "Supplier Portal" work instruction.
 - The commercial bid must be valid for **180 days** from Bid Closing Date.
 - The commercial bid must be accompanied by a bank guarantee (tender bond) issued by a local bank in Qatar and should be valid for **180 days** from the bid closing date (where applicable as per the Tender documents).
 - The successful tenderer will be required to submit a performance bond as prescribed in each of the above tender documents.
 - Qatar Foundation special qualifications, terms and conditions shall apply as stipulated in the tender document.

Note: All work instructions for Supplier registration and Supplier portal can be found in below link: <https://www.qf.org.qa/supplier-registration>

Al Faisal Without Borders Foundation honours scholarship recipients



Scholarship Recipients with HE Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim al-Thani.

Al Faisal Without Borders Foundation hosted a ceremony to honour the graduates who benefited from the foundation's educational scholarships.

The event provided a platform for the graduates to share their ambitions and future plans in terms of academic and career goals. HE Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim al-Thani, Chairman of Al Faisal Without Borders Foundation, attended the event.

Al Faisal Without Borders Foundation has been offering educational scholarships since 2020 to assist diligent students in pursuing their academic dreams, following specific conditions and criteria

Sheikh Faisal emphasised the invaluable nature of knowledge, stating, "Knowledge cannot be taken away from individuals, and it is the most precious gift that can be given." This philosophy is reflected in the foundation's mission as a non-profit organisation based in Qatar, aimed at empowering individuals and families in need through education, social and cultural development. The foundation offers extensive developmental options, innovative opportunities, and humanitarian

support locally and regionally, regardless of race, religion, gender, or culture.

The graduates, in turn, thanked Sheikh Faisal and the Al Faisal Without Borders Foundation for their support throughout their educational journey, enabling them to achieve their aspirations and secure university degrees that opened doors in both the job market and life. The graduates represented a variety of disciplines, including Medicine, Pharmacy, Business Administration, Translation, Law, and Engineering, from various universities in Qatar.

Al Faisal Without Borders Foundation has been offering educational scholarships since 2020 to assist diligent students in pursuing their academic dreams, following specific conditions and criteria. To date, the foundation has supported over 350 families, benefiting around 600 students across various stages of their academic journeys.

Today, the foundation celebrated the graduation of 28 students from different universities and colleges within Qatar. In addition to educational support, the foundation offers a variety of charitable and community programmes aimed at assisting low-income families and covering other essential needs, such as healthcare.

Fifty One East unveils newly renovated Watches & Jewellery section at Lagoona Mall

Grand reopening event showcases exquisite design and exclusive brands

Fifty One East, Qatar's favourite department store, announced the grand reopening of its beautifully renovated Watches & Jewellery section at Lagoona Mall.

This revitalised space reflects the store's ongoing dedication to delivering an exceptional shopping experience, marked by elegance, innovation, and a curated selection of the most renowned luxury brands.

The celebratory event welcomed an exclusive audience of VIP clients, key media figures, and influential guests, who were immersed in a dynamic atmosphere enhanced by live DJ performances and a dramatic entrance framed by towering digital screens.

Attendees were guided through a captivating passage to the heart of the newly transformed department, where timeless craftsmanship meets modern sophistication.

With the unveiling of this renovated section, Fifty One East demonstrates its steadfast commitment to creating extraordinary spaces that resonate with the refined tastes and aspirations of its clientele.

The Watches & Jewellery department embodies the store's vision of providing an unparalleled shopping experience, not only by showcasing luxury products but also by offering a space where personalised service and attention elevate every visit.

The newly designed section was conceived by the internationally acclaimed Swiss firm, Dobas Interior Design and Architecture, drawing inspiration from Fifty One East's signature Watches & Jewellery store at Doha Festival City.

The design merges refined materials with geometric precision, creating a sophisticated ambience enhanced by rich textures and soothing colours. A private



Azza Fahmy Jewellery's section also unveiled its new "Salon for Cultured Engagement" concept.



The newly designed section was conceived by the internationally acclaimed Swiss firm, Dobas Interior Design and Architecture



The Watches & Jewellery department embodies the store's vision of providing an unparalleled shopping experience

VIP room offers an intimate space for distinguished guests to explore collections with unparalleled exclusivity.

Among the exquisite brands on display are Aigner, Annamaria Cammilli - the newest addition to Fifty One East's portfolio, Azza Fahmy, David Yurman, Cerutti 1881, Falamank by Tarfa Itani, Genesis, Ginette NY, Guy Laroche, J by Joelle, L'Âme - a brand by Fifty One East, Saint Honoré, The Little Frog, Yvan Tufenkjian and Wolf.

Each brand has been meticulously curated to provide a distinctive yet harmonious experience, with dedicated spaces that reflect their unique identities.

In celebration of the reopening, David Yurman showcased its latest collections within a reimaged space that blends timeless elegance with modern aesthetics. As part of the event, an illustrator was present to create live

sketches for clients, bringing the brand's artistry to life.

Azza Fahmy Jewellery's section also unveiled its new "Salon for Cultured Engagement" concept, a space characterised by blue and gold hues, central display tables, and intricate timber designs, perfectly embodying the grandeur of the brand. Alongside this elegant setting, a curated selection of Azza Fahmy's signature pieces, inspired by the brand's rich heritage and design families, is beautifully displayed.

L'Âme, the exclusive Fifty One East brand, presented a space inspired by feminine grace, with pink gradients and gold accents against structured grey tones. As a special gesture, L'Âme offered personalised pendants or bracelets, with guests invited to engrave them, creating bespoke pieces to commemorate the evening.

The grand reopening event also



Each brand has been meticulously curated to provide a distinctive yet harmonious experience, with dedicated spaces that reflect their unique identities.



L'Âme, the exclusive Fifty One East brand, presented a space inspired by feminine grace, with pink gradients and gold accents against structured grey tones.

marked the official in-store debut of Annamaria Cammilli, an Italian jewellery house renowned for its sculptural designs and unique palette of eight shades of 18-carat gold. After its successful introduction at the Doha Jewellery & Watches Exhibition 2024, Annamaria Cammilli now joins Fifty One East's prestigious collection, bringing a new level of artistry to the Qatar market.

Located on Level 1 of Fifty One East at Lagoona Mall, the revamped multi-brand Watches & Jewellery section stands as a testament to the store's commitment to redefining luxury retail in Qatar and the region.

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UDC wraps up Cityscape Qatar 2024

United Development Company (UDC), the master developer of The Pearl and Gewan Islands, successfully concluded its participation at Cityscape Qatar 2024, generating significant interest and achieving impressive sales figures for its highly anticipated Crystal Residence units on Gewan Island. The event served as a platform for UDC to showcase its state-of-the-art projects, with a strong focus on the future of smart, sustainable living through advanced artificial intelligence (AI) technologies.

UDC's pavilion stood out at the event by offering visitors rich immersive experiences that transformed the traditional sales and marketing approach. With a focus on innovation, the pavilion featured AI-powered chatbot assistance, which provided real-time information and support on all UDC-related projects, developments, achievements, and future plans.

The cutting-edge artificial intelligence technology ensured that attendees received comprehensive insights tailored to their interests, enhancing their overall experience.

At Cityscape, UDC unveiled its vision for the future of real estate, presenting a range of groundbreaking technologies at The Pearl and Gewan Islands that will set a new standard in customer operations and community management. By utilising AI and Internet of Things technologies, UDC is aiming to transform the living experience for residents and visitors, providing streamlined and efficient solutions for every aspect of real estate management – from sales and marketing to after-sales services and facilities management.

UDC's integration of smart technologies will further revolutionise customer operations. Advanced platforms are enhancing customer engagement, making the sales process more seamless and per-



sonalised. UDC's Omni-Channel AI Bot provides real-time support across multiple platforms, ensuring a smooth and responsive customer journey. Additionally, IoT-enabled systems monitor environmental conditions and optimise resource management, resulting in enhanced waste control, security, and overall community well-being.

One of the highlights of UDC's digital transformation is the implementation of smart building ac-

cess, parking solutions and other advanced facilities, ensuring enhanced security and convenience for residents.

These solutions, along with AI-driven property management and integrated e-services, will set new benchmarks for operational efficiency. Through its innovative mobile app, UDC offers residents and visitors easy access to all services on The Pearl and Gewan Islands, including luxury amenities like

complimentary limousine service, adding a touch of convenience to everyday life.

This strategic leap in digital transformation is part of UDC's broader commitment to sustainability. The use of AI at Gewan Island will enhance the island's operational efficiency and smart energy management systems and AI-powered waste reduction initiatives will serve to create a cleaner and healthier environment, aligning with Qatar's Vision 2030 goals.

UDC's dedication to innovation has been recognized with the prestigious Best Cloud Transformation Project 2024 award, further highlighting the company's leadership in digital transformation. These innovations are not just about integrating technology, but about enhancing the quality of life for residents and creating sustainable, smart communities.

Building on its success at Cityscape Qatar 2024, UDC is prepar-

ing for the Luxury Property Show in Shanghai this December, where it will attract international investors and further elevate its global brand.

With the handover of Crystal Residence units scheduled to begin in early November, UDC continues to set new standards in luxury living, offering unmatched amenities and breathtaking views.

The Crystal Walkway retail district is also nearing full occupancy, standing at an impressive 84%.

UDC's robust project pipeline also includes the upcoming premium medical establishment The Pearl International Hospital, set to open in Q4 2024, providing world-class healthcare services to residents of The Pearl Island and surrounding areas. The company is also committed to maintaining a vibrant community on The Pearl Island, with a rich calendar of events aimed at driving footfall and adding value to retail businesses.



Lesha Bank signed two memorandums of understanding (MoU) with Barwa Real Estate and its subsidiary Waseef at Cityscape Qatar 2024. These MoUs are aimed at exploring potential collaboration opportunities between Lesha Bank and Barwa Real Estate in the investment domain.

Lesha Bank signs MoUs with Barwa Real Estate

Lesha Bank signed two memorandums of understanding (MoU) with Barwa Real Estate and its subsidiary Waseef at Cityscape Qatar 2024. These MoUs are aimed at exploring potential collaboration opportunities between Lesha Bank and Barwa Real Estate in the investment domain.

Additionally, Lesha Bank will collaborate with Waseef to explore opportunities for providing high-quality services in managing and operating the assets within Lesha Bank's real estate portfolio in Qatar. Both entities will also work closely to identify opportunities for providing maintenance services for buildings, equipment, and facilities related to Lesha Bank's real estate assets. This partnership aims to ensure a safe and healthy environment for customers and beneficiaries, aligning with their expectations and maintaining high levels of satisfaction.

Commenting on this special milestone, Lesha Bank CEO Mohammed Ismail al-Emadi stated, "We are thrilled to collaborate with

Barwa Real Estate Group, a leading real estate development company in Qatar and the region. This partnership is set to bring substantial benefits to both firms and to the broader real estate market.

"It aligns with our commitment to offering a wide range of investment solutions within the real estate sector as we continue to strengthen our presence as a forward-thinking investment institution."

Ahmed Mohammad al-Tayeb, Group CEO, Barwa Real Estate, added, "This marks a significant moment for both of our institutions. As we continue to position ourselves as a leading real estate company, recognised for strong values, excellence, and sustainable returns, these MoUs allow us to work collaboratively. "As partners we aim to explore opportunities for expanding our offerings while ensuring that we continue to deliver innovative products and services tailored to meet the evolving needs of our respective clients that meets global standards."

Invest Qatar joins Government Pavilion

The Investment Promotion Agency Qatar (Invest Qatar) successfully concluded its participation in Cityscape Qatar 2024 as part of the Government Pavilion. In partnership with key entities, including the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (Aqarat), the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Municipality, the Government Pavilion showcased the strength of Qatar's real estate sector and the diverse range of investment opportunities available.

Aligned with the national real estate promotion strategy, the pavilion shed light on the latest developments and initiatives to foster a transparent, efficient and investor-friendly real estate ecosystem. Among the key developments are the establishment of Aqarat, the introduction of e-services to streamline transactions, and the launching Qatar's Real Estate Platform, which offers comprehensive market data and insights to enhance investment transparency.

In conjunction with Cityscape Qatar, Aqarat hosted the '2nd Qatar Real Estate Forum', where global real estate experts gathered to explore

opportunities within Qatar's rapidly growing real estate market. During the forum, Invest Qatar CEO Sheikh Ali Alwaleed al-Thani participated in a panel titled 'The National Economy: Development and Investment Opportunities', alongside Yousef Mohamed al-Jaida, CEO of Qatar Financial Centre (QFC), and Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Faisal al-Thani, CEO of Qatar Free Zones Authority (QFZ).

The panel discussed the latest developments in the real estate sector, which are contributing to creating opportunities and boosting the sector's competitiveness and attractiveness to global investors.

Sheikh Ali said, "We are pleased to be part of this year's key events, as a strategic partner with Cityscape Qatar and a speaker at Qatar Real Estate Forum. This reflects our steadfast commitment to support the national real estate promotion strategy."

"The real estate sector plays a crucial role in driving economic diversification and developing a knowledge-based economy, aligning with the Third National Development Strategy 2024-2030 and Qatar National Vision 2030."



In partnership with key entities, including the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (Aqarat), the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Municipality, the Government Pavilion showcased the strength of Qatar's real estate sector and the diverse range of investment opportunities available.

He added: "Our engagements focused on underscoring the substantial growth prospects and opportunities in the sector, highlighting why Qatar is emerging as one of the top destinations globally to live, work and do business."

Engineer Khalid bin Ahmed al-Obaidli, chairman of Aqarat, said: "The real estate sector is a cornerstone of Qatar's economic development, driving infrastructure projects, providing varied investment opportunities and fostering sustainable growth."

"From offering permanent residency, free healthcare and education to enabling investments in commercial activities, the many benefits of investing in real estate in Qatar have strengthened the sector's attractiveness for foreign investors. Events like Cityscape Qatar play a significant role in promoting Qatar's real estate sector, showcasing its potential and attracting global investors."

With a robust economy and progressive real estate policies, Qatar's real estate sector has grown by 34% from 2015 to 2023.

The sector is poised to continue its upward trajectory, with a pro-

jected compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.1% by 2028, according to a recent report by Invest Qatar and hapondo titled 'Qatar's Real Estate: Expanding Horizons for Growth Opportunities'.

This impressive growth is driven by various factors, including high GDP growth, an influx of population, abundant employment opportunities and favourable government policies.

One of the most transformative initiatives has been Qatar's groundbreaking property ownership reforms, which grant non-Qataris the eligibility to own property and invest in the real estate sector. These initiatives offer an array of benefits, such as permanent residency and the ability to invest in selected commercial activities.

In addition, Qatar's financial institutions offer attractive mortgage loans with competitive rates and flexible terms, further enhancing the appeal to investors and homebuyers. The growing diversity of property offerings, coupled with the country's high quality of life, makes Qatar an ideal destination for real estate investments.



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ANNOUNCEMENT

I, GULNAZ FATIMA

holder of

INDIA Passport No. U0589427
QID No. 27635641046

hereby change my name

from

GULNAZ FATIMA

to

GULNAZ FATIMA NASSER

Any objection, please contact
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ANNOUNCEMENT

I, MOHAMMED ABBAS

holder of

INDIA Passport No. Y2240125
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Industry-shaping talks, investments at Cityscape Qatar

Cityscape Qatar, the nation's premier real estate event drew to a close marked by high energy and sense of optimism, as attendees explored the latest developments shaping Qatar's real estate landscape.

The event is held under the patronage of HE Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

On Day 3, Barwa Real Estate announced that it had fully sold out its Phase 1 units at Barwa Hills. Furthermore, the leading developer also announced that they have signed a long-term Concession Agreement to provide District Cooling Services at The Commercial Avenue for a duration of 20 years.

Cityscape Qatar proved to be a resounding success, with exhibitors reporting strong engagement and significant interest from both local and international

investors. The three-day event facilitated numerous investment deals and generated considerable enthusiasm for the Qatari real estate market. Exhibitor feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing eagerness to participate in next year's edition.

"Day 3 of Cityscape Qatar 2024 represented the culmination of our industry's collective vision for the future," said Alexander Heuff, exhibition director of Cityscape Qatar.

"The discussions and deals that took place, particularly those focussed on sustainability and the incorporation of AI into modern real estate projects, have the potential to reshape investment strategies for years to come."

"We are very proud of the interest and participation of the government of Qatar and the local community in the event. Their support reflects their

dedication to progressing the real estate industry in accordance with Qatar National Vision 2030 and the global sustainability goals.

"We are also excited that Cityscape Qatar gets to be the platform that brings all the stakeholders together to support such importance objectives," he concluded.

Cityscape Qatar was supported by Qetaifan Projects – Cityscape Qatar's platinum sponsor and United Development Company (UDC) – Cityscape Qatar's official registration partner. Both partners showcased their latest projects and large-scale announcements this year.

Cityscape Qatar hosted exhibitors from several countries around world, including Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom, who showcased their latest projects and offerings.

LuLu Hypermarket brings back popular 10/15/20/30 promotion

LuLu Hypermarket has announced the return of its popular 10/15/20/30 promotion, running until October 27.

Back by popular demand, this promotion offers customers unbeatable discounts across a wide range of categories, including groceries, fresh food, fruits and vegetables, household items, selected textiles, footwear, health and beauty products, home decor, stationery, toys, selected electronics and much more.

It presents the best opportunity for shoppers to make their purchases on a minimal budget while stocking up on essential commodities.

The speciality of the 10/15/20/30 promotion lies in its extensive selection of carefully curated products, designed to meet the diverse needs of LuLu's valued customers.

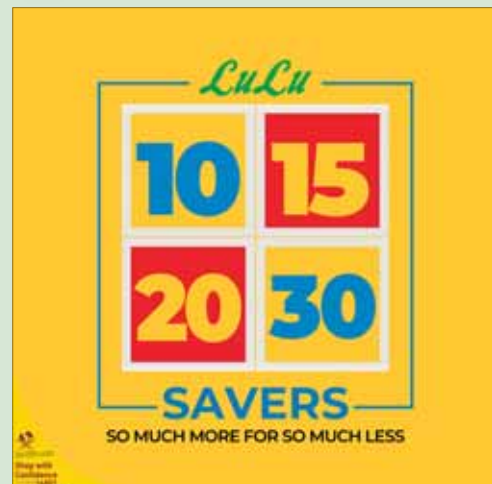
Committed to offering top-quality items at affordable prices, LuLu Hypermarket has ensured that this year's promotion is one of its best yet.

A LuLu spokesperson shared their enthusiasm: "The 10/15/20/30 promotion has always been a huge success, and each year we strive to introduce more product lines tailored to our customers' regular needs to make the campaign even more exciting."

In addition to the wide-ranging offers, Tech Deals are a key highlight, featuring the latest smartphones, laptops and gadgets, available both in-store and online.

Fashion enthusiasts can also look forward to exciting discounts on selected products from top brands like Allen Solly, Van Heusen, Louis Philippe, Marco Donatelli, Eten, Debackers, Tom Smith, Reo, John Louis and Cortigiani, available until October 19.

Furthermore, LuLu is offering an exclusive Hap-



piness 10% points on selected supermarket categories, including sliced cheese, health drinks, and Filipino ethnic grocery items and much more, for Happiness Loyalty customers. This offer is valid until October 18.

LuLu Hypermarket continues to provide a wide range of global products at the best prices, catering to the region's diverse community. With its unwavering commitment to quality and efficient logistics, LuLu remains the top choice for shoppers across Qatar.

According to the LuLu management, "We are always focused on enhancing the shopping experience for our valued customers, and we will continue to introduce innovative promotions in the future to keep our customers happy."

Lusail Winter Wonderland set to open on October 24

Lusail Winter Wonderland, one of Estithmar Holding's projects, is all set to be back with its third season for adventure seekers featuring even more exciting entertainment.

The park will open for public on October 24, in the heart of Al Maha Island. The event promises an exciting new season of endless entertainment and the opportunity to indulge in an unparalleled experience and a wide spectrum of new games and activities with loads of surprises and specially curated entry packages for family and friends.

The opening of the third season will kick-off with a festive carnival full of surprises and live performances, during which Lusail Winter Wonderland will host an array of incredible talents and performers from around the region.

This season has an action-packed agenda for visitors right from Day One. Starting with an enthralling concert by local Qatari artist Nasser AlKubaisi and the famous Bahraini singer Hala al-Turk to the renowned Arab superstar "Al-Shami" who will rock the stage and perform his best tunes and melodies performing live on October 25, the events are all set to captivate the audience.

On October 26, the Lusail Winter Wonderland Carnival will see live performance by Flipperachi, Bahrain's pioneering hip hop artist/tapper and one of the region's most sought-after artists in the hip hop realm with an unmatched ability to create songs with catchy lyrics.

The evening will further gain momentum with Hamad al-Khazina, the renowned Qatari artist who has been bestowed with numerous awards in recognition for his talent and creativity. He will dazzle



Lusail Winter Wonderland

the audience with his inspiring abilities to combine Arab musical heritage with contemporary rhythms, and thrilling performance.

This season will also witness the grand launch of "Rafeeq Village", a specially designed gourmet destination on October 26. This LWW star attraction houses a broad selection of bespoke food & beverage offerings including diverse restaurants and cuisine, carefully curated to satisfy visitors' appetites, and offers a distinctive culinary experience that promises to satisfy all taste buds, along with several entertaining activities, parades, live shows and events.

Rafeeq Village will also host an interactive entertainment event every Friday throughout the season, where visitors will be able to get many opportunities to win gifts and surprises from Lusail Winter Wonderland, promising a new season full of fun, enjoyment and an unforgettable experience.

This season will also introduce "Dafy" the new mascot of Lusail Winter Wonderland who will welcome kids and adults in this new season as well as continuously engage with the visitors.

Lusail Winter Wonderland provides the opportunity to

enjoy advanced and diverse experiences filled with adventure and entertainment specially with new attractions, exhilarating rides, exceptional games and a wide range of entertainment options, including the Ooredoo 5G rollercoaster, the giant 53-metre AIN QNB Ferris Wheel providing stunning views of Lusail City, the Qatar Airways Festive Forest, the Doha Bank view, the thrilling Qitar Al Rayan, in addition to new attractive rides & games.

The new season of Lusail Winter Wonderland boasts of a wide array of new games, such as "Snow Karts", the exciting karting circuit that will witness exciting daily competitions and thrilling races, and the "Baladna Farm" games area, which includes giant air games suitable for children and adults, and many other exhilarating rides and surprises. The new season will also feature many entertainment activities and live shows as well, with the expansion of seating areas, making Lusail Winter Wonderland the first and the ideal family destination and the preferred place for gatherings of family and friends. The View Hospital, an affiliate to Cedars-Sinai is the medical provider this season.

Registration opens for Al Meez, Al Souq events during National Day celebrations

The Organising Committee for National Day Celebrations has announced opening registration for the Al Meez and Al Souq events, part of the Qatar National Day 2024 activities at the Darb Al Saai venue in Umm Salal, noting that the deadline for registration is October 24.

The committee added that registration is being done via a designated electronic service on its website by filling out the application and meeting terms and procedures. Al Meez area consists of serial restaurants and booths at Darb Al Saai. It aims to support emerging and entrepreneurial businesses, and enhancing the participation of Qatari youth and the community with responsibility towards their country through fruitful participation.

Al Souq is a popular market at Darb Al Saai that contains stores to sell the products of the local projects of Qatari entrepreneurs. It aims to introduce the community to the national products and to support it.

The Qatar National Day is a national commemoration of Qatar's unification by the founder, Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani. It took place on December 18 in the year 1878. Sheikh Jassim established the rules of modern Qatar. In his reign, Qatar became a unified co-



hesive entity, and a united independent country.

This day serves as an opportunity to introduce the efforts of the founders of the State of Qatar, who endured hardships and paid a heavy price for the unity of their nation. This special day is also to celebrate the founders historic accomplishments, which reaffirm the identity of the state and its history. It also represents the ideals and aspirations embraced by the state to strengthen unity and pride in the national Qatari identity. (QNA)

Over 95% slot reservation reported for Qatar Boat Show

Old Doha Port has announced that the first edition of the Qatar Boat Show 2024, which will take place from November 6-9, is approaching full capacity, with more than 95% of on-water slots already reserved.

With the participation of many international, local companies and yacht manufacturers, the anticipation for the Qatar Boat Show is high with a few weeks remaining for the promising exhibition of superyachts and boats, thrilling ongoing water sports, industry workshops and panels.

The exhibitors themselves represent the forefront of the marine industry, showcasing exceptional craftsmanship and groundbreaking luxury marine

vessels. Their presence at the Qatar Boat Show will set the tone of innovation and excellence. Each company not only exemplifies the very best of the marine industry, but are also committed to innovating and pioneering continuously to further advance the industry. The Qatar Boat Show will be receiving leading companies and brands within the maritime industry. Incredible local talent will be showcasing boats and marine vessels made in Qatar, many of which will be featured for the first time in the region. As exhibitors, businesses will have unparalleled opportunities to engage directly with industry professionals, among others. (QNA)

The All-New Haval H9 launched in Qatar!



Teyseer Motors launched the Haval H9 from Great Wall Motor, which belongs to the luxury large SUV category. It was first launched in 2020 and achieved great success in many global markets, to come with the latest 2025 model with elegant and distinctive features, using high-quality materials.

The H9 features a spacious and comfortable interior, accommodating 7 passengers with an elegant and sophisticated design, in addition to a telescopic leather steering wheel with control buttons, triple air conditioning, a 16-speaker audio system, a 14.6-inch touchscreen entertainment screen, an automatically foldable third-row seat, and a very advanced 540-degree camera.

It is also available with several safety systems, including an automatic door closing system during take-off, dual front and rear airbags, a lane change assist system,

a rear collision warning system, cruise control, and a surround vision system.

It also includes a distinctive and modern exterior design, 19-inch aluminum wheels, electric side mirrors, front and rear LED lights, a panoramic sunroof, and is powered by a 2.0-liter 4-cylinder engine that generates 214 horsepower and 385 Newton torque, and is connected to an 8-speed automatic transmission for active control of the handles. It comes in 4 colors: black, white, olive green, and matte gray.

On the occasion of this launch, the Executive Board Member of Teyseer Group of Companies and Managing Director of Teyseer Motors Company, Mr. Mohamad Khliifa Al Mannai, stated: "Today, we are proud to launch the long-awaited Haval H9 in the Qatari market because it is a luxurious, large-sized SUV that is characterized by its strength and high performance and is ideal for families with its



seven seats." He added, "We are very happy with the success of the prestigious Great Wall Motor brand, which includes the Haval, Tank, Ora and Poer brands in the State of Qatar, as we have witnessed high sales since the launch of the brand

in July 2024 and high demand from the Qatari public."

"At Teyseer Motors, we are constantly working to strengthen our position in the market by offering innovative and advanced cars that



keep pace with the aspirations of our customers and we are always keen to provide an exceptional driving experience that combines performance and technology. We also aim to build long-term trust by providing the best services to our

customers," he concluded.

For more information about the company and the available offers, you can visit our showroom on Airport Road and enjoy a unique driving experience.



'Amendments will ensure unity and equal citizenship'

From Page 1

The state is keen to align a balanced spending policy, which has improved its financial position over the past years and concurrently supported national growth and development, where it allocated the necessary financial resources for government initiatives for the years 2024-2028 according to priorities and in line with the objectives of the Third National Development Strategy.

These objectives include supporting the sectors of commerce, industry, research and tourism, digital transformation and information technology, developing financial and administrative systems and enhancing human development with the aim of achieving economic diversification and sustainability.

We are serious about investing in these sectors. This interest must be coupled with a similar interest in developing human competencies and expertise in all fields, evaluating workers according to the standards of professionalism, efficiency and quality of outputs, and enhancing work ethics and ensure diligence on public affairs.

In the context of enhancing local production and opportunities available to the private sector, and after implementing the in-country value programme (ICV) in government procurement in August 2022, a directive was issued to target a growth rate of no less than 10% annually of the ICV, develop plans to localise various economic sectors, and to work on developing mechanisms such as mandatory procurement lists and long-term contracts, while considering the need to take into account the quality of the local product and its competitiveness against imported products.

The state has acted to support the private sector through Qatar Development Bank and partnerships in private agricultural projects, as well as developing the real estate sector by supporting its development strategy, and launching the real estate platform of the State that enhances transparency through data and the use of advanced technology, all of which to encourage local and international investment in the real estate sector.

As part of the State's commitment to its environmental pledges, the first sovereign green financing framework in the region has been launched as per the highest international standards in the fields of sustainable financing and green financing.

This was followed by the issuance of government green bonds in global debt markets, which achieved IPO (initial public offering) oversubscription by six times at the peak, with wide geographical

and institutional diversity, confirming the global investors' confidence in the country's financial and economic performance and its future orientations.

We accord special importance to the relations with our brothers in the Gulf and to the advancement of the process of integration between us.

In light of Qatar's presidency of the current session of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), we have spared no effort along with our brothers, the leaders of the GCC

The state has acted to support the private sector through Qatar Development Bank and partnerships in private agricultural projects, as well as developing the real estate sector by supporting its development strategy

countries, to support our Gulf march and push forward joint action, in a way that fulfills the aspirations of our peoples.

In general, with regard to our foreign policy, we have always been keen to establish it on fundamental basics and solid principles in sync with our values and reflective of our Islamic-Arab-Gulf affiliation, to achieve our goals and national interests and fulfil our international obligations and effective partnership with the international community in addressing global challenges for the good of mankind.

Apart from striking a balance between values, principles and interests, our foreign policy is also based on political realism and a realistic assessment of what we can afford to do.

We pursue a dialogue approach and preventive diplomacy, support conciliatory political solutions and peaceful settlement of disputes, and engage in mediation when that is possible, and this requires the necessary flexibility to perform this role.

It is no secret that our region is passing through extremely sensitive and dangerous events and developments that threaten the security and stability of the region and the entire world.

The Palestinian cause remains at the forefront of our priorities.

A year has passed since the beginning of the brutal aggression against our kindred in Gaza and the West Bank, a year of destruction and genocide under the continued inactivity and failure of the international community to stop this ugly war that breached all values that unite humanity, as well as international conventions, norms, and religious canons.

Israel, which is taking advantage of the international community's inaction, the paralysis of its institutions and the frustration of its resolutions in order to implement dangerous settlement plans in the West Bank, has embroiled in expanding its aggression to Lebanon.

We have stood up and are still

standing with our brothers in Palestine, and called on the international community to stop the repetitive Israeli aggression and attacks and lift the unjust siege clamped on the Palestinian people.

We stressed that this destruction will be of no avail vis-a-vis the steadfast Palestinian people bent on upholding their legitimate rights.

After all this spree of killing and destruction, Israel will have no choice but to comply with what the international community has

The state has acted to support the private sector through Qatar Development Bank and partnerships in private agricultural projects, as well as developing the real estate sector by supporting its development strategy

agreed upon regarding the two-state solution in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy, and to commit to implementing them and accepting a Palestinian state living side by side with it, and for the Palestinian people to obtain all their legitimate rights.

Qatar has made, and continues to make, intensive efforts with its partners to achieve a ceasefire, and we succeeded in reaching a truce agreement that was implemented last November.

We pursue a dialogue approach and preventive diplomacy, support conciliatory political solutions and peaceful settlement of disputes, and engage in mediation when that is possible, and this requires the necessary flexibility to perform this role

Despite the obstacles that hinder mediation efforts, we continue to make every effort to reach an agreement to end this war, stem the bloodshed of our brothers in Palestine, enable them to access aid, and release prisoners and detainees, as a prelude to a political path towards a just solution.

Regarding the Lebanese issue, we reiterate our condemnation of the air strikes and military operations unleashed by the Israeli occupation forces against the sisterly Lebanese Republic, which have claimed the lives of thousands of civilians and led to the displacement of more than a million citizens.

We have warned against this dangerous escalation of the Israeli aggression, which is snowballing day after day, and of its repercussions on neighbouring countries and the region.

The easiest and safest way for de-escalation on the border with Lebanon was to stop the war in Gaza which is demanded by the majority of humanity.

However, Israel has deliberately decided to expand the aggression to carry out the pre-planned plots in other locations, such as the West Bank and Lebanon because it sees that as an opportunity to do so.

We call for an end to the aggress-

ion against Lebanon and for the implementation of international resolutions, including Security Council Resolution 1701 of 2006.

Making thoughtful change is a reliable way to develop people's interests, meet their aspirations and realise them.

Undoubtedly, the permanent Constitution of the State of Qatar serves as the legal parameter of these ambitions and interests.

As you all know, in my speech during the opening of the 50th annual session of the Shura Council in 2021, I referred to the assignment of the Cabinet to prepare the necessary legal amendments - including constitutionally-based legislations - to promote equal citizenship and to refer them to your esteemed Council.

The Cabinet has finalised draft constitutional and legislative amendments.

Based on my responsibility and duty towards my country and my people for the good of the present and the future, I considered that these amendments fulfil the supreme interest of the state and promote the values of justice and equality in rights and duties among members of Qatari society, and I have directed that the draft constitutional and legislative

amendments, including a return to the system for appointing members of the Shura Council, are to be referred to your esteemed Council for necessary action in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

The Council of Ministers will take necessary measures on proposed amendments to laws and other legislative instruments in accordance with the law.

Two goals incorporate the constitutional and legislative amend-

In Qatar, the people and the government have a direct civic relationship, and there are recognised norms and mechanisms for direct communication between the people and the governance

ments: Ensuring the unity of the people on the one hand, and equal citizenship in terms of rights and duties on the other.

Equality before the law and to be treated on an equal footing under the law is the foundation of a modern state, as well as a legal, moral and constitutional obligation.

It is the justice that Allah has enjoined us to do, and we do not accept anything else.

Allah Almighty said: "Indeed, Allah commands you to return trusts to their rightful owners, and, when you judge between people, you judge justly."



As you know, our national unity has been the source of our strength, after the graceful success granted by Allah Almighty, in countering all the challenges we have gone through.

Hence, we must always place our unity and cohesion above any other consideration when we review our experiences.

As for the election of the Shura Council, or to be precise, the election of two-thirds of its members, it was stipulated in the permanent constitution of the state since 2004, but has not been put into effect.

I declined to have provisions in the Constitution yet to be implemented.

So, I took the initiative to call for elections. I frankly tell you that I called for elections despite the reservations on the part of many loyal citizens who believed there was a valid rationale for not implementing these provisions.

I said at the time from this podium and elsewhere that it was an experiment, and we will review it, evaluate it and draw conclusions from it.

We did that and drew conclusions that led us to propose the constitutional amendments.

Our system is an emirate founded on justice, *shura*, which protects rights and liberties under the rule of law.

The Shura Council is not a representative parliament in a democratic system, and its status and powers will not be affected whether its members are chosen by election or appointment.

In Qatar, the people and the government have a direct civic relationship, and there are recognised norms and mechanisms for direct communication between the people and the governance.

The honourable members of the Shura Council were only appointed or elected to debate laws and actions of the executive authority with impartiality and without ulterior or parochial interests, with

In Qatar, the people and the government have a direct civic relationship, and there are recognised norms and mechanisms for direct communication between the people and the governance

wisdom and reason, and to present the recommendations to the Amir.

You do this to the fullest, and this does not change by altering the mechanism of selecting the members of this council.

Shura is one of the most important forms of participation in public affairs, and it will so continue.

There are many channels for citizen participation, and we must increase, intensify and deepen them.

Allah Almighty said: "And consult them in the matter. Then, when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah favours

those who rely upon Him."

We are all one family in Qatar. The contest between candidates for membership in the Shura Council took place within families and tribes, and there are different views regarding the repercussions of such competition on our norms, traditions, as well as the conventional social institutions and their cohesion.

The contest assumes an identity-based character that we are not equipped to handle, with potential complications over time that we would rather avoid.

The Qatari experience has shown that the positive aspects of our social institutions have not been an obstacle to progress but rather a contributing factor, forming a solid foundation that has enabled us to combine our authenticity with modernity.

After you debate these amendments, and after I receive the proposals of your esteemed Council, and out of our keenness to have all citizens participate with us in founding the monumental structure of national unity, acknowledging equal citizenship and enhancing popular participation in public affairs, the constitutional amendments will be put up to a popular referendum.

Hence, I call on all citizens to participate in it.

Brothers and Sisters, on such days, I proudly remember our ancestors who clung to this land and strived to survive on it and spared no sacrifices whatsoever, some of whom have been martyred in defending it.

However, they built a national entity against the backdrop of the bleakest environmental and economic circumstances.

I recall the difficult trials that we successfully navigated together thanks to our faith, steadfastness and awareness of our common destiny.

I relive the joy in the achievements and the smiles of our sons and daughters, while being mindful of our responsibility for their future.

My conviction is strengthened that there is no alternative to combining strong will and wisdom, and that our values, morals, humility and patriotism are the sources of our strength and the justification for our confidence in the future.

Allah Almighty said: "And those who have responded to their Lord and established prayer and whose affair is determined by consultation among themselves and from what We have provided them, they spend."

In conclusion, I can only extend my sincere thanks to you, wishing you all success and guidance in serving this country, our homeland.

May the peace, mercy and blessings of Allah be upon you.

Wise steps for a stronger Qatar

From Page 1

On the other hand, many nations, driven by arrogance, resist change, leading to political crises, destruction, and the displacement of their people to other countries.

The review of Qatar's nationality and election laws reflects our commitment to strengthening national unity.

These new laws will be subject to a popular referendum, ensuring that the voice of the people shapes the future of our nation.

The role of the Qatari Shura Council is essential in this process, as it plays a vital part in shaping the future of our society.

The people of Qatar are one family, and throughout the many challenges we have faced, our unity with the leadership has only grown stronger, proving our resilience in every crisis.

Ibn Khaldun's phrase "Justice is the foundation of civilisation" means that the most important pillar for the continuity of states, nations, and peoples, is justice.

And God Almighty said: "Indeed, Allah commands justice and good conduct" [Holy Qur'an, An-Nahl: 90].

In his speech, His Highness the Amir outlined Qatar's economic trajectory, highlighting both the accomplishments and challenges of the past year.

Despite a projected decline in economic growth from the highs of 2022, Qatar's economy has shown resilience, with the gross domestic product (GDP) growing at 1.2% in 2023.

The expansion of the hydrocarbon and non-hydrocarbon sectors has played a key role in stabilising the economy during this period.

Qatar's medium-term outlook is more optimistic as the International Monetary Fund projects a significant jump in growth to 4.1% annually between 2025 and 2029, driven by gas production expansions and initiatives under the Third National Development Strategy.

These projects are not just aimed at boosting short-term growth but are part of a broader vision for economic diversi-

fication and sustainability.

This forward-looking strategy aligns with Qatar's efforts to maintain budget surpluses, reduce public debt, and stabilise inflation, which has notably decreased from 5% in 2022 to 1.4% by mid-2023.

The state's fiscal discipline, combined with a focus on innovation and technology-driven sectors such as commerce, tourism, and digital transformation, underscores Qatar's commitment to long-term economic health.

Moreover, Qatar's environmental focus, exemplified by the issuance of sovereign green bonds, positions the country as a leader in sustainable finance in the region.

Such initiatives signal not only economic foresight but also a growing acknowledgment of global environmental responsibilities.

His Highness the Amir's speech highlighted significant support for Qatar's private sector. His emphasis on boosting local production, expanding the in-coun-

try value (ICV) programme, and fostering partnerships in agriculture and real estate demonstrates a concerted effort to empower businesses beyond traditional state-led ventures.

To this end, institutions like the Qatar Development Bank play a pivotal role by providing the financial backbone necessary to fuel private sector growth.

Additionally, the launch of the state's real estate platform is a landmark step toward greater transparency and attracting both local and international investments.

However, achieving these goals requires more than just financial support.

His Highness the Amir stressed the importance of developing human capital, that is crucial for fostering a competitive workforce capable of sustaining the nation's ambitious growth targets.

Qatar's role on the global stage is defined by its unwavering commitment to justice, particularly concerning the Palestinian cause.

His Highness the Amir's condemnation of Israel's ongoing aggression in Gaza and the West Bank, as well as its expansion of hostilities into Lebanon, was a sharp reminder of Qatar's stance on regional conflicts.

His Highness the Amir aptly described Israeli actions as "brutal aggression", "genocide", and "a breach of all values that unite humanity".

His Highness the Amir's speech reiterated the urgency of addressing the failure of the international community to hold Israel accountable.

The call for an end to the aggression and the implementation of a two-state solution highlights Qatar's consistent advocacy for a just resolution based on international legitimacy.

Qatar's efforts to mediate and secure ceasefire agreements, as well as its calls for the international community to lift the unjust siege on the Gaza Strip, underscore the country's role as a regional peacemaker.

His Highness the Amir's speech also warned of the broader destabilising effects of Israeli actions, not only on Palestine and Lebanon, but on the entire region.

As Qatar moves forward with its development plans and constitutional amendments, the core values of unity, equality, and justice will continue to guide its path.

falmudahka@gulf-times.com

Shura Council conducts first meeting of 4th ordinary session

The Shura Council held yesterday its first meeting of the fourth ordinary session of the first legislative term, corresponding to the Shura Council's 53rd annual session at "Tamim bin Hamad Hall", headed by HE Speaker of the Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem.

At the outset of the session, HE al-Ghanem, on his behalf and the members of the Council, extended his deepest thanks and appreciation to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, for his kind opening of the fourth ordinary session of the first legislative term, praising the Amir's continuous support for the Shura Council and its journey in

servicing the nation. He commended the lofty directives and comprehensive content contained in the Amir's speech, stressing that these directives represent a roadmap for national action during the next phase.

He praised the distinguished achievements made by Qatar at the domestic and international levels, thanks to the wise leadership and strategic vision of His Highness the Amir, which is based on hard work and sound planning, which has strengthened Qatar's position as an emerging economic power and a leading country in various fields.

Then, HE Secretary-General of the Shura Council Nayef bin Mo-

ammed al-Mahmoud read out the agenda. In the first item of the agenda, he read out Decree No 71 of 2024 calling the Shura Council for the fourth ordinary session of the first legislative term, corresponding to the 53rd annual session. In the second item, and in implementation of the new internal regulations of the Shura Council, which stipulate opening the door for nominations for the presidency of the Council's committees, during the session, the committee heads were chosen by acclamation after one candidate ran for the position of president in each of the six committees.

The results led to the selection of Sultan bin Hassan al-Dhabet



al-Dosari as Chairman of the Legal and Legislative Affairs Committee, Yusef bin Ali al-Khater

as Chairman of the Internal and External Affairs Committee, Mohammed bin Yusef Almana as

Chairman of the Economic and the Financial Affairs Committee, Mubarak bin Mohammed al-Kuwari as Chairman of the Health, General Services and the Environment Committee, Khalid bin Ahmed al-Obaidan as Chairman of the Education, Culture, Sport and Information Committee, and Abdulrahman bin Yousuf al-Khulaifi as Chairman of the Social Affairs, Labour and Housing Committee.

The Council considered the letter received from the Amiri Diwan, attached to which was the draft constitutional amendments, and decided to form a special committee to study the draft amendments and submit its report on it to the Council. (QNA)

Shura Speaker praises Amir's vision for Qatar

HE the Speaker of the Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem hailed the speech delivered by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani at the inauguration of the fourth ordinary session of the first legislative term, corresponding to the 53rd annual session of the Shura Council, noting the key achievements mentioned in the speech and the Amir's directives for the upcoming phase.



HE the Speaker of the Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem.

He affirmed that His Highness the Amir's speech expressed a clear and comprehensive vision of Qatar's steadfast approach to facing challenges and achieving ambitions. He noted that the Amir's directives represent a roadmap for a bright future, grounded in solid foundations of hard work, sound planning and a strategic vision that offers hope to every Qatari citizen.

He appreciated the economic developments achieved by the state, as mentioned in the Amir's speech, which have strengthened Qatar's position as an emerging economic power. He also emphasised the continuous efforts to enhance infrastructure and develop vital sectors, stressing that these achievements would not have been possible without the success granted by God, and the wise directives of His Highness and his steadfast belief in the ability of his loyal people to face challenges and achieve desired goals.

HE the Shura Council Speaker praised Qatar's firm positions in support of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent state in accordance with international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative.

Addressing His Highness, he said: "As we listen to your speech, we can only commend our country's unwavering stance in support of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the establishment of their independent state, in accordance with international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative, as well as its calls for an end to aggression against Palestinians so they can enjoy security and stability like other nations, and a halt to the genocide and destruction of Gaza in preparation for the displacement of its residents. In this context, we recall what Your Highness previously mentioned in your address before the Shura Council

at the opening of the last session, regarding Israel crossing all boundaries in its brutal assault on Gaza, and your call to end this war and stem the bloodshed." He added in a related context: "Your Highness' words were a call to the international community to fulfil its duty; however, it has failed to pressure Israel or hold it accountable for the crimes it has committed against humanity. Israel continues its brutal aggression on Gaza, even expanding it to include Lebanon. It is exploiting the international community's inaction to implement its plans to expand settlements in the West Bank in preparation for annexation. This underscores our urgent need for more credible and serious international commitments to achieve global security and peace. Peace cannot be achieved without genuine will and commitment to the rights of oppressed people."

HE the Speaker summarised the achievements of the Shura Council during the previous session, noting that it approved 23 draft laws, including the recently issued internal regulation law for the Council, marking the beginning of a new phase in the Council's journey in enhancing oversight and legislative work. The Council also discussed several topics and issues of concern to citizens that address their needs, along with approving the state budget for the fiscal year 2024, he added.

In the field of parliamentary diplomacy, he stated that the Council participated in fifty-one events, including conferences, meetings, and local, regional, and international parliamentary seminars.

He stressed that the Council places great importance on Gulf unity and works diligently to strengthen this cohesion amid the complex challenges facing the region. He referenced the constant emphasis the Amir places on the importance of Gulf unity and the necessity of promoting brotherhood and solidarity among the Gulf Co-operation Council member states, achieving economic integration among them, enhancing their regional weight and international influence, and strengthening their internal unity, which ultimately benefits all Gulf peoples connected by ties of religion, language, history, kinship, and shared destiny.

HE the Speaker pointed out in his speech the significant transformations the world is currently witnessing on multiple fronts. He stated that, in light of this, Qatar remains steadfast in its positions and efforts to promote peace and stability, noting that the State has always taken the initiative in calling for peaceful solutions to conflicts and has mediated between conflicting parties, both regionally and internationally, due to the directives of the Amir.

In this regard, he emphasised that Qatar's active role in alleviating tensions in various conflict areas did not arise from nothing, but is a result of a balanced policy aimed at promoting peace and security for all.

HE al-Ghanem reiterated his loyalty to His Highness the Amir, adding: "We pledge to implement the directives outlined in Your Highness' speech and to continue working diligently and sincerely to achieve the higher interests of our country. We also pledge to remain faithful to the principles of our religion and the values of our community, striving to achieve development for our nation and our people, enhance Qatar's position on both the regional and international stages, and fulfil the aspirations and ambitions of the loyal Qatari people. We ask Almighty God to protect you, grant you success, and guide your steps toward the welfare of this generous homeland."

He concluded his speech by stating: "We assure Your Highness that the Shura Council will take all necessary measures to study the proposed constitutional amendments in the interest of the country." (QNA)

SJC president hails Amir's speech on vision to achieve progress

HE President of the Supreme Judiciary Council and President of the Court of Cassation Dr Hassan bin Lahdan al-Mohannadi has praised the speech of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani during the opening of the 53rd annual session of the Shura Council, stressing that it was comprehensive and reinforced the state's vision to achieve further progress and development in all fields.



HE President of the Supreme Judiciary Council and President of the Court of Cassation Dr Hassan bin Lahdan al-Mohannadi.

His Excellency said in a statement, that the Supreme Judiciary Council (SJC) fully supports the draft constitutional amendments, and affirms its commitment to implementing these amendments that achieve justice for all, adding that the SJC is certain that these amendments will enhance Qatar's position as

a country that seeks to achieve a balance between the aspirations of the people and commitment to constitutional principles, which form the basis of the strength and unity of Qatari society, and

are consistent with the nature of Qatari society.

His Excellency also expressed his appreciation of His Highness the Amir's directives regarding the draft constitutional amendments, which reflect His Highness' keenness to strengthen the unity of the Qatari people, and ensure the principle of equality among citizens in rights and duties.

HE the President of the Supreme Judiciary Council (SJC) and President of the Court of Cassation also said that referring this project to the esteemed Shura Council represents a wise step that reflects a comprehensive vision for developing the legal and constitutional structure of the state, in a way that ensures political stability and deeper social justice. (QNA)

Turkish envoy says Amir's speech affirmed Qatar's support for Palestinian cause

Turkish ambassador to Qatar Dr Mustafa Goksu has praised the speech of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani yesterday before the Shura Council. Dr Goksu said: "His Highness the Amir delivered a comprehensive speech at the Council that touches upon very important local, regional and international matters.

The ambassador appreciated His Highness the Amir's particular emphasis on his speech to the priority and urgency of the Palestinian cause. Dr Goksu also praised the Amir's call to international community and its institutions to stop the repeated Israeli aggression and attacks as well as to lift the unjust siege on the Palestinian people.

Dr Goksu said: "Türkiye's position is consistent with what His Highness the Amir stated that 'Israel, which is taking advantage of the international community's inaction, the paralysis of its institutions and the

frustration of its resolutions, and has embroiled in expanding its aggression to Lebanon." The ambassador made a reference to Turkish President Erdogan's latest remarks pointing out that the Israeli government has extended its massacre policy to Lebanon and underlying that standing against the "state terrorism" practised by Israel is a moral obligation for everyone.

He considered that the Amir's speech sends a clear message to the international community in that vein by emphasising that there are strong voices standing with the Palestinian people and demanding their just rights.

He expressed his hope that the strong and ethical positions of both Türkiye and Qatar will contribute to pressuring the international community to take serious measures to stop the war in Gaza and achieve just and lasting peace in the region.

Amir's speech 'guides future strategies of Shura Council'

HE the Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council Dr Hamda bint Hassan al-Sulaiti praised the contents of the lofty speech of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, which laid the foundations for work directions in the next stage.

In her remarks to Qatar News Agency (QNA), she emphasised the Shura Council's support for what was stated in His Highness' speech before the Council regarding making constitutional amendments that would contribute to strengthening the unity and cohesion of Qatari society, which derives its strength from solidarity, co-operation, and unity. She noted that the directives of the Amir guide the Shura Council to perform its duties and continue its path in serving the nation and the citizens.

HE Dr al-Sulaiti stressed that these directives represent a road-



HE the Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council Dr Hamda bint Hassan al-Sulaiti.

map for the Council to follow in determining its priorities and developing its future strategies. She highlighted that the Shura Council is proceeding with steady and continuous steps towards contributing to achieving the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030, guided by the wise directives of His Highness the Amir, which lay the foundations for national work and to enhance

the state's capabilities to face challenges and achieve ambitions. She added that the Council, as the country's legislative authority, plays a major role in promoting the comprehensive development process by exercising its powers in studying and approving laws that contribute to achieving progress in various sectors. HE Dr al-Sulaiti addressed the key achievements of the Shura Council during the previous session, noting that the Council was able to study and approve several draft laws that contributed to strengthening the legislative system of the state, in addition to discussing topics that concern citizens and meet their aspirations.

She also affirmed the Council's keenness to enhance transparency and co-operation with all government agencies, within the framework of the efforts made to achieve the public interest. (QNA)

Amir's speech sets clear path for national action

HE the Secretary-General of the Shura Council Nayef bin Mohammed al-Mahmoud praised the speech of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani before the Shura Council yesterday, stressing that His Highness' speech presented directives and an insightful vision that enhances the path of national action and lays clear foundations for the next stage in all sectors.



HE the Secretary-General of the Shura Council Nayef bin Mohammed al-Mahmoud.

In a statement to Qatar News Agency (QNA), His Excellency commended His Highness the Amir's continued support for the Shura Council and strengthening

its role as a legislative authority that contributes to formulating and developing laws, in accordance with the provisions of the

Constitution, stressing the Council's keenness on continuing pioneering role based on its constitutional powers.

HE the Secretary-General of the Shura Council noted the fruitful co-operation between the Council and the government in implementing policies that enhance the welfare of citizens and achieve the national interest, stressing the General Secretariat's commitment to providing the necessary support to the Shura Council to achieve its goals and continue to develop its legislative and oversight work. (QNA)

Amir's speech revealed Qatar's view on local, global issues

HE the Chairperson of the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) Maryam bint Abdullah al-Attiyah affirmed that the speech of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani at the opening of the fourth ordinary session of the first legislative term, corresponding to the Shura Council's 53rd annual session, covered many aspects that show Qatar's vision towards local, regional and international issues.

In a statement, HE al-Attiyah pointed out that His Highness' speech addressing the Palestinian cause comes from his belief in its centrality at the regional level, and the importance of achieving peace for the Palestinian people who have suffered from occupation for decades, and are undergoing a devastating war



NHRC chief HE Maryam bint Abdullah al-Attiyah.

targeting civilians for more than a year, which left tens of thousands of martyrs and wounded, in addition to deteriorating infrastructure and difficult humanitarian conditions with great danger to the Palestinian people, which Qatar and its wise leadership is aware of and has warned against in various forums. She said that the scope of the war on Gaza has expanded to include civilians in Lebanon, which will lead to a humanitarian catastrophe on a regional level

unless the Israeli occupation finds a just international community to confront it and stop these flagrant violations of international law and international humanitarian law. She praised what was stated in the speech of the Amir that emphasised that the permanent constitution of Qatar is the legal fence for achieving the aspirations and interests of the Qatari people, and the keenness of the wise leadership to promote the principles of equal citizenship, which represents a new addition to what Qatar has achieved in the field of human rights. In the statement, HE al-Attiyah noted that the speech of the Amir emphasised the principle of equality before the law and to be treated on an equal footing under the law is the foundation of a modern state. (QNA)



Qatar calls for concerted effort to protect education from attack

Qatar has called on member states of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) to join efforts within the framework of Unesco's action plan for the Executive Board's decision to protect education from attack, and to protect this basic right as there is no safe future without education.

This came in a speech today by HE the Permanent Representative of Qatar to Unesco Dr Nasser bin Hamad al-Hanzab before the General Session of the Unesco's Executive Board, which continues until October 23.

He said that the world is witnessing the largest humanitarian disaster in the Gaza Strip, as the Israeli aggression has claimed the lives of more than 41,000 people with this number increasing, including 17,000 children and 11,000 women, in addition to the complete destruction of schools and universities, heritage sites and museums, and the death of 177 journalists.

HE Dr al-Hanzab also noted the expansion of the Israeli aggression on Lebanon.

The international community, he said, has failed to put an end to these blatant violations of humanity, as the aggression on Lebanon has caused the displacement of children and deprived them of their right to education.

HE Dr al-Hanzab stressed that Qatar continues to work together with all member states and Unesco in its various sectors, and to exert more efforts to achieve the noble goals of the organisation, especially achieving the goals of the Unesco's 2026-2029



strategy in light of the critical circumstances witnessed by the entire world, while stressing the need to enhance the principle of transparency and wise management in implementing Unesco's strategy.

He highlighted Qatar's efforts in the context of protecting the right to education, as international partners from international organisations, countries and civil society institutions met in Doha in an event held under the title *Education in Peril: The Human Cost of War*, on the occasion of the International Day to Protect Education From Attack last month, during which the effects of wars on children were discussed.

HE Dr al-Hanzab also noted Qatar's efforts through signing a memorandum of understanding with Canada in the field of development co-operation, and another

framework agreement for international co-operation in the field of education and development with a total value of \$95mn to enhance youth employment and empowerment.

Education Above All Foundation pledged to provide \$40mn for various initiatives, with the aim of reaching youth and children through education and employment, while empowering youth, enhancing their skills and providing job opportunities to develop human and economic development in societies.

In June Qatar launched the Debt Relief for Education initiative in co-operation with the World Bank and Education Above All to address the challenges posed by sovereign debt and explore appropriate methods and frameworks to address issues arising from debt, he added, noting that Qatar, at the national level, launched its National Education Strategy 2024-2030 in line with achieving the goals of the human development pillar of the National Vision 2030, which contributes to identifying opportunities and overcoming challenges in the coming years through innovation and excellence in education, enhancing teachers skills and developing them professionally, and preparing a generation capable of facing the challenges of the future.

ing from debt, he added, noting that Qatar, at the national level, launched its National Education Strategy 2024-2030 in line with achieving the goals of the human development pillar of the National Vision 2030, which contributes to identifying opportunities and overcoming challenges in the coming years through innovation and excellence in education, enhancing teachers skills and developing them professionally, and preparing a generation capable of facing the challenges of the future.

HE Dr al-Hanzab stressed that Qatar has adopted an effective national policy to ensure that cultural dialogue is the cornerstone of the country's policy and its relationship with the world as a whole, and to encourage the adoption of a forward-looking approach that addresses the challenges of human development and the aspirations of future generations by promoting inter-faith dialogue and the alliance of civilisations, both of which are of utmost importance in today's world, which is witnessing the growth of fanaticism and extremism, in an effort to build bridges with other countries and cultures and enhance global co-operation and understanding.

He reiterated that Qatar will continue its vital role in the international arena to support peace and stability and contribute to the peaceful settlement of conflicts and disputes by enhancing the educational process, strengthening international co-operation and solidarity in multilateral efforts and enhancing co-operation and dialogue to confront global challenges. - QNA



Right to Food for a Better Life and a Better Future is the theme for the World Food Day.

Qatar Charity marks World Food Day

Qatar Charity (QC) is celebrating World Food Day under the slogan *Right to Food for a Better Life and a Better Future*.

The "Supporting the Wheat Value Chain" project in north-western Syria, launched in 2019 in partnership with the UN's Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), is one of the leading initiatives worldwide to enhance food security.

The project was designed to support and build the resilience of communities affected in north-western Syria through a range of sustainable interventions, supporting wheat production from seed to bread.

It encompasses various stages, including the establishment of seed multiplication stations to support the production and restoration of pure Syrian wheat seed varieties, providing farmers with agricultural inputs, rehabilitating grain storage facilities, and supplying new mills with a production capacity of 50 tonnes per day.

The initiative also involves renewing mill buildings, creating flour storage facilities, rehabilitating bakeries, and providing new bakery lines for bread production, as well as purchasing wheat directly from farmers to encourage them to cultivate and produce wheat, contributing to local production and food security.

Wheat is stored in silos, ground into flour, and then baked and distributed for free or at subsidised prices to the most vulnerable groups in camps, villages, and towns hosting internally displaced persons.

The project has achieved several milestones in northwestern Syria, including the establishment of three seed multiplication stations for local Syrian wheat seeds and the rehabilitation of three grain silos, each containing 36 storage cells with a capacity of up to 1,000 tonnes.

Approximately 8.28mn loaves of bread were distributed to the host community and displaced persons in northern Syria, along with the provision of two automated bakeries with a capacity of 5,000 loaves per hour.

The QC is seeking funding for the sixth phase of this project and is looking for ongoing funding due to its significant importance in supporting the resilience of displaced persons and farmers by economically empowering them.

The six-year plan focuses on expanding support and building resilience within local communities through new activities targeting climate change and enhancing the role of women in rural areas in wheat-related products.

Additionally, agricultural machinery will be provided to farmers and local institutions operating in the region to address climate change challenges.

Sidra programme provides critical care for injured Palestinians

Next month, WISH 2024 - an international gathering hosted by Qatar Foundation (QF)'s World Innovation Summit for Health - will bring together experts from across the world in Doha to discuss vital healthcare issues under the overarching theme of *Humanising Health: Conflict, Equity and Resilience*.

It is a theme that is as relevant and urgent as it has ever been, given the ongoing situation in Palestine and the urgent need of its people for critical medical care.

Sidra Medicine, a member of QF, is one of the seven hospitals in Qatar selected to provide medical care for injured Palestinian children, playing a pivotal role in triaging the injuries of these patients before their arrival and directing them to hospitals with appropriate treatment expertise.

In early December 2023, Qatar offered treatment to 1,500 injured people as well as the sponsorship

of 3,000 orphans from the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.

And on April 27 this year, one-year-old Palestinian child Sanad arrived in Qatar and was admitted to Sidra Medicine for urgent medical care.

He had sustained severe injuries that tore parts of his small body after his home in Gaza was bombed on April 14.

Sidra Medicine has a dedicated unit for treating Gaza's wounded, featuring 22 beds, each of which carries a story of suffering told by wounds and scars of war, just like Sanad's story.

Dr Ahmad al-Hammadi, acting chief medical officer at Sidra Medicine, is the national paediatric lead for the Gaza patient care programme to enable the standardisation of care for all the children coming in from Gaza.

"The early cohort of patients we received at Sidra Medicine were children who had multiple injuries as a result of the bomb-



ings," the official said.

"These cases typically involved multiple fractures, open wounds, burns and embedded shrapnel," Dr al-Hammadi said. "We treated children who had injuries on their heads, faces, limbs and with abdominal injuries. They all

required specialised or complex surgical interventions including amputations, plastic surgery and grafting."

Elaborating on Sanad's condition, he said: "Sanad arrived with a complex medical history and underwent several surgical op-

erations, including amputations, facial injury repairs, and intricate procedures to treat deep wounds. Each operation was a step towards saving his life."

Sanad is currently residing in Doha with his grandmother.

Sidra Medicine plays a vital role in providing this support through specialised care tailored to meet the unique needs of patients.

The hospital has seen more than 230 paediatric patients from Gaza, across many of its core services including mental health, orthopaedics, surgery, craniofacial and plastics, and the heart centre.

In addition to providing basic support services, Dr al-Hammadi explained that many children require auxiliary health services such as occupational therapy, rehabilitation, physiotherapy, and nutrition, along with other medical specialties like general paediatrics, neurology, and pain management.

Msheireb Museums, Sidra Medicine host Fifth Science Café on Precision Medicine

Msheireb Museums, in collaboration with Sidra Medicine, hosted the fifth session of the Science Café series, on *Unveiling the Wonders of Precision Medicine*, on October 14 at Bin Jelmood House.

The event offered insight into the transformative potential of personalised care, which tailors healthcare solutions based on a patient's genetic makeup, environment, and lifestyle.

In a press statement, Msheireb Museums general manager Abdulla al-Naama said: "The Science Café series continues to serve as an essential platform for discussing the future of healthcare and creating accessible opportunities for members of our community to gather knowledge and insights that can improve their lives."

"Sidra Medicine is leading this effort to personalise diagnosis and treatment for our young patients," Sidra Chief Research Officer Prof Khalid Fakhro said. "Our milestones in genomic screening, clinical trials and whole-genome sequencing continue to push boundaries in standard-of-

care, to develop best in class management for paediatric precision health in Qatar and the region."

The session featured presentations from experts in the field of precision medicine.

Dr Fakhro cited Sidra Medicine's precision medicine programme, while Sidra Medicine's chief of endocrinology, Prof Khalid Hussain, discussed the potential for precision medicine to tackle complex diseases through the use of genomic testing.

Additionally, Qatar Genome Programme director Dr Said Ismail highlighted the power of genomic data to unlock remarkable improvements in patient outcomes.

Dr Hussain's presentation on *Personalising Care through Genomic Insights* featured updates on the targeted therapies used for children with obesity.

He shared a patient story about the successful treatment protocol of a young infant who was genetically predisposed to obesity.

The infant's life was dramatically

changed by the care she received.

Sidra Medicine research manager Dr Sahar Da'as, who leads the Science Café series said: "Platforms like our Science Café series have been a wonderful opportunity to engage with the community on a wide range of topics that previously would have been inaccessible."

"We are grateful to Msheireb Museums for being a fantastic partner in helping us highlight the depth and the wealth of the scientific and research programmes in Qatar, that make precision medicine a reality for children and families," she said.

The event included a panel discussion and an interactive question-and-answer session that allowed participants to explore how precision medicine is shaping the future of healthcare, making treatments more effective and tailored to the individual.

In addition, attendees had the opportunity to visit information booths and learn more about ongoing research projects and their implications for future healthcare models.



The event offered insights into the transformative potential of personalised care.

Workshop on rehabilitating contaminated sites



The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change has organised a workshop on *Environmental Assessment of Contaminated Site Rehabilitation Projects*. The workshop coincides with the celebration of Arab Environment Day, adopting the slogan *Land Restoration to Enhance Resilience*. The workshop was presented by the Environmental Assessment and Permit Department, and covered methods used for removing pollution and the procedures for rehabilitating contaminated sites.

Ministry of Municipality exerted intensive efforts during the third quarter of 2024

The Ministry of Municipality carried out intensive inspections across the municipalities all over the country during the third quarter of this year.

The municipalities carried out various public services transactions and issued building permits and advertisement licences.

Accordingly, the health control sections of the municipalities car-

ried out 83,706 inspection tours during this period, the general control sections carried out 45,588 inspection tours, and the technical control sections carried out 16,786 inspections.

These resulted in the issuing of 18,770 related violations, with 80 outlets and facilities shut.

The insects and rodents control campaigns carried out by the con-

cerned sections at the municipalities during this period amounted to 30,368 campaigns.

Further, the municipalities issued 4,332 building permits and 6,322 advertisement licences.

The Public Relations and Communication Department handled 4,847 calls by the public regarding various inquiries and municipal services.

QDA to organise diabetic conference next month

The Qatar Diabetes Association (QDA) is organising a conference on November 8-9 at the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC), aimed at enhancing the knowledge and expertise of healthcare providers in the field of diabetes management and prevention.

Diabetes continues to be a major health concern in the Mena (Middle East and North Africa) region and worldwide.

According to the International Diabetes Federation Atlas, 537mn adults - one in 10 - were living with diabetes in 2021.

This number is projected to rise to 643mn by 2030 and 783mn by 2045, making diabetes a growing global health crisis.

The conference will address the theme of *Diabetes Comorbidities and Complications*, focusing on the various health conditions that frequently occur



alongside diabetes and the potential complications that can arise from poorly managed diabetes.

These complications can significantly impact the quality of life and increase the risk of severe outcomes for individuals with diabetes.

QDA executive director Dr Abdulla al-Hamaq (pictured **!-closing bold italic--**) highlighted the importance of the conference.

"The Qatar Diabetes Association has always worked on improving the level of knowledge among healthcare providers in diabetes management and prevention," he said. "This is crucial, especially given the increasing burden of diabetes worldwide."

The event will gather healthcare professionals, researchers, and experts to discuss the latest developments in diabetes care, share best practices, and explore strategies for managing diabetes and its complications effectively.

Historic GCC-EU Summit aims to forge unprecedented partnership

By **Joey Aguilar**
Staff Reporter

The first GCC-EU Summit, convening today in Brussels, aims to elevate the strategic partnership between the European Union and the Gulf Co-operation Council to unprecedented levels, EU ambassador to Qatar Dr Cristian Tudor has said.

Speaking to reporters yesterday at his residence in Doha, the envoy said the summit will focus on strengthening co-operation across numerous sectors, including trade, energy, security, and humanitarian aid, amid a complex regional geopolitical landscape.

"This summit is a key milestone to give a further boost to the region-to-region partnership. As the first-ever summit at the level of heads of state, it confirms the intention held by both blocs to elevate the growing partnership between the EU and the GCC to the strategic level," Dr Tudor said.

The summit, co-chaired by European Council President Charles Michel and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, will bring together a high-level delegation including European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, High Representative and Vice-President Josep Borrell Fontelles, and heads of state and government from all six GCC member states and the 27 EU member states.

Dr Tudor highlighted the summit's ambition to build upon previous collaborations, including the 2022 EU Joint Communication for a Strategic Partnership and recent high-level forums focused on regional security and co-operation.

"A stronger partnership with the Gulf on these themes will allow to address arising challenges together. Amid the current geopolitical situation in the Middle East and the risk of a regional escalation, the EU appreciates the efforts of GCC members towards



Dr Cristian Tudor with journalists at his Doha residence yesterday.

de-escalation of tensions. "The summit will be an opportunity for the EU and the GCC to work together on crucial themes of mutual interest and build a partnership based on sustainable prosperity and stability for both sides," he said.

The agenda includes enhancing trade and investment co-operation, fostering the green and

digital transitions, and promoting sustainable energy solutions. Dr Tudor underlined the importance of people-to-people connections, noting the EU's commitment to supporting initiatives such as Erasmus+ to facilitate exchanges in education, research, and cultural diplomacy.

"The EU aims to continue and deepen the EU-GCC partners Hu-

man Rights Dialogues on the basis of mutual respect," he pointed out, citing the recent successful EU-Qatar Human Rights Dialogue as an example.

The envoy said the summit will also address critical security concerns, including regional de-escalation efforts, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and countering terrorism and cyber threats.

"The security of our regions is deeply interconnected. Therefore, strategic co-ordination on key regional security files (de-escalation in the Middle East, a political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, regional nuclear non-proliferation, Russia's aggression against Ukraine, violence in the Horn of Africa) is an important deliverable of the Summit.

"The current regional security situation is fragile. The EU remains committed to engaging with regional actors to call for diplomacy, dialogue, restraint and to prevent further military escalation. We are grateful to our Gulf

partners for their intensive efforts to date," he said.

He confirmed that the EU and GCC will discuss enhanced co-operation on maritime security, in the context of recent threats in the Red Sea, and the ongoing efforts in Operation Atalanta and Operation Aspidos.

Dr Tudor added that the summit aims to establish a framework for collaboration on humanitarian aid, leveraging the strengths of both blocs to address growing needs in the region and beyond.

He noted that the next annual EU-GCC Business Forum is set to take place by the end of November in Doha.

"The EU and the GCC are on track to discuss together themes of common interest with an emphasis to trade and investment. This is a strong political signal to business communities in the Gulf, including with the exploration of potential EU chambers of commerce in all GCC states," Dr Tudor said.

Qatar keen to maintain equal rights of citizens

From Page 1

Eventually, the studies conducted on this issue led to the conclusion that these elections will not serve the development and advancement of the country.

HE Sheikh Mohammed stressed that the proposed constitutional changes have been studied well with the assistance of the experts and well-informed persons to make sure that what have been issued would certainly serve the next phase. The main base for such amendment is to maintain the solidarity and unity of the citizens of the country, giving them full equal rights in duties and rights while affirming the authority of the law. Further, the minimum age limits for the Shura Council have been eliminated in the new amendments giving younger people more opportunity to serve their country according to their qualifications, experience and capabilities.

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs said that mechanisms of decision making have been well-known and well-defined in Qatar over the past thirty or even forty years, where there are open communication channels among the ruler and the people. He noted that the experience of Qatar is particular to itself and should not be compared to others, as its governance is based on achieving justice and equality among all without any form of discrimination, where all citizens are given equal opportunity in jobs, services, rights, privileges and duties. He pointed out that even non-Qataris enjoy equal treatment protected by the law. He said all the generations that lived in this country faced the same challenges and difficulties and worked together united for the development and progress of their country. They have all been known for their high and generous ethics and morality. Accordingly, nobody should be left out of the proper citizenship rights.

In the meantime, the proposed constitutional amendments will follow the approved and usual

procedures, with them being first approved by at least two thirds of the members of the Shura Council. Then it will be put up for a referendum as His Highness the Amir is keen to directly involve the people in this.

Further, HE Sheikh Mohammed stressed that His Highness the Amir's directives are to diversify the economy and create more incentives to attract more investments into the country. He said more will be done to prepare Qatari people to embrace the new investment trends and open up the business environment. The steps taken include sophisticated and modern health and education services with focus on technology, science and artificial intelligence. Besides, the state is set to increase the role of the private sector in the field of the promising health care projects.

Regarding Qatar's role as a mediator in resolving international disputes and crises, he stressed that Qatar has established itself as a reliable and experienced mediator able to reach out to all parties of a conflict as it is keen to maintain the security and stability of the region because it sees this as a necessity for its own progress. Qatar has a long documented history of successful mediation efforts and works with transparency with all parties.

Accordingly, he said that Qatar will continue its efforts to stop the aggression on the Palestinian people. The country has been exerting extensive efforts for more than one year to end the Israeli war on Gaza and is determined to do what it can to end such atrocities there.

Regarding the situation in Lebanon, he stressed that Qatar's priority now is to stop the Israeli attacks against Lebanon, but for the other political issues in regard to the Lebanese presidency, it is an issue that pertains to the Lebanese people.

Regarding the close relations with the USA, he pointed out that both countries enjoy strong relations based on mutual respect and respect to the sovereignty of each country.

Qatari-European relations are based on mutual trust

QNA
Doha

Qatar, European countries in general, and the European Union (EU) countries in particular have strong and distinguished relations in various fields.

Relations between Qatar and European countries are based on mutual trust, respect, and constructive co-operation in various political, economic, investment, and trade fields. Over the past years, these relations have significantly consolidated, reaching important strategic stages between Qatar and the EU countries.

Qatar strengthened its relations with all EU countries in all fields, and the visits and tours of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to European capitals have deepened co-operation, increased the strength of relations, and brought them to the highest strategic levels.

On the occasion of the first summit at the leaders level between the GCC countries and the European Union in Brussels under the presidency of Qatar, scheduled for this week, a number of analysts and academics in statements to Qatar News Agency (QNA) said that Qatari-European relations are based on mutual trust and respect, and are based on respect for values and human rights. Europe values co-operation with Qatar due to its political vitality and rationality, as well as its clear economic strength, in addition to its respect human for rights, international laws and norms, and it is an active and effective member of the international community.

Assistant Professor of Political Science at Qatar University (QU) Dr Nafja al-Buafra affirmed that Qatar enjoys distinguished friendly relations with European countries based on mutual interests and fuelled by the continuous desire of both parties to enhance co-operation in various fields.

She pointed out that co-operation between Qatar and European countries includes economy, politics, investment, defence, security, and various other aspects of cooperation.

Qatar has proven to be a reliable strategic partner, due to its respect for bilateral and multilateral charters and treaties, and its fulfilment of its obligations towards partners

Qatar's active diplomacy and balanced policy played a major role in consolidating Qatar's position as an active and indispensable member of the international system, which strengthened the belief of international organisations in Doha's effective role and its policy that works to maintain international peace and security, resolve disputes through mediation, sit down at the dialogue table, and reject violence, she added.

She said that Qatari investments in European countries are the best evidence of the confidence that Qatar enjoys in the old continent, indicating that Qatari investments, worth tens of billions, included various fields, from real estate to sports.

Qatar has proven to be a reliable strategic partner, due to its respect for bilateral and multilateral charters and treaties, and its fulfilment of its obligations towards partners, pointing in this context to Qatar's commitment to exporting liquefied natural gas (LNG) to many European stations, whether power stations or factory stations, she explained.

For example, France signed a long-term agreement with Qatar to import LNG. Germany also worked to build a special terminal to import Qatari LNG, and other European countries have long-term agreements regarding the export of Qatari LNG, she added.

In the humanitarian field, she said that Qatar participates in many humanitarian programmes, such as supporting refugees and health projects in Europe. This was clearly evident during the Covid-19 pandemic, as Qatar provided material and moral support to various countries of the world, and co-operated with international organisations such as the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross to enhance efforts to combat the pandemic.

Assistant Professor of Political Science at QU highlighted the cultural co-operation between Qatar and the EU, which includes holding many art exhibitions, literary events, and educational programmes, which contributed to enhancing mutual cultural and civilisational understanding, pointing out that European countries have attracted many Qatari students in various academic fields.

For his part, the Director of the Economic Studies Unit at the Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies Dr Hazim Rahahleh said that the great development witnessed by Qatari-European relations over the past years constitutes a solid foundation for further co-operation at various levels, highlighting the strong presence of common interests between the two sides.

He added that based on the

major role played by both sides in the field of humanitarian work, and in light of the worsening human suffering associated with the raging conflicts in large parts of the world and the Middle East in particular, the need to co-ordinate efforts and enhance joint work between Qatar and European countries seems more urgent, pointing out that the past years have witnessed the crystallisation of multiple partnerships in the educational and academic fields between the two sides, translated on the ground through joint programmes between academic institutions and Qatari and European scientific missions, in addition to the cultural co-operation that culminated in the establishment of a branch of the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) in Doha.

Dr Rahahleh also highlighted the partnership agreements between Qatar and the EU in addition to the bilateral agreements with a number of European countries, each separately, which would establish solid and extended relations, channels of co-operation, and institutional partnership, which is a very important issue in light of the expansion of the scope of economic relations between the two sides, and the need to frame them within a legal, regulatory and procedural system that facilitates the translation of these relations into practical steps on the ground.

The great development witnessed by Qatari-European relations over the past years constitutes a solid foundation for further co-operation at various levels, highlighting the strong presence of common interests between the two sides

Dr Rahahleh pointed out that the European economic, investment, and trade openness to Qatar reflects the great confidence given to the country by these EU countries.

Assistant Professor of Political Science at Lusail University (LU) Dr Tarek Hamoud said that the co-operation between Qatar and the EU began within the framework of the agreement concluded between the EU and the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) in 1988, which included work on several aspects, including enhancing political and security stability, facilitating political relations, economic and technological co-operation, as well as strengthening co-operation in the fields of energy, industry, trade and services, agriculture, fishing, and investment.

On the political front, Dr Hamoud highlighted Qatar's efforts over the past years, which reflected high efficiency in playing essential roles in matters of mutual interest with the EU, such as humanitarian mediation regarding the exchange of children between Russia and Ukraine, and before that the significant mediation following the Afghanistan crisis in 2021, where Qatar played a pivotal role in facilitating the evacuation of EU citizens from Afghanistan.

On the other hand, he explained that the EU is an important trading partner, and includes

global economies, including three countries from the Group of Seven (G7) industrialised countries, in addition to the UK, which recently left the EU, adding that Qatar's partnerships and investments in many European countries reflect a role convergence between the two parties.

In the same context, a researcher at the Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies and the editor-in-chief of "Siya-sat Arabiya" journal Dr Ahmed Qasim Hussein affirmed that Qatari-European relations have witnessed significant development recently.

He explained that Qatar has strengthened its bilateral relations with several European countries in a way that achieves mutual goals and interests in various sectors. The energy sector has been central to these relations, especially with Qatar's emergence as one of the most significant global powers in energy and its credibility and reliability, Dr Hussein added.

He said that Qatari diplomacy has played an important role in overcoming obstacles in Gulf-European relations in the aluminium and petrochemical sectors. From the European perspective, these products are considered sensitive goods because their local markets contain similar alternatives, he said.

He pointed out that the relationship was not limited to economic aspects but extended to politics, given Doha's role in mediation and conflict resolution through peaceful means.

On the cultural level, Dr Hussein pointed out that Qatari-European relations have witnessed significant development in this field through a series of visits and cultural events, including the organisation of Qatari Week at the European Parliament (EP) chamber to introduce Qatari heritage and culture.

For his part, Research Professor at the Gulf Studies Centre at Qatar University Dr Shaaban Kardas said that Qatari-European relations include bilateral and institutional aspects, as Qatar has multi-faceted relations with European actors in various fields, including economy, security, and defence.

Dr Kardas explained that Qatar enjoys a close relationship with the European Union and individual European actors, which benefits Qatar in many situations. He highlighted Qatar's diplomatic initiative to resolve the conflict in Gaza, as well as the start of a dialogue with the EU on human rights. Through this process, it became possible to discuss various human rights issues, including labour rights and women's rights, and address the progress Qatar has made in this regard, he added.

He pointed out that co-operation between Doha and European capitals is developing, given Qatar's regional and international standing and reputation along with the priorities of European actors, the relationship cannot advance in all areas equally because it is developing in a selective manner, with a focus on key areas, adding that Qatar continues to play a decisive role in mediation in crisis hotspots, and in economic and development policies, the relationship has good potential.

Qatar envoy: Summit marks a milestone in strategic ties

Qatar's ambassador to the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato), Abdulaziz bin Ahmed al-Jehani al-Malki, affirmed the significance of the first summit between leaders of the Gulf Co-operation Council countries and member states of the European Union, due to take place in Brussels today.

Speaking to Qatar News Agency (QNA), the ambassador said the first-ever summit since the establishment of official relations between the two sides marks a historical milestone in the path of strategic partnership between the GCC countries and the European Union, and reflects the joint commitment to bolstering the relations, in light of the growing regional and international challenges and the prevailing atmosphere of wars and geopolitical conflicts.

The summit will address many pressing issues on the regional and international scene, including security and stability in the Middle East and geopolitical conflicts, as well as trade, investment, combating climate change, industry, energy



Abdulaziz bin Ahmed al-Jehani al-Malki

present during the summit. The leaders of the GCC and the EU countries will discuss aspects of co-operation and unifying visions on many issues, in a bid to develop a vision and an end to the crises in the region, he pointed out.

The GCC-EU summit will address all regional and international issues. The joint communique is expected to cover all the issues and conflicts currently taking place in the international community, and the outcomes of the summit will be built upon in order to strengthen the relationship between the GCC countries and the European Union, and transform the files discussed into future projects and visions, the ambassador indicated. Ambassador al-Malki noted that the global economy is facing many difficulties as a result of the wars in the Middle East and the world, and that political stability is reflected on the economic growth of each country. Therefore, Qatar is keen on peace, security, political solutions and negotiations as a basis for resolving crises, because any economic stability is based on political stability.

security, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and other topics related to innovation and scientific research. The deliberations will also touch on reducing carbon emissions, the transition to a green economy, combating terrorism, and other issues related to peoples' dealing, most notably the European Union entry visa "Schengen", he explained. Regional issues of mutual interest to the GCC and EU will be strongly



Report recommends using Qatar's 2022 World Cup experience as a global model

Qatar and the World Health Organisation (WHO) launched a new, detailed report yesterday highlighting the lessons learned from the "Sport for Health" partnership, initiated in 2021 in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), the WHO, FIFA, and the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy.

The report provides many recommendations for organising mega global sporting events that prioritise health and safety by drawing on the successful experience of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

The report, titled "Changing the Game: Strengthening Health and Well-Being Through Sport Events", was launched during an event organised by Qatar, titled "Strengthening Health and Well-Being Through Sports Events". The launch event was held on the sidelines of the 71st session of the WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Regional Committee.

HE Dr Hanan Mohamed al-Kuwari, Minister of Public Health, emphasised, "The collaboration between Qatar, the WHO, and FIFA can inspire organisers of major global sporting events to integrate health into the planning and execution of their events."

She stressed: "The Sport for Health model reflects a commitment to harness the transformative power of mega-sports events to create lasting improvements in public health and well-being," adding: "This report details our collaborative effort - a



HE Dr Hanan Mohamed al-Kuwari, Minister of Public Health speaks at the event.

new model that unites nations, international organisations, and sports federations in a shared mission."

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director-general of the World Health Organisation, stated: "The new report demonstrated the power of sports - and sporting events - to empower people to lead healthier lives, physically and mentally."

Mutaz Barshim, Qatari Olympic high jump champion, underscored how "sport has the unparalleled ability to inspire, unite, and transform lives. By promoting both physical and mental well-being during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, the Sport for Health initiative has shown how sport can lead to healthier lives for everyone, setting a valuable model for future global events."

The report reviewed the three-year Sport for Health project and, based on the findings, put forward a series of key recom-

mendations, including the importance of: developing memorandums of understanding with the private health sector, such as hospitals and healthcare providers, ahead of major events to lay the foundation for effective collaboration; involving all relevant authorities and bodies in decision-making, planning and implementation; developing and reviewing comprehensive plans and procedures to enhance safety at mega-sports events, followed by testing them through extensive training programmes and major incident drills; and establishing mechanisms to strengthen compliance with public health and social measures, as well as other established public health protocols.

The report captures the learning process and outcomes of the Sport for Health partnership with the aim of presenting the Healthy FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 as a model for future sporting events worldwide.

Qatar to participate in Diriyah art book fair in November

The Diriyah Biennale Foundation in Saudi Arabia will organise the inaugural edition of the PaperBack - Art Book Fair from November 1-3, 2024, with Qatari participation.

To be held at the Jax district in Diriyah, Saudi Arabia, the cultural event will bring together

a diverse array of professionals, collectors, art enthusiasts and curious minds from around the world. The fair will feature 25 artists and collectives, independent press, booksellers, zine makers, publishers, cultural organisations and academic institutions.

With participants hailing from 16 countries, including Qatar, China, Egypt, India, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Switzerland, the UAE, and the UK, the event promises a rich cultural exchange. (QNA)

DI's new media initiative aims to enhance journalism education

Doha Institute (DI) for Graduate Studies launched the "Independent Media Initiative" recently with two leading US-based institutions in media capacity-building, Al-Monitor and Semafor.

The event was organised in collaboration with the Journalism Masters Programme at the DI.

Dr Basim Tweissi, head of the Journalism Programme at DI, said: "The aim of these workshops is to develop the learning outputs of media and journalism education in Qatari educational institutions. This initiative includes the journalism and mass communication programmes at Qatar University, Northwestern University, and the

Doha Institute. It seeks to improve students' competencies and skills bridging the gap between Press and Media Education Centres in Qatar and advanced Media Industry Centres around the world, specifically in leading news institutions."

The workshop covered many topics, including audience development, digital methods and techniques, coverage of conflict zones and the fundamentals of business and economic reporting.

The programme, which will be held three times per year at DI, also discussed key methods and techniques for fact-checking and investigative reporting. The work-

shop involved significant interaction between students and the workshop instructors on the best practices of independent media.

"This programme has been an exceptional opportunity to participate in the education and training of a cohort of leading graduate journalism students, from across the Middle East, in the best practices, cutting-edge methodologies and technological advances shaping the independent media industry," said Andrew Parasiliti, president of Al-Monitor.

A total of 30 students from journalism and media programmes from various educational institutions in Qatar participated in the workshop.



The event was organised in collaboration with the Journalism Masters Programme.

Turkiye appeals for 'sanctions' against Israel over Gaza conflict

AFP
Ankara

Turkiye's foreign minister yesterday called for sanctions against Israel, urging the international community to cut support over the conflict in the Middle East.

"We have reached the limit of words, diplomacy and international politics. We must start with sanctions," Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan told ruling party delegates at a meeting about the future of the Palestinian state.

Turkiye is a fierce critic of Israel's now year-long military campaign in Gaza and its recent deadly push into Lebanon, accusing the United Nations of failing to sanction Israel over the conflicts.

Fidan said Israel so far had not responded to calls to halt the Gaza war, meaning "the international community must now resort to legal action. Israel needs to be boycotted," he said.

Israel was "not paying any price economically, politically or militarily" for its actions in Gaza, and the only way that would change was if the world "cut off support".

"If we cannot, Israel will continue the genocide and massacre in Gaza," he said.

Despite the world's focus now largely being on Lebanon, where escalating Israeli bombardments have targeted the Hezbollah fighters, it was important "not to let the war in Lebanon distract from Gaza," Fidan added.

Last week, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said the 12

months of bloodshed in Gaza was "the common shame of all humanity".

Although some EU states have mooted the idea of economic sanctions against Israel, such proposals have little chance of success within the bloc whose 27 members have been divided over the conflict.

The Gaza war began with Hamas's storming of Israel in October first week last year.

According to the Hamas-run territory's health ministry, more than 42,300 people have been killed in Gaza since then, mostly civilians. The UN has said the figures are reliable.

Erdogan has branded Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu the "butcher of Gaza" and compared him to Nazi Germany's Adolf Hitler.

Saudi Arabia, Egypt agree deeper investment ties, urge Gaza truce

Reuters
Cairo

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi agreed to deepen trade and investment co-operation and called for a ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon in talks in Cairo yesterday.

Egypt's presidency said the leaders signed an agreement to encourage and protect mutual investments between the countries, and witnessed the signing of an accord to form a supreme co-ordination council between Riyadh and Cairo to deepen co-operation.

The visit is taking place amid speculation about potential Saudi investments in Egypt, which has received a major influx of external financing this year including a record \$35bn deal with UAE sovereign fund ADQ.

The crown prince, known as MbS, made his last official visit to Egypt in 2022. Saudi Arabia, which has provided financial support to Sisi's Egypt in the past, later indicated it was shifting towards investing rather than providing direct aid to allies.

Yesterday's presidency statement said the two leaders reviewed efforts to develop economic partnership between Cairo and Riyadh particularly in investment, trade



A handout picture provided by the Saudi Press Agency shows Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bidding farewell to Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi at the end of his visit to Cairo, yesterday.

and economic integration in the energy, transport and tourism sectors.

The leaders also discussed regional developments, particularly the situations in Gaza and Lebanon, the presidency said, adding that "they demanded to start taking steps to reach calm that include a ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon".

Egypt's sovereign dollar bonds rallied by early afternoon yesterday, with longer-dated maturities gaining the most. The 2059 maturity added 1.73 cents by 1128 GMT to bid at 77.80 cents on the dollar.

Egypt's prime minister said last month that Saudi Arabia was planning to invest \$5bn in Egypt, independently from funds the Gulf state has deposited in the Egyptian central bank.

Possible targets of investment include two sites for tourism developments on Egypt's Red Sea coast and in the south of its Sinai peninsula, both of which are opposite Saudi Arabia. Egypt has been seeking large investments as it tackles a long-running economic crisis that led to record inflation, a rising debt burden and sharp currency devaluations over the past two years.

Iran summons Hungarian envoy, condemns EU and UK sanctions

Iran's foreign ministry summoned Hungary's ambassador yesterday to protest against new European Union sanctions on Tehran, and denied Western allegations that it has transferred ballistic missiles to Russia, Iranian state media reported. The EU agreed on Monday to impose sanctions on seven people and seven organisations, including airline Iran Air, for alleged links to Iranian transfers of ballistic missiles to Russia. Britain, which is not in the EU, also imposed new sanctions, Reuters reported from Dubai. Hungary's ambassador was summoned because Budapest holds the 27-nation EU's rotating presidency. "In addition to voicing the Islamic Republic's strong protest against the EU's recent decision, the meeting helped stress that resorting to illegal and coercive methods like sanctions against Iran is unacceptable and will lead nowhere," the official IRNA news agency said. Britain added nine new designations under its Iran sanctions regime on Monday, after the United States said last month that Russia had received ballistic missiles from Iran for Moscow's war in Ukraine. Denying the missile transfers, Iranian foreign

ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei said on X: "Some European countries and the UK have unfortunately claimed without evidence that Iran has militarily intervened in this conflict which is totally refuted." Baghaei said the imposition of new sanctions on Iranian individuals and entities went against international law. A spokesperson for Iran's Civil Aviation Organisation told IRNA that national airline Iran Air would cease flights to Europe as it was no longer able to receive the flight permits it needs. Iran Air is the only Iranian airline that has recently been flying to Europe, an official from the Association of Iranian Airlines told the Iranian Labour News Agency. Saha Airlines, Mahan Air and Iranian Deputy Defence Minister Seyed Hamzeh Ghalandari are included in the latest sanctions.

Also facing EU sanctions are prominent officials from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard and the managing directors of Iran Aircraft Manufacturing Industries and Aerospace Industries Organisation. The sanctions include an asset freeze and a travel ban to the EU.

Kenya courts decline to block vote on impeachment

Kenya's courts yesterday declined to stop this week's Senate vote on Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua's impeachment from going ahead, Reuters reported from Nairobi.

Last week Kenya's parlia-

ment voted to impeach Gachagua for allegedly stirring ethnic hatred, embezzlement and undermining the government, paving the way for the Senate to debate whether to remove him from office today and tomorrow.

Several legal challenges have so far failed to prevent the impeachment process from proceeding. In one courtroom, Justice Chacha Mwita referred a case to the chief justice to appoint a panel of judges to make a final determination.

Historic southern Africa drought 'starving millions'

AFP
Johannesburg

Millions of people across southern Africa are going hungry because of a historic drought that risks causing a full-scale humanitarian catastrophe, the United Nations warned yesterday.

Five countries - Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe - have declared a state of national disaster in the past months as the drought has destroyed crops and livestock.

Angola and Mozambique are also severely affected, the UN's

World Food Programme (WFP) said in a briefing.

The crisis is expected to deepen until the next harvests due in March or April next year, it warned.

"A historic drought - the worst food crisis yet - has devastated more than 27mn lives across the region," said the WFP spokesperson for southern Africa, Tomson Phiri.

"Some 21mn children are malnourished."

The WFP is distributing food and supporting relief programmes but has only received one-fifth of the \$369mn it requires, Phiri said.

Wildlife Kenya moves 50 elephants to larger reserve

Kenya is moving 50 elephants to a new home after overcrowding in the Mwea National Reserve has seen the creatures stray into nearby human settlements and damage local ecosystems, Reuters reported from Embu. The last national wildlife census recorded 156 elephants at Mwea, more than three times the reserve's capacity. As a result, elephants have strayed into nearby villages. During a two-week mission to relocate the animals from the 42sq km Mwea reserve to the more spacious Aberdare National Park, wildlife specialists, travelling in helicopters, sedated elephants with tranquilliser darts, and loaded them onto a caged truck for the drive northwest.

DEFENCE
India to buy 31 armed drones from US

India signed a deal with the US state department yesterday to buy 31 armed MQ-9B SkyGuardian and SeaGuardian High Altitude Long Endurance (HALE) drones, the defence ministry said. The deal follows talks that began in 2018. It is expected to significantly increase India's surveillance and intelligence capabilities and is in line with US efforts to coax India away from buying Russian military equipment and counter China's growing dominance. India's apex defence body approved the procurement last year just before Prime Minister Narendra Modi's state visit to Washington, while the Pentagon approved it in February.

SCARE
Bomb hoax forces Air India plane to land in Canada

The latest in a string of hoax bomb threats made to Indian airlines forced an Air India plane to make an emergency landing in Canada, the airline said yesterday. The passenger aircraft, flying from New Delhi to Chicago, was the subject of "a security threat posted online" and as a "precautionary measure" has landed at Iqaluit Airport in Canada, Air India said. The aircraft and passengers were being "re-screened as per the laid down security protocol," the company said. "Air India notes that it, and other local airlines, have been subject to a number of threats in recent days", it added.

DECISION
Australia PM launches affordable housing plan

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese yesterday launched a new building programme to address a critical housing shortage, the same day news of his plans to buy a \$4.3bn (\$2.9bn) seaside home dominated national headlines. Albanese's centre-left Labor government has pledged to build 1.2mn homes by 2030 to help ease cost pressures in one of the world's most expensive housing markets. The issue has special resonance with a federal election looming. At a press conference to announce plans to build more than a thousand homes in Queensland state, many low-cost, Albanese was instead peppered with questions about the ocean front home.

WILDLIFE
Mystery death of Hong Kong monkey takes zoo toll to nine

Zoo authorities in Hong Kong are keeping close watch on a monkey that is behaving unusually a day after the ninth death this week of one of the animals, while hastening tests to find out what killed them. During the monitoring, the city's Zoological and Botanical Gardens (HKZBG) will keep shut its mammals section, after having closed it for disinfection and cleaning on Monday. The ninth monkey, belonging to the white-faced saki species, died a day after Sunday's deaths of a De Brazza's monkey, a common squirrel monkey, three cotton-top tamarins and three white-faced sakis, the zoo added.

India rules out auction of satellite spectrum

Reuters
New Delhi

India's government yesterday said it will allot spectrum for satellite broadband administratively and not via auction, hours after Elon Musk criticised the auction route being sought by rival billionaire Mukesh Ambani as "unprecedented".

In what is seen as a battle between billionaires, the methodology of awarding spectrum for satellite services in India - a market set to grow 36% a year to reach \$1.9bn by 2030 - has been a contentious issue since last year.

Musk's Starlink argues administrative allotment of licences is in line with a global trend, while India's Reliance, led by billionaire Mukesh Ambani, says an auction is needed to ensure a level playing field and as there are no provisions in Indian law on how individuals can be provided satellite broadband services.

Telecoms Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said during a New Delhi event that the spectrum will be allocated administratively in line with Indian laws, and its pricing worked out by the telecom watchdog.

"If you do decide to auction it, then you will be doing something which is different from the rest of the world," he said.

On Sunday, Reuters was first

to report that Reliance had challenged the Indian telecom regulator's consultation process that signals home satellite broadband spectrum should be allocated, not auctioned, calling for it to start again.

The minister's comment will come as a shot in the arm for Musk, who following the Reuters story wrote on X late on Monday that any decision to auction "would be unprecedented".

"This spectrum was long designated by the ITU as shared spectrum for satellites," Musk said, referring to the International Telecommunication Union, a UN agency for digital technology.

India is a member of the ITU and signatory to its treaty that regulates satellite spectrum and advocates that allocation must be done "rationally, efficiently and economically" as it is a "limited natural resource".

Sunil Mittal, co-chair of global satellite group Eutelsat, which has partnered with India's telecom operator Bharti Airtel, voiced support for the auction route yesterday.

"Satellite companies who have ambitions to come into urban areas, serving elite retail customers, just need to take the telecom licences like everybody else... they need to buy the spectrum as telecom companies buy," Mittal, who is also the chair of Airtel, said at the New Delhi event.

Heavy rains lash Chennai



People wade through a flooded street amid heavy rainfall in Chennai, India, yesterday.

US, Philippines launch war games after Taiwan drills, ship collision

AFP
Manila

Thousands of US and Filipino troops launched joint exercises in the northern and western Philippines yesterday, after China held huge drills around Taiwan and a Chinese vessel collided with a Filipino patrol boat.

The annual Kamandag, or Venom, exercises are focussed on defending the north coast of the Philippines' main island of Luzon, which lies about 800kms from Taiwan.

Beijing considers Taiwan part of its territory and has vowed it will never rule out using force to take it, calling Monday's drills a "stern warning" to "separatist" forces on the island.

The joint US-Filipino exercises also come days after a collision between a Chinese and a Philippine vessel in the South China Sea.

It was the latest in a series of confrontations between the two countries in the strategic waterway claimed almost entirely by Beijing.

Philippine Marine Corps commandant Major General Arturo Rojas stressed at yesterday's opening ceremony in Manila that Kamandag was long planned and had "nothing to do with whatever is happening in the region".

The drills' primary focus will be live-fire exercises along Luzon's north coast, while other activities will be conducted on tiny Philippine islands between Luzon and Taiwan.

"It's a coastal defence doctrine. The doctrine says that a would-be aggressor might be directed towards our territory," Filipino exercise director Brigadier-General Vicente Blanco told reporters. "We are not exercising to join the fight (over Taiwan)," he added.

US Marines representative Colonel Stuart Glenn said the exercises were aimed at helping

the US and its allies respond to "any crisis or contingencies". The western Philippine island of Palawan, facing the South China Sea, will also host part of the drills.

The US and Philippines are fielding just over a thousand participants each, while smaller numbers of Australian, British, Japanese and South Korean forces are also taking part.

An amphibious landing and training on how to defend against chemical and biological warfare were also among the activities planned, according to a press kit.

As the war games began yesterday, the Philippine government announced that the BRP Datu Cabaylo, a civilian patrol vessel, had sustained minor damage on October 11 when it was "deliberately sideswiped" by a "Chinese Maritime Militia" vessel.

The collision dented the 98-foot vessel's front right section, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources said in a statement.

Diplomatic spat 'not likely to hit India, Canada trade ties'

India does not see the diplomatic fallout with Canada over the murder of a Sikh separatist leader having any immediate impact on bilateral trade ties, a government source said yesterday, a day after Ottawa linked some Indian diplomats to the crime.

Relations between the countries worsened after Canada on Monday linked India's high commissioner and other diplomats to the murder of Sikh leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar on its soil and accused New Delhi of a broader effort to target Indian dissidents in Canada.

India denied the accusations, describing them as part of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's "political agenda".

"We are not immediately concerned about trade ties. Our bilateral trade with Canada is not very large," the source said.

"We expect (Canadian) funds to make investment decisions based on returns and India offers attractive returns at the moment."

UK's 'King Conker' under probe



David Jakins, known as 'King Conker', takes part in the annual World Conker Championships in Southwick, Britain. The World Conker Championships is investigating allegations one of its 2024 winners may have cheated by using a steel fake to smash their opponent's 'conker' - the hard brown fruit of the horse chestnut tree - at the annual event in England. This year's men's champion Jakins, a long-time participant who competed wearing a green robed bedecked in strings of conkers, is under investigation after complaints from other players. A World Conker Championships spokesman said it was looking at video footage and reviewing other evidence. Jakins was found to have a replica steel conker in his pocket.

UK eyes weight loss drug trials to get people back to work

Reuters
London

Britain will study whether the use of Eli Lilly's weight loss drug can get people back into work and help tackle the high rate of long-term sickness that has become a major drag on the economy.

Health Minister Wes Streeting predicted the use of the drug - a competitor to Novo Nordisk's Ozempic - could help transform the health of the nation, after Lilly announced a £279mn (\$365.4mn) investment in Britain as part of a flagship summit hosted by Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

The deal included "a major real-world study" on the effectiveness of tirzepatide, marketed as Mounjaro in Britain, which could reduce the burden on the state-run National Health Service.

Streeting said obesity was costing the NHS £11bn a year and meant people took more sick leave or were forced out of

the jobs market altogether. "The long-term benefits of these drugs could be monumental in our approach to tackling obesity," Streeting wrote in an article in the *Telegraph* newspaper. "For many people, these weight-loss jabs will be life-changing, help them get back to work, and ease the demands on our NHS."

The University of Manchester will co-ordinate the study, which will have up to 3,000 participants, and collect data on "health-related quality of life and changes in participants' employment status and sick days from work."

Earlier this month, England's National Health Service outlined a plan to give the drug to nearly a quarter of a million people as part of a three-year plan.

Streeting said that while the drug would be a tool to tackle obesity, people would need to make lifestyle changes too so that the health service, already struggling after years of crises, was not put under further strain.

N Korea blows up roads connecting it to South

AFP
Seoul

North Korea yesterday blew up sections of the deeply symbolic roads and railways connecting it to the South, Seoul's military said, adding it had conducted a "counter-fire" operation in response.

Pyongyang's military last week vowed to permanently seal its southern border after spending months laying mines and building anti-tank barriers in the wake of leader Kim Jong-un declaring the South his country's "principal enemy".

The North also accused Seoul of

using drones to drop anti-regime propaganda leaflets on the capital Pyongyang, with Kim convening a security meeting to direct a plan of "immediate military action" in response, state media reported yesterday. "North Korea has detonated parts of the Gyeongui and Donghae roads north of the Military Demarcation Line," the joint chiefs of staff said yesterday, referring to inter-Korean infrastructure that once connected the two countries.

"There has been no damage to our military, and our forces conducted counter-fire in areas south of the MDL," it added.

The JCS added late yesterday that some sections of railways connect-

ing the North to the South had also been detonated, without giving further details.

The infrastructure have long been shuttered, but destroying them sends a clear message that Kim is not prepared to negotiate with the South, experts said.

"This is a practical military measure related to the hostile dual-state system that North Korea has frequently mentioned," Yang Moo-jin, president of the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul, said.

The North may also be looking to erect more physical barriers along the border, Yang said, adding that the road detonations could be "preparatory work."

South Korea's military released video footage showing North Korean soldiers in military uniforms ahead of a huge explosion, which emitted thick billowing smoke as it blew up sections of the Gyeongui road.

More footage, apparently from after the blasts, showed excavators digging, while soldiers worked as large red trucks arrived.

The Seoul military also released separate footage showing North Korea blowing up a section of the Donghae road, on the east coast.

South Korea's unification ministry slammed the North for what it called an "extremely abnormal" provocation, adding that Seoul had shouldered millions in costs for

building the infrastructure.

"North Korea still has repayment obligations regarding this funding," it added. China, a traditional ally of the North, called on all parties "to avoid further escalation of conflicts" on the peninsula, a foreign ministry spokeswoman said.

Seoul's military initially denied sending drones north but has subsequently declined to comment, even as Pyongyang has blamed them directly, warning it would consider it "a declaration of war" if another drone was detected.

Later yesterday, the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un released a statement, saying Pyongyang has secured "clear

evidence" that the South Korean military was behind the drones that reached Pyongyang.

"The provocateurs will have to pay a dear price," Kim Yo-jong said.

Activist groups in the South have long sent propaganda northwards, typically carried by balloons, but enthusiasts are also known to have flown small, hard-to-detect drones into the North.

Unlike conventional drones made of metal, the devices they used were constructed from expanded polypropylene, similar to Styrofoam, allowing them to go undetected by both South and North Korean authorities, according to enthusiasts who spoke to local media.



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Faisal Abdulhameed al-Mudahka

Deputy Managing Editor

K T Chacko

- 📍 P.O.Box 2888, Doha, Qatar
- ✉ editor@gulf-times.com
- ☎ 44350478 (News),
- ☎ 44466404 (Sport),
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Self-driving cars on long road to full autonomy

An autonomous car is a vehicle capable of sensing its environment and operating without human involvement. The terms “autonomous” and “self-driving cars” are often used interchangeably. Two decades ago, the US military kicked off the race to build a self-driving car by sending a fleet of fledgling robot vehicles across the Mojave Desert in its seminal Darpa challenge.

Ten years later, the auto industry was buzzing with predictions that self-driving cars would be all over the roads by now. That hasn't happened. But the industry has started to put limited bits of automation, such as hands-free driving and crash-avoidance systems, into mass-produced models. Although these features have been promoted for their potential to make driving safer and easier, regulators are subjecting them to scrutiny after years of notable crashes, some of which resulted in fatalities.

Some companies have abandoned their autonomous vehicle efforts, citing excessive costs and complexity. Others are continuing to make progress, including Alphabet's Waymo, which this year expanded its driverless taxi service to a third major US city.

Elon Musk's Tesla has failed repeatedly to realise its ambitious targets for autonomous vehicles. The CEO told investors in 2019 that Tesla would have more than 1mn robotaxis on the road by the following year. The company hasn't deployed a single autonomous vehicle in the years since.

China has been a hotbed of innovation thanks to dozens of startups and robust regulatory support

service in the three states where it was operating and dismissed top executives.

Nonetheless, GM announced in September it would resume driving robotaxis on public roads in California, and has been testing self-driving cars — accompanied by a human — in Texas and Arizona.

Among other positive developments in 2024, technology leaders such as China's Baidu and Waymo are expanding services to new cities, with Alphabet in July announcing it would put \$5bn more into the business.

China has been a hotbed of innovation thanks to dozens of startups and robust regulatory support.

There are some alternatives to full autonomy.

Advanced driver-assistance systems — known as ADAS — help drivers to park, stay in their lane and avoid objects using cameras, radar and other electronic sensors. They can alert drivers and in some cases briefly take control of the car to avoid collisions.

The industry categorises automation systems from Level 0 to 5. Level 0 features simply pass on information to the driver, like sounding a warning when you're driving out of a traffic lane.

The pinnacle — which has yet to be achieved — would be Level 5 cars that can drive autonomously everywhere and in all conditions.

Virtually every major automaker has embraced ADAS, with the fanciest systems reserved for higher-price vehicles.

There are some advantages of limited autonomy.

Auto-safety regulators in the US see so much potential in automatic emergency-braking systems that they've decided to mandate them as standard equipment for new cars beginning in 2029.

But fatal crashes involving ADAS attract a lot of attention, especially if a Tesla is involved. Musk argues that Autopilot saves lives, but he's used questionable data to make his case.

The US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has opened dozens of investigations into crashes involving ADAS since 2016, most of them involving Teslas.

In 2015, Ford's then-CEO Mark Fields predicted that self-driving cars would be on the road in five years. A year later, Musk said Tesla would demonstrate a fully autonomous Los Angeles-to-New York trip by the end of 2017 — another goalpost that came and went.

A true self-driving car — Level 5 — won't be available before 2035, and probably not for some time after that, S&P Global Mobility said in September 2023.

General Motors Co's self-driving Cruise unit has also had problems. One of its robotaxis struck a pedestrian in San Francisco in 2023.

GM then halted Cruise's service in the three states where it was operating and dismissed top executives.



Investing in the WHO will yield outsize returns

Amid climate disruptions, pandemics, and population ageing, the World Health Organisation's \$7.1 billion fundraising campaign could save 40 million lives over the next four years. Some of the world's poorest countries have already made significant financial commitments, and now their wealthier counterparts must step up

By Gordon Brown
Edinburgh

In August, 14 of Africa's poorest countries, alongside international organisations and private companies, pledged over \$45mn to the World Health Organisation (WHO)'s new Investment Round, which aims to raise \$7.1bn in voluntary contributions to close its current funding gap for the next four years, improve primary care, and build a more robust, better-trained health workforce.

Amid climate disruptions, pandemics, and rapid population ageing, the WHO estimates that its fundraising effort could save an additional 40mn lives over the next four years. The African Development Bank has committed \$10mn, while countries like Ethiopia and Niger have each pledged \$2mn.

Earlier this month, countries and partner organisations from the WHO South-East Asia Region — including India, Indonesia, North Korea, and Sri Lanka — pledged \$345mn.

This raises an important question: if low-income countries like Chad and lower-middle-income countries like Côte d'Ivoire can contribute their fair share, will their wealthier counterparts step up?

The WHO, which provides critical aid to roughly 166mn people in conflict zones such as Ukraine, Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, urgently requires more consistent and predictable funding.

Otherwise, its ability to respond to health crises caused by wars, disease outbreaks, famines, droughts, and floods will be severely constrained, denying

millions of people the emergency medical assistance they need.

The WHO must also sustain its ongoing efforts in impoverished countries, where billions of people lack regular access to healthcare. In response to these evolving needs, the new Investment Round calls for just 0.1% of the \$9tn spent annually on healthcare.

When the WHO was founded after World War II, member states provided flexible funding that allowed for long-term planning. But nowadays, the organisation can be certain about only 20% of its budget and relies on voluntary, often earmarked, contributions for the rest, limiting its effectiveness. Even with institutional reforms underway, the current Investment Round is vital for securing the flexible funding required to implement the organisation's strategy over the next four years.

If Covid-19 has taught us anything, it is that health emergencies know no borders and that another pandemic is not a question of if, but when. Alarming, as global health threats grow more frequent and severe, the number of unvaccinated children is rising for the first time in modern history, exposing them to deadly diseases again. Moreover, communicable diseases have re-emerged as a leading cause of premature deaths.

The climate crisis, too, is undeniably an escalating health crisis, with millions more people projected to die from malnutrition, cancer, malaria, air pollution, and extreme weather events. Meanwhile, the silent pandemic of antimicrobial resistance, which contributes to 5mn deaths annually, threatens to reverse a century of medical progress.

Against this backdrop,

the world is grappling with a profound mental health crisis. As our understanding of mental health disorders has deepened, it is now recognised that they are far more prevalent than previously thought. Notably, more than 700,000 people worldwide die by suicide each year.

While health is enshrined as a human right in the constitutions of 140 countries, more than 4bn people lack access to basic care, leaving them so vulnerable that they cannot afford to get sick. Investing in healthcare is thus the best insurance policy to have. The results speak for themselves: every dollar invested in the WHO generates a remarkable \$35 return in improved health outcomes. But the organisation's 194 member states currently contribute just \$0.30 per person annually to keep it afloat.

Closing the funding gap is crucial for enabling the WHO to respond to the next pandemic swiftly and effectively. Of the \$7.1bn it aims to raise, \$1.6bn will be used for expanding healthcare in low- and middle-income countries — equivalent to just \$0.13 per year from each of the 3bn people in the global middle class.

With adequate funding over the next four years, the WHO can address gender-based health disparities, which account for 75mn years of life lost each year, by tackling issues such as post-partum haemorrhage, the leading cause of maternal deaths. These funds will also accelerate the implementation of the global strategy to accelerate the elimination of cervical cancer. And they will help finance the organisation's Special Initiative for Mental Health, increasing support for the 1bn people living with mental health conditions. Altogether, fully funding the

WHO's programme of work for the next four years could prevent 40mn deaths by 2028, including 7.5mn deaths from climate-related causes, 6.5mn from noncommunicable diseases, and 5mn from infectious diseases.

Moreover, it could improve health outcomes for 6bn people and provide access to healthcare for 5bn individuals facing financial hardship as a result of out-of-pocket expenses.

The past few decades have shown what international co-operation, spearheaded by the WHO, can achieve. Co-ordinated global efforts have successfully eradicated smallpox, advanced the fight against tuberculosis, and reduced HIV deaths by 70% within 20 years. Over the past five years alone, it is estimated that 25 countries have eliminated at least one tropical disease, allowing the WHO to expand its efforts to eliminate 30 communicable diseases.

Just imagine what can be accomplished in the next four years. A fully funded WHO could protect the world from health emergencies, reduce gender-based disparities, eliminate many more diseases, bridge the mental-health treatment gap, combat antimicrobial resistance, and ensure that displaced people worldwide have access to essential medical services.

Achieving these goals depends on closing the current funding gap. In the face of what Martin Luther King, Jr, famously called the “fierce urgency of now,” the world cannot afford to wait. - Project Syndicate

• Gordon Brown, a former prime minister of the United Kingdom, is UN Special Envoy for Global Education and Chair of Education Cannot Wait.



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Maduro says opposition leader has fled Venezuela

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has claimed that opposition leader Maria Corina Machado has fled the country, making light of her alleged departure after presidential elections she denounced as fraudulent.

Machado has been in hiding in Venezuela since August, following a July election that Maduro claims to have won.

The opposition insists that its candidate, Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia, won the vote by a landslide - Machado was herself ruled ineligible to run by institutions loyal to the Maduro regime.

Gonzalez Urrutia is now in exile in Spain, but Machado had vowed to remain in Venezuela to continue the opposition's struggle.

"To her, who fled the country, don't tell anyone, she left the country, my sources tell me that she fled," Maduro said with a laugh on his television programme, without naming Machado directly.

Machado rejected the idea of following Gonzalez Urrutia into exile in an interview last month. - AFP

Zelensky invited to present 'victory plan' at EU summit

European Council President Charles Michel said yesterday that he has invited Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to present his "victory plan" to defeat Russia at a meeting of EU leaders this week. Zelensky has been seeking support from Kyiv's western allies as Russia's invasion of Ukraine grinds on through its third year.

Writing on social media site X, Michel said he had invited Zelensky "to the European Council summit on Thursday, 17 October to take stock of the latest developments of Russia's war against Ukraine and present his victory plan". Military support to Kyiv and strengthening Ukraine's battered energy sector are among the topics on the table as leaders from the EU's 27 nations meet in Brussels tomorrow. - AFP

Goal to end extreme poverty by 2030 'out of reach': World Bank

AFP
Washington

A global target of ending extreme poverty by 2030 is "out of reach", said the World Bank yesterday, adding that it could take three decades or more to do so.

"Global poverty reduction has slowed to a near standstill, with 2020-30 set to be a

lost decade," according to a new report assessing progress on eliminating poverty after the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

The world is experiencing serious setbacks after decades of progress, noted World Bank senior managing director Axel van Trotsenburg.

This comes amid overlapping challenges including slow economic growth, the pandemic, as well as climate shocks.

He warned that with these crises, "a

business-as-usual approach will no longer work".

Almost 700mn people, or 8.5% of the global population, live on less than \$2.15 daily - the threshold for extreme poverty.

This is set to remain at 7.3% in 2030.

Today, extreme poverty remains concentrated in countries with low growth and fragility, many in Sub-Saharan Africa.

And 44% of the world's population lives on below \$6.85 a day, which is the poverty

line for upper-middle-income countries.

"The number of people living under this poverty line has barely changed since 1990 due to population growth," the bank noted.

It added that "future poverty reduction requires economic growth that is less carbon emissions-intensive than in the past".

Nearly one in five people are expected to be hit by a severe weather shock in their lifetime, and will struggle to bounce back from it, according to the World Bank.

India's foreign minister in Pakistan for rare visit

AFP/Reuters
Islamabad

Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar landed in Pakistan yesterday for a Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO) summit, the first top diplomat from Delhi to visit the country's neighbour in nearly a decade.

Jaishankar and Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif greeted each other with a handshake at the start of an official dinner for the visiting leaders of the bloc.

The neighbouring governments have said that no bilateral meetings have been requested, and Jaishankar's visit will strictly follow the SCO schedule.

Islamabad is keen to project an image of stability and security while hosting the meeting of governments, after a rash of civic unrest in the capital and militant attacks elsewhere across Pakistan in recent weeks.

The country's popular opposition leader and former prime minister Imran Khan remains in jail on charges he says are designed to keep him from returning to power.

The city has been shut down for the two-day summit with more than 9,000 police officers deployed alongside security forces.

Roads have been blocked off, restaurants



In this handout photograph taken yesterday and released by Pakistan's Press Information Department, India's Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar (second left) is seen speaking with Pakistan's South Asia Director-General at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ilyas Nizami upon arrival at the Nur Khan Airbase in Rawalpindi. - AFP

closed and public holidays announced in an attempt to restrict movement in the capital and the neighbouring city of Rawalpindi.

The government has announced a three-day public holiday in Islamabad.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang and Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexey Overchuk, whose nations established the SCO, are also in town for the meeting between the bloc of 10 nations, which includes Belarus, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Sixteen more countries are affiliated as ob-

servers or "dialogue partners".

China and Russia have used the alliance to deepen their ties with Central Asian states and vie for influence in the region.

They have recently pitched the organisation as a competitor to the West.

The bloc claims to represent 40% of the world's population and about 30% of its GDP, but its members have diverse political systems and even open disagreements with one another.

Former Indian foreign minister Sushma Swaraj visited Pakistan in 2015, arriving for a summit on Afghanistan, while Modi also made a surprise visit to Pakistan that year, shortly after taking office for his first term, sparking short-lived hopes of a thaw in relations.

Pakistan's former foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was in Goa last year - also a rare visit - for an SCO meeting, where he and Jaishankar were involved in a verbal spat.

It was the first official visit by a senior Pakistani official to their eastern neighbour since 2016, but the two foreign ministers did not hold a one-on-one meeting.

The prime ministers of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Belarus and Mongolia - Akybek Zhaparov, Qohir Rasulzoda, Olzhas Bektenov, Roman Golovchenko and Luvsannamsrain Oyun-Erdene - also arrived yesterday.

Chinese PM inaugurates Pakistan airport

China's Premier Li Qiang took part in a ceremony during his Pakistan visit to inaugurate a Beijing-funded airport, located in a volatile region where Chinese interests are routinely targeted by separatists.

While Li did not travel to Balochistan, he "virtually" inaugurated Gwadar Airport at a ceremony held on Monday in the capital Islamabad, some 2,000km (1,240 miles) away.

The airport is next to Gwadar Port, the cornerstone project of the multi-billion dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that connects China's Xinjiang region to Pakistan's coast.

"China will continue to work with Pakistan to uphold the principle of planning together, building together and benefitting together," Li said at the ceremony alongside Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

An aviation official told AFP, on condition of anonymity, that the airport is yet to open for flights.

"The facility is now ready for operations, but it is not yet operational," he told AFP.

Li is on a four-day visit to Pakistan that began on Monday to hold bilateral talks.

He will also take part in the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation summit that Islamabad is hosting.

Beijing has been one of Islamabad's most reliable foreign partners, readily providing financial assistance to bail out its often struggling neighbour. - AFP

Harris holds 45%-42% lead over Trump: Reuters/Ipsos poll

Democratic Vice-President Kamala Harris held a marginal three-percentage-point lead over Republican Donald Trump - 45% to 42% - as the two stayed locked in a tight race to win the

November 5 US presidential election, a new Reuters/Ipsos poll found.

While the gap between the two remained steady compared with a Reuters/Ipsos poll conducted a

week earlier, the new poll, which closed on Sunday, gave signs that voters - particularly Democrats - might be more enthused about this year's election than they were ahead of the Novem-

ber 2020 presidential election when Democrat Joe Biden defeated Trump.

The latest Reuters/Ipsos poll surveyed 938 US adults online, nationwide. - Reuters

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