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Amir calls for closer GCC-EU ties, end to Gaza, Lebanon wars



His Highness the Amir chaired Qatar's delegation to GCC-EU Summit in Brussels yesterday. **Page 15**



His Highness the Amir with European Council president Charles Michel and European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen in Brussels yesterday.

Amir chairs Qatar's delegation to GCC-EU Summit • Urgent need for a comprehensive and just settlement of the Palestinian issue: Amir

QNA
Brussels

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani headed Qatar's delegation to the opening session of the Co-operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) and the European Union (EU), which was held yesterday at the Europa Building, the headquarters of the Union in the capital Brussels, in the friendly Kingdom of Belgium, in the presence of a number of Their Excellencies and Highnesses, heads of state and government, delegations and representatives of regional and international organisations.

His Highness the Amir gave a

speech, the following is its transcript: In the Name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful Your Excellencies and Highnesses, Honourable Audience, May peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you.

At the outset, I would like to greet you and express my gratitude to HE Secretary-General of the Co-operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf Jassem Al-budaiwi, and HE President of the European Council Charles Michel for their diligent efforts in organising this summit.

The convening of this first Gulf-European summit coincides with the State of Qatar's presidency of the current session of the Gulf Co-operation Council. There is no doubt that this summit is the

culmination of tireless efforts over the past years and reflects the mutual interest and keenness of both the GCC and EU to strengthen co-operation, dialogue, and co-ordination collectively, and to support existing communication channels at the bilateral level between the states of the two sides.

The Gulf Arab states and the European Union have shared deep-rooted historical relations and ties, which have been strengthened over the decades through mutual interests and adherence to principles such as respect for international law, the promotion of international peace and security, respect for state sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs, and achieving prosperity for all.

To Page 15

Amir meets president of European Parliament



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani met yesterday in Brussels with President of the European Parliament Roberta Metsola, on the sidelines of the First Summit of the Co-operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) and the European Union (EU). The meeting dealt with bilateral relations and ways to enhance them, in addition to the latest regional and international developments of shared concern, especially the situation in the Gaza Strip, the occupied Palestinian territories and Lebanon, along with several topics on the summit agenda. The meeting was attended by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, a host of members of the official delegation accompanying His Highness the Amir, alongside a number of members of the European Parliament. **(QNA)**



His Highness the Amir with European Council president Charles Michel and European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen in Brussels yesterday.

Amir, Belgian PM discuss ties, Gaza, Lebanon developments



QNA
Brussels

Additionally, the meeting discussed the most prominent topics on the summit agenda.

The meeting was attended by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, HE the Chief of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Saoud bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabbi, HE the Minister of Commerce and Industry Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Qassim al-Thani, HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi, alongside a host of members of the official delegation accompanying the Amir.

The meeting dealt with bilateral relations and ways to strengthen them, in addition to sharing perspectives on the latest issues, as well as regional and global developments of shared concern, especially developments in the Gaza Strip, the occupied Palestinian territories and Lebanon.

It was also attended by a number of senior officials from the Belgian side.

Cabinet praises Amir's speech at Shura Council

The Cabinet praised the speech of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani on Tuesday at the inauguration of the fourth ordinary session of the first legislative term, corresponding to the 53rd annual session of the Shura Council. The Cabinet expressed pride in the vision of His Highness the Amir regarding adopting the results of the Cabinet's study concerning the necessary constitutional and legislative amendments, with the aim of enhancing national unity, equal citizenship, social responsibility, establishing justice, and achieving equality in rights and duties among citizens, and protecting public liberties under the rule of law. **Page 15**

Food, medicines running out in Gaza hospitals

Palestinian health officials called yesterday for a humanitarian corridor to three hospitals in northern Gaza that have come close to collapse as Israeli troops have cut off the area during almost two weeks of heavy fighting against resistance movement Hamas. Doctors at the Kamal Adwan, Al-Awda and the Indonesian hospitals have refused to leave their patients despite evacuation orders issued by the Israeli military at the start of a major push into the Jabalia area of northern Gaza 12 days ago. "We are calling on the international community, the Red Cross and the World Health Organisation to play their humanitarian role by opening up a corridor towards our healthcare system," said Hussam Abu Safiya, director of Kamal Adwan Hospital.

Shura committee reviews articles for amendment



The committee concerned with studying the amendment of articles in the Constitution at the Shura Council held its first meeting yesterday, chaired by HE the Speaker of the Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem. The committee reviewed the draft constitutional amendments proposed by the Amiri Diwan, and decided to complete its study of the aforementioned draft in its next meeting. **(QNA)**



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Minister of environment takes part in ministerial meeting of Middle East Green Initiative in Saudi

HE the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie has participated in the ministerial meeting of the Middle East Green Initiative held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Addressing the meeting, Dr al-Subaie underscored Qatar's unwavering commitment to supporting the Middle East Green Initiative with the aim of fostering regional and global partnerships and exploring new and innovative solutions for environment conservation. He underlined that such an initiative is a first-of-its-kind alliance that offers an ambitious and clear-cut road map for the regional climate action, highlighting that it further consolidates the joint efforts and pursues a unified approach to address effects of climate change and its consequences on the countries of the region.

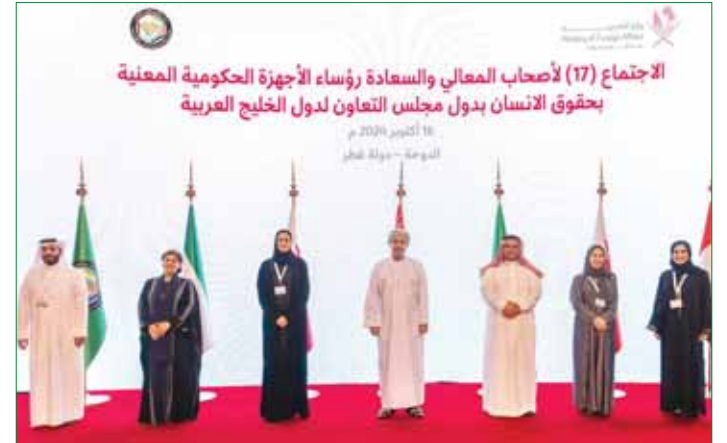


Dr al-Subaie shed the light on Qatar's steadfast efforts devoted to achieving the sustainable development, including the National Action Plan for Climate Change that primarily aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25% in all sectors by 2030. He affirmed that over 35 initiatives have been identified to reduce the emissions, alongside

over 300 initiatives to adapt to effects of climate change. HE the minister highlighted that Qatar has announced a project to plant 10mn trees by 2030 with the aim of enhancing biodiversity and benefiting from the Treated sewage effluent (TSE) in irrigation, optimising air quality, as well as expanding the green spaces and reducing gas

emissions. He pointed out that the move underscores Qatar's adherence to the international conventions, such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, and to bolster the initiatives of Qatar in mitigating the effects of climate change, along with the sustainability efforts. (QNA)

Qatar hosts meeting of human rights officials in GCC countries



Qatar hosted yesterday the 17th meeting of the heads of government agencies concerned with human rights in the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries. The meeting was chaired by Acting Director of the Human Rights Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Reem bint Ali Ibrahim al-Derham. The meeting discussed joint co-operation between the GCC countries to develop policies and practices that guarantee human dignity and protect human rights in various fields, embodying their belief in the importance of human rights and their keenness to consolidate their values. (QNA)

Doha Forum, WHF sign MoU to strengthen collaboration on humanitarian diplomacy

QNA
London

Doha Forum (DF) and the World Humanitarian Forum (WHF) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) yesterday to enhance the role of humanitarian diplomacy through closer collaboration and dialogue. The MoU was signed ahead of a high-level panel discussion, entitled 'Addressing Global Crises: The Role of Humanitarian Diplomacy in a Fragmented Era', held at the UK's Houses of Parliament.

The event brought together influential leaders and experts to discuss the urgent need for effective humanitarian strategies to address global crises in today's increasingly fragmented world.

In this regard, Executive Di-

rector of Doha Forum, Mubarak al-Kuwari said that "this collaboration demonstrates the shared commitment of Doha Forum and the World Humanitarian Forum to tackling today's global challenges through meaningful dialogue and strategic cooperation on humanitarian issues."

For her part, Doha Forum General Manager, Maha al-Kuwari, said that "humanitarian diplomacy plays a crucial role in bridging divides, fostering understanding, and finding actionable solutions. Doha Forum embraces this opportunity to engage in dialogue with global leaders and experts to explore how we can work together to build a better future for all."

In her opening speech during the panel discussion, CEO of the WHF, Ferayze Ozfescioglu, said that "today's event is providing a



platform for dialogue on the role of diplomacy in addressing today's pressing global humanitarian challenges. We are delighted to partner with Doha Forum and join

forces to transform the conversations into action."

Featured panellists included HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Lolwah bint

Rashid AlKhater, Minister for International Development and the Minister for Women and Equalities and Minister for Development at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the UK Anneliese Dodds, and former minister of state at the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon.

The MoU and panel discussion was held ahead of DF's annual flagship event scheduled to be held in Doha on Dec 7-8, 2024, under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani.

The WHF will attend this year's event, which will feature a number of high-level sessions on humanitarian diplomacy. The event will bring together global leaders, policymakers, thinkers and influencers

to address the world's most pressing issues, under the theme "The Innovation Imperative". Doha Forum's mission is to provide a leading platform for policymakers, business leaders, civil society representatives, and other stakeholders to come together, exchange ideas, and work towards solutions for the most pressing issues facing our planet. Its values are rooted in integrity, understanding, and innovation, valuing diverse perspectives while striving to foster a culture of mutual respect.

Doha Forum last convened in Doha in December 2023, bringing together more than 4,000 guests in Qatar, including more than 270 speakers from 120 countries, who contributed to more than 80 sessions across the two-day event. Doha Forum is proud to be a carbon neutral event.



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Diplomat shares experiences in 2nd edition of Qatari Treasures

The Center for Empowerment and Care of the Elderly (Ehsan), part of the Qatar Social Work Foundation under the Ministry of Social Development and Family, organised the 2nd edition of the 'Qatari Treasures', which features prominent Qatari figures known for their achievements.

In this edition, held under the patronage of HE the Minister of Social Development and Family Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad, the Center hosted HE Special Envoy of Minister of Foreign Affairs for Climate Change and Sustainability Bader bin Omar al-Dafa.

During the dialogue session, HE the Special Envoy addressed several topics related to his work as a diplomat, sharing his rich experience in the diplomatic field, the challenges he faced throughout his career, and his strategies for enhancing international relations and representing Qatar on the global stage.

He also discussed the social and cultural dimensions that influence diplomatic work and how to achieve a balance between national and international commitments.

The event concluded with the Assistant Undersecretary for Family Affairs at the Ministry of Social Development and Family Sheikhha Sheikhha bint Jassim al-



HE Bader bin Omar al-Dafa was honoured in recognition of his efforts and notable contributions in the fields of diplomacy, climate change, and sustainability.

Thani honouring HE Bader bin Omar al-Dafa in recognition of his efforts and notable contributions in the fields of diplomacy, climate change, and sustainability.

The 'Qatari Treasures' programme provides an opportunity for youth to engage directly with the guest and learn closely about their achievements to create a channel of communication and interaction between young people and experienced individuals. It also allows them to discover the guest's experiences, key milestones in their career, and the skills that contributed to

their development as a leadership figure, so that new generations can benefit in their professional journeys.

Additionally, the programme focuses on raising awareness among community members about the rights and various achievements of the elderly, working to change societal perceptions towards them. It aims to highlight their accomplishments and contributions while fostering communication between different generations, as well as seeking possible solutions to bridge the gap between generations. (QNA)

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Health minister holds talks with Sudanese, Egyptian and Somali counterparts



HE the Minister of Public Health Dr Hanan Mohamed al-Kuwari met yesterday with Sudanese Federal Minister of Health Dr Haitham Muhammad Ibrahim who is visiting the country to participate in the 71st session of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean. The meeting discussed areas of co-operation between Qatar and Sudan, as well as ways to enhance and develop these collaborations in the health sector. They also addressed key topics being discussed at the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean.



HE the Minister of Public Health Dr Hanan Mohamed al-Kuwari met separately yesterday with Egyptian Deputy Prime Minister for Human Development and Minister of Health and Population Dr Khaled Abdel Ghaffar and Somali Minister of Health and Social Welfare Dr Ali Haji Abubakar, who are visiting the country to participate in the meetings of the 71st session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean. The two meetings addressed aspects of co-operation between Qatar and Egypt and Somalia and ways to strengthen and develop them in health fields. They also addressed key topics discussed in the meetings of the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean. (QNA)



Visit Qatar, Es'hailSat join forces for launch of television channel

Visit Qatar and Es'hailSat, the Qatar Satellite Company, have signed an agreement that includes the launch of a dedicated Visit Qatar television channel which showcases the country as one of the world's leading travel destinations.

The channel can be viewed on the Es'hail-2 satellite, broadcasted at the 26° East hotspot, which has a large number of viewers due to its coverage of the entire Middle East and all of North Africa.

The partnership agreement was signed by Visit Qatar CEO engineer Abdulaziz Ali al-Mawlawi and Es'hailSat CEO Ali bin Ahmed al-Kuwari. Hotels throughout Qatar will feature the Visit Qatar channel on the TV of all guest rooms, giving visitors the opportunity to explore the country's tourism offerings and stay updated on ongoing events.

In a press statement, engineer al-Mawlawi said: "Qatar is an exciting global travel destination and has been receiving millions of visitors annually from across the globe over the past few years.

This partnership with Es'hailSat for a dedicated tourism TV channel will showcase the diversity of the country's tourism offering and promote its robust calendar of events."

Al-Kuwari said: "Es'hailSat is delighted to power Visit Qatar's TV channel and showcase the most attractive travel and tourist destinations across Qatar via its sat-

ellite hotspot. "We believe that Es'hailSat's experience in providing advanced satellite services to the public and private sector in State of the Qatar, in addition to the premier broadcasters and enterprises across Middle East and North Africa, aligns perfectly with Visit Qatar's objective of enabling development of the tourism sector through new initiatives."

Through partnerships and ongoing initiatives, Visit Qatar aims to strengthen Qatar's position as a premier, family-friendly tourist destination, distinguished by its service excellence.

Visit Qatar's mission is to elevate the visitor experience and to promote and increase international visitor demand in Qatar by showcasing the country's rich culture and thrilling attractions, as well as organising events that attract tourists from all over the world.

Es'hailSat, which has been providing satellite, broadcast, teleport and managed services from Qatar for 15 years, has two satellites at 25.5/26 East together with a 50,000sq m teleport facility which ensures reliable and independent connectivity services. The Visit Qatar channel is now part of the Es'hail-2 channels bouquet through the following details: Orbital Position: 26°E

Satellite: Es'hail-2, Transponder Number: F02, Downlink Frequency: 10,730 MHz, Polarisation: Vertical (V), MODCOD: 8PSK.



Liquidation Announcement First

Based on the Extraordinary General Assembly Resolution

to Liquidate

EC Harris – Qatar W.L.L.

(the "Company")

(Under Voluntary Liquidation)

The Liquidator - Rami Mohammad Ali Qudah

Deloitte & Touche – Qatar Branch

Announce the commencement of the liquidation of

EC Harris – Qatar W.L.L.

Commercial Registration No. (45016)

Any party who has any claims with this Company should send a registered letter, including all supporting documents to P.O.Box: 431, Doha – Qatar within 45 days from the date of this publication.

Minister chairs session on emergencies in the region of Eastern Mediterranean

HE the Minister of Public Health Dr Hanan Mohamed al-Kuwari, also the chairperson of the 71st Session of the Regional Committee of the World Health Organisation (WHO) for the Eastern Mediterranean, presided yesterday over a special session focused on the latest developments concerning emergencies in the region.

During the session, members of the Regional Committee reviewed critical developments regarding the health and humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, the ongoing emergencies across the region, and the latest developments from the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body.

Speaking on behalf of Qatar during the meeting, Dr Salih Ali al-Marri, Assistant Minister for Health Affairs, stressed the critical need to protect medical personnel and healthcare systems in countries devastated by disasters and conflicts, including the occupied Palestinian territories, Lebanon, Sudan, and Yemen.

Dr al-Marri stated: "In the occupied Palestinian territories, hospitals and medical clinics face immense challenges due to the blockade and repeated attacks. The doctors and nurses there are exposed to serious risks and are struggling to provide healthcare amid severe shortages of medicines and equipment, alongside the constant threat to their



Members of the Regional Committee reviewed critical developments regarding the health and humanitarian situation.

lives." Dr al-Marri highlighted: "The situation in Sudan and Yemen is similarly dire. Healthcare infrastructure has been destroyed, and access to medical care has become a matter of life or death. We also cannot overlook the situation in Lebanon, where medical personnel face threats and are prevented from carrying out their vital work amidst ongoing aggression."

He emphasised: "Qatar firmly believes in the importance of supporting medical personnel in these afflicted countries. Qatar has provided significant humanitarian and financial aid to support the health sector in many affected countries. This includes constructing and equipping hospitals, supplying medicines and medical equipment, and providing

urgent aid during crises. In Gaza, for instance, Qatar has contributed to improving healthcare infrastructure and ensuring the continuity of essential health services for the civilian population, which were unfortunately destroyed last year by the Israeli occupation forces."

He called on the international community, saying: "We in Qatar call on the international community to seek an immediate cessation of the war in the occupied Palestinian territories and Lebanon, and to commit to providing legal and physical protection for healthcare workers, while ensuring and respecting international laws that prohibit the targeting of medical facilities and health sector personnel."

Dr al-Marri stressed the importance of joint efforts to strengthen healthcare systems adding: "We emphasise that the protection of medical personnel is not an individual responsibility, but the collective duty of the entire international community. Qatar will remain committed to supporting these noble humanitarian efforts."

The members of the committee reviewed the importance of ensuring unhindered access to medical products during pandemics, the need for mandatory technology transfer, and the establishment of a new pooled funding mechanism for pandemic preparedness and response.

HMC team of experts performs complex reconstructive surgery on Gaza patient

The Plastic Surgery Department at Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) has achieved a new milestone by successfully performing the first of its procedure using microsurgical reconstructive techniques for flap-based perforating arteries. The surgery was performed on a patient from Gaza who had been severely debilitated by the significant loss of back tissue, which had left her unable to sit or move. This procedure brought relief after prolonged suffering due to tissue shortage.

Dr Attallah Hamada Hamouda, consultant and director of the Plastic Surgery Department at HMC, said: "This successful surgery is the result of the surgical expertise in the team as well as the adoption of international standards while using advanced medical techniques.

The plastic surgery department is distinguished by its multiple and continuous surgical innovations that significantly contribute to improving the quality of healthcare provided to all patients."

Dr Salim Nouredin al-Laham, associate consultant and leader of the surgical team who performed the surgery stated: "Considering the affected area and the need to use a number of



The team which performed the first of its procedure using microsurgical reconstructive techniques for flap-based perforating arteries.

flap-based perforating arteries in an innovative and advanced method, the reconstruction was successful without causing any damage to other tissue."

Dr al-Laham further explained that after reconstructive surgery and physiotherapy, the patient regained her normal life and was able to walk and sit without experiencing any pain. The patient originally arrived at HMC in a deteriorated health condition suffering from a severe shortage of back tissue, burns around the thigh area and fungal sepsis caused by lack of treatment for her wounds over a long period of time. Prior to the operation, the patient had a surgical debridement to remove damaged tissue and was placed on a high protein diet.

Al-Laham said: "HMC's advanced and world-class capacity played a significant role in facilitating such a surgery. The Plastic Surgery Department has significantly developed and achieved major steps towards treating complicated cases, with most recently the 'Qatar Flap', a surgical innovation in microsurgical reconstructive hand surgery."

Dr Sequina al-Saigel, plastic surgery specialist at HMC who also took part in the surgery, added: "We are proud to contribute to this important surgery which enables patients from Gaza to regain their functional abilities. The wounds of many Gaza patients are extremely complicated and require us to adapt our surgical methods."

QCS, HMC equip patient rooms with smart TVs

As part of its ongoing efforts to support patients and enhance their experience during treatment, Qatar Cancer Society (QCS) has equipped patient rooms in the Medical Care and Research Center at HMC with smart TVs. Their specifications have been approved by the Medical Equipment Engineering Department at HMC, ensuring patient safety during their use.

This operation was overseen by Dr Mohammed Salem, CEO and medical director of the National Center for Cancer Care and Research at HMC, and Huda al-Yafai, head of the Treatment Support Department at QCS. Dr Salem stated: "We thank the Qatar Cancer Society for its efforts in providing support to cancer patients in collaboration with HMC, as this is done through several social and recreational programmes aimed at improving the quality of life for patients



HMC and QCS officials collaborated in the initiative.

within and outside the hospital environment." Al-Yafai noted: "This initiative reflects our strong commitment to supporting cancer patients. We hope these screens will improve patients' psychological well-being and provide a more comfortable environment for them. We are dedicated to offering all possible support to alleviate their suffering."

She added: "This step comes as part of

strengthening the partnership between the Qatar Cancer Society and HMC. The society seeks to utilise all available means to support patients and improve their quality of life. The society emphasises the importance of psychological and social support, believing that enhancing the surrounding environment can significantly impact patients' mental health."



Qatari Cultural Week opens in Tajikistan

QNA
Dushanbe

HE the Minister of Culture Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-Thani yesterday opened the Qatari Cultural Week in Tajikistan.

In a ceremony held at the Ayni Opera and Ballet Theatre in Dushanbe, the event was attended by Tajikistan's Minister of Culture Matlubakhon Sattoriyen, Qatar's ambassador to Tajikistan

Mubarak bin Abdulrahman al-Nasr, a number of ministers, ambassadors, intellectuals, artists and the public.

The event comes within the framework of the cultural co-operation between Qatar and Tajikistan to highlight the Qatari heritage and culture and promote the cultural exchange between the two nations.

Speaking to Qatar News Agency (QNA), Director of Public Relations and Communications Department at the Ministry of

Culture Ahmed Ali al-Yafei affirmed that holding the Qatari cultural week in Tajikistan comes within the framework of bolstering cultural ties and forging further cultural bonds between the two nations.

Al-Yafei added that through these events, the ministry intends to beef up the cultural exchange, asserting that the activities held during this event underscore the depth of fraternal relations between Qatar and Tajikistan.

The three-day events feature

a variegated models of the Qatari heritage and mores, in addition to shining a spotlight on a variety of activities such as gypsum carving, Qatari Bisht, different types of embroidery, Sadu weaving, henna, traditional clothing, and popular dishes, along with a collection of Qatari publications on heritage. The house of poetry' and the Qatari traditional dance (Ardha) as well as sea songs that reflect aspects of social life heritage, in addition to a musical performance by the artist Mansour al-Mahndi.

Minister of Culture meets Tajik counterpart



HE the Minister of Culture Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-Thani met in Dushanbe yesterday with Tajikistan's Minister of Culture Matlubakhon Sattoriyen. The meeting discussed aspects of co-operation between the two countries in the cultural fields and ways to support and develop them. This took place on the sidelines of the Qatari Cultural Week in Tajikistan. (QNA)



AlKhater in London meetings



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater met in London yesterday with UK Minister for International Development Anneliese Dodds. The meeting discussed co-operation relations between the two countries and ways to support and enhance them, especially in the field of development in the Gaza Strip, Lebanon and Syria. They also discussed projects included in the joint development portfolio between Qatar and the United Kingdom, in addition to the latest preparations for the upcoming Qatar-British Strategic Dialogue.



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater met with Director of Global Health at the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office David Whineray. The meeting discussed global health issues, especially multilateral financing, ways to strengthen health systems and prepare for epidemics. In addition, they discussed a number of topics of common interest.



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater met in London yesterday with Special Envoy to the Horn of Africa and Red Sea at the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Alison Blackburne, on the sidelines of the World Humanitarian Forum. The meeting discussed the latest developments in the Horn of Africa and the developmental co-operation in Sudan, Somalia, and Ethiopia. In addition, they discussed a number of topics of common concern. Qatar's ambassador to the UK Sheikh Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Saud al-Thani attended the above three meetings. (QNA)

Pakistan International School Qatar (PISQ) Renews Partnership with the British Council



who has been instrumental in fostering cultural and educational ties between Qatar and the UK for over 13 years. His dedication to promoting educational exchange was highlighted during the ceremony.

The re-signing of the MOU signifies a deepened commitment between PISQ and the British Council, with the continuation of vital services for students and the Pakistani community in Qatar. Under this agreement, PISQ will continue to support the British Council by hosting both on-paper and computer-based IELTS tests. Additionally, the British Council will provide ongoing support to PISQ with nearly 90 free slots for IELTS practice tests, along with study materials and on-campus IELTS registration for students.

In his address, Dr. Kotoub emphasized the importance of international collaboration and the mutual benefits of cultural exchange. Mr. Nimrod D'Silva, Accounts Relationship Manager at the British Council, was also recognized for his pivotal role in strengthening the bond between the two institutions.

The event concluded with the official signing of the MOU by Mr. Arsalan Khan, Dr. Waseem Kotoub, and PISQ Principal Syed Asif Ali Shah. This partnership will continue to empower students, providing them with valuable opportunities to achieve their academic and professional goals through IELTS.

Pakistan International School Qatar (PISQ) proudly hosted a momentous ceremony today to mark the re-signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the British Council. This renewed partnership further cements the relationship between the two institutions, which began when PISQ became an IELTS testing center in 2023.

The event was graced by the presence of Mr. Arsalan Khan Tanoli, Community Welfare Attaché from the Pakistan Embassy, who extended his support for the collaboration between PISQ and the British Council. The school also welcomed Dr. Waseem Kotoub, Country Director for the British Council, a distinguished leader

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QFFD top official meets Barbados minister



Acting Director General of the Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD), Sultan bin Ahmed al-Aseeri met yesterday with Minister of Tourism and International Transport of Barbados Ian Gooding-Edghill. The meeting discussed ways of co-operation in international transport. (QNA)

QNA chief meets UK envoy



HE the Director-General of Qatar News Agency (QNA) Ahmed bin Saeed al-Rumaihi met yesterday with UK ambassador to Qatar Neerav Patel. During the meeting, the two sides discussed aspects of co-operation between the two countries in the media field. (QNA)

CRA launches public consultation on Postal Services Regulation Draft

The Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA) has launched a public consultation on the newly drafted Postal Services Regulation in line with its mission to support a transparent and competitive postal market.

The draft regulation was designed to provide clarity on the various roles and responsibilities of postal service providers in Qatar. It is now open for comments and feedback from stakeholders and other inter-

ested parties. The consultation period will close on October 24. The draft Postal Services Regulation addresses the categories of services that will be available in Qatar, which include both Universal Services and Exclusive Services. The new regulatory framework not only outlines the responsibilities of the Public Postal Operator but also clarifies the licensing requirements for both domestic and international courier services. The new framework also

ensures that service providers understand their roles within the postal sector and adhere to standards laid down by CRA per the Postal Services Regulation Law No (15) of 2023.

The new draft regulation will provide a clear distinction between Universal Services and Exclusive Services. This regulation will support defining services that are open for competition and those that are exclusively provided by the Public Postal Operator, ensuring a balanced

postal ecosystem that benefits both consumers and service providers.

The new regulation also highlights the necessity for all existing postal service providers to apply for the appropriate licenses under the newly categorised services. These changes will set clear standards of service, and promote transparency and consistency in the sector, which in turn will benefit businesses and consumers alike.

This consultation ensures that

all stakeholders are allowed to share their views on the regulation. Stakeholders' input is significantly critical in building a framework that will foster competition, protect consumer rights, and promote efficiency across the sector. This is part of CRA's commitment to establishing a postal market that aligns with Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Digital Agenda 2030, making certain that reliable services for all consumers are provided while upholding

fair market practices. CRA invites all interested parties and stakeholders to submit their comments and feedback on the draft regulation via e-mail to postalinfo@cra.gov.qa before the consultation period ends on Thursday, October 24.

The draft Postal Services Regulation and the consultation guidelines are available on <https://www.cra.gov.qa/en/document/public-consultation---postal-services-regulations>

QC opens multi-facility village in Ghana

Qatar Charity (QC), with the support of donors in Qatar, has inaugurated the 'Love and Peace Village' in Ghana's Kissi in the Central Region, a statement said yesterday. The project includes two schools, each consisting of six classrooms, a three-storey residential building to house students and orphans, a clinic managed by the Ghana Health Service and upgraded to a health centre, a mosque and four new wells.

Over 40 houses have been constructed to accommodate health-care workers and educators, enabling the village's services to be fully staffed and operational.

Economic empowerment projects are a central focus of the 'Love and Peace Village', which promotes food security and sustainable agricultural practices. The village also offers additional projects, such as tricycle services



and a bakery, providing the residents opportunities for income generation and self-reliance.

Hasan Owda, director of QC's Office in Ghana, explained that the 'Love and Peace Village' serves as a model of sustainable community building, with its comprehensive approach to addressing the educational, economic, religious, and healthcare needs of the beneficiaries. "This initiative supports Ghana's Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring that areas like Kissi have the tools and resources nec-

essary to thrive," he added. Martin Sumani Baaku, director of Health in Kissi, expressed his gratitude for the healthcare facility, acknowledging QC's efforts in supporting Ghana's health sector. The inauguration of the 'Love and Peace Village' comes just a month after QC launched a series of development projects in Ghana. These include a multi-service centre in Inswanu in the Eastern Region, an orphanage and school in the Prampram district, and the Dar Al Salam Model Village.

Indian university chief to visit Qatar

MIE SPPU Institute of Higher Education Qatar, the home of Savitribai Phule Pune University in India, is preparing to receive the Vice-Chancellor of the University in India, Prof Dr Suresh Gosavi from October 19 to 21, a statement said yesterday.

The agenda for the visit is to strengthen the academic programmes offered by the Institute in Qatar, its academic quality management and its examination management in line with the high academic standards of the parent University, it was explained.

Prof Dr Gosavi will be accompanied on his maiden visit to Qatar by the ex-Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr Nitin Karmalkar. During the visit, the Vice-Chancellor is scheduled to meet the higher authorities in the field of higher education in Qatar and Qatar Uni-



Prof Dr Suresh Gosavi

research standards of the parent university.

The Institute has admitted a fresh batch of close to 200 students in its undergraduate and post-graduate programmes in the academic session that commenced in September 2024 bringing the total number of enrolled students to approximately 500.

"We are looking forward for this great opportunity for our academic community both within and outside of the institute to interact and learn from great educational luminaries like Prof Dr Suresh Gosavi and Prof Dr Nitin Karmalkar," said Yasir Nainar president of the Institute in Qatar.

This visit will also help launch new courses and guide the academic faculty to deliver the existing courses in the new era of being industry-focused, added Prof B B Nath, the director of the Institute.

ANNOUNCEMENT

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QCAA holds meeting with civil aviation authorities of Central Asian countries



The General Civil Aviation Authority (QCAA) yesterday held a joint meeting with the civil aviation authorities of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan, in the Uzbek city of Samarkand, with a delegation headed by Mohammed bin Faleh al-Hajri, who is in charge of managing the work of QCAA. The meeting brought together the Director-General of the Civil Aviation Agency in Uzbekistan Tahir Nazarov, Director of the Civil Aviation Agency in Tajikistan Nazarzoda Habibullo Temur, Director General of the State Civil Aviation Agency (SCAA) of the Kyrgyz Republic Daniyar Bostonov, alongside member of the board of director of Kazakhstan Aviation Administration Saltanat Tompieva. The meeting discussed avenues of bolstering co-operation ties in civil aviation field and exploring prospects of advancing the strategic partnership. (QNA)

Dodge, Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Kia models recalled

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), in co-operation with United Cars Almana, has announced the recall of Dodge Ram 1500, 2019/2021-2024 models, over a possible malfunction in the ABS control module software, which may disable the Electronic Stability Control system. The MoCI, in co-operation with Nasser Bin Khaled and Sons Automobiles, announced the recall of Mercedes C-Class and E-Class, 2024 model, as the electronic ignition lock control unit software does not meet the factory specification, possibly causing engine not starting and display not responding. The MoCI, in co-operation with Alfordan Automobiles, announced the recall of BMW R 18, R 18 Classic, R 18 B, R 18 Transcontinental, and R18 Roctane, 2021-2024 model, as insufficient sealing of the reverser control unit may result in moisture penetration causing corrosion of contacts. The MoCI, in co-operation with Al-Attiya Motors and Trading Company, also announced the recall

of Kia EV6, 2024 model, as the Integrated Charging Control Unit (ICCU) may become damaged over time from transient high voltage and thermal cycling. A damaged ICCU may not be able to charge the 12-volt battery which can discharge gradually while driving. The MoCI said the recall campaign comes within the framework of its ongoing efforts to protect consumers and ensure that car dealers follow up on vehicle defects and repairs. The MoCI said it will co-ordinate with the dealer to follow up on the maintenance and repair works and will communicate with customers to ensure that the necessary repairs are carried out. The MoCI urged all customers to report any violations to its Consumer Protection and Anti-Commercial Fraud Department, which processes complaints, inquires and suggestions through the following channels: Call Center: 16001, e-mail: info@moci.gov.qa, social media channels @mociqatar, and mobile application MOCIQatar available on iPhone and Android devices.

Katara exhibition to focus on innovations and science

The Cultural Village Foundation – Katara, in collaboration with Maps International, has announced the upcoming Katara Astronomy Exhibition, part of the Katara Space Science Programme. The event, titled "Innovations and Science Shaping the Future from Idea to Creativity," will be held from October 24-26.

This exhibition aims to provide a unique platform for students from schools and universities to showcase their creativity and ambitions in science and technology. It seeks to engage young minds in the exploration of cutting-edge scientific developments while enhancing their participation in a significant scientific forum. The exhibition offers a valuable opportunity for participants to demonstrate their talents, exchange ideas, and deepen their passion for space and astronomy. The exhibition will inspire youth and science enthusiasts alike, fostering an environment that encourages innovation, curiosity, and critical thinking. This initiative is part of Katara's broader mission to cultivate a culture of innovation that will serve the community for generations to come.

Participants are expected to present scientific models grounded in innovation, with topics ranging from space exploration, artificial intelligence, and robotics to machine learning, planetary systems, and space travel. The exhibition will also feature several competitions, including awards for the Best Comprehensive Scientific Model, Most Innovative Design, and Best Use of Technology. (QNA)



NOTICE

City Center and Al Khor Branches of Masraf Al Rayan will be permanently closed, as of Thursday, 21 November 2024.

You can continue to enjoy our banking services through Umm Lekhba branch or any of Masraf Al Rayan branches.

Masraf Al Rayan Internet Banking and Mobile Banking services are available 24/7.

We apologize for any inconvenience caused.

Safari Group's new hypermarket inaugurated in Birkat Al Awamer

The Safari Group of Companies yesterday opened a new hypermarket in Birkat Al Awamer.

Safari Group chairman Hamad Dafer A A al-Ahbabi, chairman Aboobaker Madapat, managing directors Zainul Abideen and Shaheen Backer and director Shahid Backer, along with other management representatives inaugurated the new store.

Safari has lined up two mega promotions to mark the opening of its new branch, a statement said. For every purchase worth QR50, customers can participate in the draw for a chance to win a QR100,000 cash prize and three MG ZS 2024 model cars through e-raffle coupons.

The first prize of QR50,000, second prize of QR25,000, third prize of QR10,000, fourth prize of QR5,000, fifth prize of QR3,000 and sixth prize of QR2,000 are for one winner each while the seventh prize of QR1,000 will be awarded to five winners.

The promotion runs until December 29, 2024. The second mega promotion offers customers a chance to win three MG ZS 2024 model cars when they spend QR50. Winners will be selected in three rounds. The first draw will be held on November 14, second draw on December 16 and the final draw on January 14, 2025. Both promotions are exclusively available at Safari's Birkat Al Awamer hypermarket.

The new hypermarket offers a wide range of options. From grocery, fruits, vegetables, fish and meat to apparel, footwear, health and beauty products, electronics and IT, Safari's new outlet offers products of all well-known brands to customers 'at the most attractive prices', it was explained.

Among the main attractions are iLife Z Air Notebook for QR349, a 32-inch Silverdome TV for QR159, Ferix High Pressure Washer for QR89, a 700gm pack of Perdix Frozen chicken for QR6, a three-piece cookware set for QR39 and a 12-inch bicycle for QR69.

"The Safari Group of Companies is an industry network envisioned to serve the consumer needs of both nationals and expatriates in Qatar. Safari's motto is to deliver quality goods to customers at competitive prices.



"Safari is committed to providing a unique shopping experience, and numerous art, sports and cultural events have already been held at all Safari outlets. In addition to shopping and enjoying music, the Safari offers customers the opportunity to meet their favourite stars in person through movie promotions and musical evenings.

"Apart from this, various competitions such as arm wrestling, tug of war, drawing contests for children, fun games, photography competitions and cooking contests for both men and women are also held. Safari has always maintained a vibrant presence in all aspects of art and culture. "Safari's promotions are unique and unmatched by anyone else. In 2005, during the inauguration of Safari Hypermarket on Salwa Road, 1kg of gold was presented as a gift. Safari's prize schemes have produced many winners. Notably, Safari made history by offering the first prize of QR1mn in Qatar's retail sector, along with many cash prizes.

"Safari has always stood out by offering gifts such as gold, SUVs such as Toyota Land Cruiser, Nissan Patrol, Toyota Fortuner, sedan cars and many more."

The other branches of Safari Hypermarket are in Abu Hamour, Salwa Road, Al Khor, Barwa Village and the Industrial Area.



Bang & Olufsen launches second special edition Ferrari Collection



The Ferrari Collection Beovision Theatre & Beolab 50.

Danish soundcraft meets Italian flair as Bang & Olufsen, represented in Qatar by Modern Home, announced its second Special Edition Ferrari Collection, revealing three new masterworks.

For the made-to-order collection, Bang & Olufsen has reimagined its Beolab 50 speaker, Beosound Theatre Soundbar solution and Beovision Theatre TV solution, a statement said yesterday.

The design integrates Ferrari's charcoal Grigio Corsa colourway, combined with a striking shade of red to create an unmistakable connection to the motorsport icon and the first Ferrari collection launched in 2023.

The new Special Edition Ferrari Collection will be available in Qatar exclusively at the Bang & Olufsen store at Lagoona Mall in a made-to-order setup.

"Both Ferrari and Bang & Olufsen have always strived for the most powerful experience possible in the pursuit of unstoppable performance. For our second collection together, we wanted to pay tribute to aluminium, which is a hallmark material of both our brands," says Bang & Olufsen CEO Kristian Tear. "The result is pioneering sound and vision that blurs the line between Italian passion and Danish elegance."

Both brands share a passion for aluminium, which is used for the chassis of Ferrari sports cars and Bang & Olufsen's speakers thanks to its natural properties that combine beauty and performance. Emulating Ferrari's unique Grigio Corsa colourway has been achieved through Bang & Olufsen's expertise in aluminium at its revered Factory 5 in Struer, Denmark.

Beolab 50 Ferrari Edition are Bang & Olufsen's powerful, active loudspeakers, blending radical audio technology with graceful aesthetics and meticulous craftsmanship. Finely tuned to provide balanced, rich audio whether listening to music or watching a movie. With its adjustable acoustic lens, Beolab 50 can alter its sound delivery to suit the audience. When listening alone, the lens contracts to send a direct sound beam to create a sweet spot. With a house full of guests, the lens opens for a room-filling performance.

Bang & Olufsen's design

team wanted to echo the internal details of Ferrari cars by 'looking under the hood' of its own products to create hidden design elements. When Beolab 50's acoustic lens majestically ascends before performing, listeners can discover the intense red lens. The top cover of the lens features Ferrari's Prancing Horse logo laser engraved, alongside the Bang & Olufsen logo.

Beosound Theatre Ferrari Edition is a powerful and sleek soundbar, built to roar. With 12 custom drivers firing in all directions, the Dolby Atmos-ready Beosound Theatre performs like a multi-speaker powerhouse, crafted in Grigio Corsa aluminium. Bang & Olufsen's logo is silk screen printed on the glass top while the laser-engraved Ferrari Prancing Horse leaps from aluminium wings.

Beovision Theatre Ferrari Edition is a complete sound and vision setup crafted for immersive film experiences that deliver the power of a multi-product home cinema, all in one singular product. With Dolby Atmos surround sound, a 4K OLED screen and upgradeable design, Beovision Theatre is available in a 55", 65" or even 77" screen.

The three newly created products complement the first Ferrari collection introduced last year and encompass the Beosound 2 home speaker, Beoplay H95 headphones, Beoplay EX earphones and the portable speaker Beosound Explore.

Beosound 2 delivers a 360-degree home audio experience that fills any space it is placed into. Beoplay H95 is Bang & Olufsen's headphones, providing best-in-class sound and innovation, and 38 hours of non-stop listening.

With an IP67 rating, meaning that it is fully dust and waterproof, Beosound Explore has Bluetooth and Fast Pairing, and offers up to 27 hours of playtime.

Beoplay EX, Bang & Olufsen's most powerful true wireless earphones, boast active noise cancellation and unrivalled sound, and comes complete with a wireless charging case for up to 20 hours of on-the-go listening. Six microphones and intelligent beam-forming technology mean that Beoplay EX can be used for taking business calls and enjoying music in equal measure.

Qatar chairs GCC Medals and Decorations panel meeting



Qatar chaired the supplementary meeting of the Committee for Examining Nominations for Medals and Decorations in the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries that was held yesterday via video conference technology. Chaired by Assistant Director of the Public Relations Department at the Ministry of Interior Colonel Dr Jabr Hamoud Jabr al-Naimi, the meeting discussed a number of topics on its agenda and took appropriate decisions regarding them. (QNA)

Qatar hosts GSO technical council meeting

Qatar hosted the 59th meeting of the Technical Council of the GCC Standardisation Organisation (GSO) yesterday, chaired by HE Chairperson of Qatar General Organisation for Standardisation and Metrology (QGOSM) engineer Mohammed bin Saud al-Musallam, with the attendance of HE President of the GSO, engineer Nawaf Ibrahim al-Mana, and the participation of representatives of the member states and a representative of the General Secretariat of the GCC. The meeting's agenda included important topics, such as a follow-up on the implementation of the decisions of the GSO's 58th Technical Council meeting. The meeting addressed several memorandums from the GSO's presidency related to the fields of specifications and standards, conformity, institutional services, and preparation for the eighth meeting of the Ministerial Committee for Standardisation Affairs. (QNA)



UN workshop empowers future advocates for children in conflict

The Analysis and Outreach Hub of the Office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict organised a training workshop on "Raising awareness among future advocates on the rights and reality of children in conflict areas", with the aim of raising awareness about the impact of armed conflicts on children and enhancing the

skills of participants in advocacy.

The workshop was attended by about 30 students from various academic institutions in Qatar, including Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, Northwestern University, and Georgetown University, as well as youth activists from Education Above All Foundation. The students appreciated the workshop, which will enhance their

ability to engage in effective advocacy for children affected by armed conflict.

In her speech during the workshop, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict Virginia Gamba emphasised the crucial role of the new generation in protecting children facing the reality of devastating conflict, saying that children are not just victims of war; they are our future

and our hope for a better tomorrow, calling on participants to harness their power to bring about change.

Manager of Strategic Partnerships Sheikha Haya Abdulrahman al-Thani highlighted the efforts of Qatar Foundation International and strategic partnerships with the UN, including co-operation with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children

and Armed Conflict. During the workshop, participants engaged in discussions on six grave violations against children, explored the roles of key actors in advocacy, and developed skills needed to advocate for child protection in conflict zones. The training workshop reflected the clear interest among university students on issues of children affected by armed conflict. (QNA)

Aisha Alfardan hosts exclusive private viewing of Sartoro Geneve's jewellery collection

Sartoro Geneve, the acclaimed fine and high jewellery Maison known for its impeccable craftsmanship and innovative designs, in collaboration with Aisha Alfardan, one of Qatar's most distinguished businesswomen, welcomed esteemed guests to a recently held exclusive private viewing of the extensive jewellery collection.

The exclusive gathering showcased Sartoro's stunning creations, offering a unique opportunity for attendees to explore the Maison's commitment to quality and elegance. Hosted by Aisha Alfardan at the Alfardan Jewellery Boutique in Qatar, the evening was a fitting engagement that combined Sartoro Geneve's artistic vision with Alfardan's graceful and influential presence.

Sartoro, a visionary fine and high jewellery Maison based in Geneva, stands as a pillar of trust in the heart of the city, where three generations converge. Its commitment to excellence is showcased through innovative creations and unrivalled quality, designed to set apart, telling the unique story of the wearer's essence.

Founded in 2001 by Arto and Saro Artinian, the Maison's enduring dedication to transparency in craftsmanship is upheld by its in-house artisans, who meticulously source, select, cut, and craft each creation. Rooted in a rich family legacy and guided by ethical principles and familial connection, Sartoro fosters a sense of trust and reliability, preserving tradition and delivering exceptional creations.

As a family business, the Maison's commitment to client relationships, founders' active engagement, and above-and-beyond client care contribute to a deeply personal and cherished journey for every individual.



The exclusive gathering showcased Sartoro's stunning creations, offering a unique opportunity for attendees to explore the Maison's commitment to quality and elegance.



Hosted by Aisha Alfardan at the Alfardan Jewellery Boutique in Qatar, the evening was a fitting engagement that combined Sartoro Geneve's artistic vision with Alfardan's graceful and influential presence.



CCQ hosts symposium on interfaith dialogue



The Community College of Qatar (CCQ), in partnership with the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID), held a cultural symposium titled "Fundamentals of Interfaith Dialogue and Social and Cultural Communications."

Community College President Dr. Khaled al-Horr, and Dr. Youssef al-Siddiqi, Deputy Chairman of the Center, attended the event. The symposium was also attended by representatives from Qatar University, Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Lusail University, and Doha University for Science and Technology, along with a distinguished group of academics, researchers, and CCQ students.

This symposium is part of the Dialogue Initiative in Universities between Culture and Practice launched by DICID. The initiative aims to instill values of tolerance and constructive dialogue among university students, promoting openness and understanding among people from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds.

In his opening remarks, Dr. al-Horr underscored the shared commitment of higher education institutions in Qatar to fostering mutual understanding and respect among students. He emphasized that such events offer valuable opportunities for the exchange of ideas and encourage collaboration to build a more in-

clusive and diverse society.

He further added that through its academic programmes and cultural and social events, CCQ aims to create an interactive environment that encourages students and researchers to exchange ideas and respect diversity. In today's world of growing challenges and interconnected issues, dialogue is a key tool for building peace and achieving sustainable development.

Dr. Youssef al-Siddiqi, Deputy Chairman of DICID, praised CCQ for hosting this symposium as part of the centre's ongoing initiative. He highlighted the productive collaboration with CCQ, which reflects the colleges' dedication to fostering intellectual awareness and promoting the values of dialogue and coexistence among its students and staff. He also stressed the importance of these gatherings in stimulating critical thinking and addressing key issues for students and scholars. In today's global village, where conflicts abound, dialogue between followers of different religions and ideologies without exclusion paves the way for peace and coexistence, based on constructive understanding and mutual respect.

The symposium featured a panel discussion moderated by journalist Mujahid Sharara of Al Jazeera Media Network. It featured contributions from Dr. Ibrahim Mohammed Zain, Dean of

the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Dr. Youssef Benmehdi, Head of the Department of Islamic Creed and Dawaa at Qatar University, and Dr. Khadega AlAbdullah, Head of the Department of Islamic Studies at CCQ. The panellists emphasised the importance of interfaith dialogue in promoting the principles of constructive engagement and peaceful coexistence across humanity.

They highlighted how religious, ethical, and intellectual values can be activated to address global challenges; it is a central message of Islam, which advocates for peace, tolerance, and coexistence. The speakers noted that human diversity in thought is part of God's wisdom, which leads to differences in opinions and perspectives. This diversity is a natural part of human existence, and dialogue is the key to fostering understanding and coexistence without negating the other.

They also pointed out that, as moral beings, humans have an ethical responsibility to engage in dialogue with followers of different religions. Dialogue is not only a human necessity but also a moral and humanitarian obligation, given the many commonalities shared across cultures. Furthermore, the diverse ways of thinking that underpin human knowledge drive the continuous evolution of ideas. (QNA)

Interior ministry delegation visits HBKU



A delegation from the Ministry of Interior (MoI) yesterday visited Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU). The visit, according to an X post by MoI, aimed to discuss avenues of academic co-operation and explore new opportunities for collaboration between the two sides in the upcoming phase. The delegation was introduced to the key academic programmes offered by the university that align with the ministry's functional needs. The delegation included Lt Col Abdulrahman Ahmed al-Ibrahim, head of the Scholarship Section at the Human Resources Department, along with several officers.

Registration for Haj ends on Oct 22

The Department of Haj and Umrah at the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs has announced that the registration for the Haj season of the year 1446 AH will close on Tuesday, Oct 22. In a statement yesterday, the department said that registration is underway via its website for those who are willing to register for this year's Haj season. They can easily review the specifics of

the registration procedure through streamlined video footage prepared to explain the registration mechanism, along with the steps applicants should follow accordingly. It added that the mechanism has been posted on the ministry's accounts on social media platforms (<https://www.Haj.gov.qa>), highlighting that the public can reach out to the Department of Haj and Umrah in case of any further queries or complaints via the hotline number 132 during the official business days. (QNA)

Awqaf participates in Katara Book Fair



The Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs is participating in the ongoing second edition of Katara Book Fair. Awqaf's pavilion, according to an official statement, features the most prominent scientific, cultural and jurisprudence publications printed and distributed by the Departments of Islamic Affairs and Islamic Research and Studies. The pavilion also has Islamic heritage books in jurisprudence, doctrine, interpretation, Hadith and Qur'anic sciences, various editions of Qur'an, interpretations of Hadith, and a series of scientific research and theses by Qatari researchers and authors. Some publications are distributed free. The Katara Book Fair is held on the sidelines of the Novel Week activities, running until October 20.



Hamas official says no end to widening Mideast conflict without Gaza resolution

Reuters
Istanbul

Any solution to the rapidly expanding regional conflict that has spread to Lebanon and beyond hinges on a resolution of the original crisis in Gaza, a senior Hamas official said yesterday.

With the war in Gaza now in its second year, fighting has flared in southern Lebanon, where Israeli troops are now facing Hezbollah fighters on the ground, and risks escalating into a full-scale conflict with Iran. Diplomatic efforts to halt the fighting have stalled and attention is now focused on an expected Israeli strike on Iran after Tehran launched its second missile attack on Israel more than

two weeks ago. "It is so complicated and intermingled, the two fronts, that it is not easy to reach a permanent ceasefire or permanent solution to this conflict without solving the original one, which is in Gaza," Basem Naim told Reuters in Istanbul. The comments underline how hard it will be to resolve a war that also involves the Houthi movement in Yemen and now threatens to draw in the United States, which this week sent a missile defence battery to Israel.

The Gaza war erupted after Hamas-led fighters stormed Israel in the first week of October last year. Israel's campaign in response has killed more than 42,000 people, Gaza authorities say, turning much of the enclave into rubble and displacing most of its population.

'NO CALM' EVEN WITH LEBANON CEASEFIRE

Hezbollah, which fired its first barrage against Israel immediately after the October first week storming last year in solidarity with Hamas, has recently begun to talk about a possible ceasefire, but Naim said that would still leave the wider question unresolved.

"Even if they reach a ceasefire for Lebanon, there will be no calm in the region (because) they are not talking about solving all these questions related to Lebanon or Palestine," he said. Naim said the mediators were "disappointed" by the expansion of the conflict beyond Gaza's borders but again blamed Israel for the failure of the talks.

"We cannot simply start negotiating new conditions added by (Israeli Prime Minister) Benjamin



Basem Naim, a senior Hamas official in Gaza, speaks during an interview with Reuters in Istanbul, Turkey, yesterday.

Netanyahu," he said.

Israel has vowed to dismantle Hamas' military and governing capability but has not appeared to be close to completing its campaign in Gaza, where it launched a major

push in the northern part of the enclave two weeks ago.

Naim said the latest Israeli offensive in northern Gaza amounted to a "very tight, suffocating siege" unlike others. "It is much more

brutal and aggressive (than previous operations). It is directly targeting the civilian residential houses and homes," he said. Israel says its troops have killed dozens of Hamas fighters over recent days in the operation but there has been growing international alarm at the humanitarian situation facing Palestinians, with the United States urging Israel to ensure more aid gets through.

However Naim said US calls for more aid were not consistent with its overall support for Israel.

"How can one understand that at the same time that the Americans are calling for more aid and humanitarian relief, they are sending billions and billions of dollars and ... explosive materials and weapons, and (using) their veto each time in the UN Security Council to block the international will," he said.

UNRWA chief warns of 'real risk' of famine in Gaza

AFP
Berlin

The head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees warned yesterday of the risk of famine in Gaza, a day after the United States said Israel had been warned to improve aid deliveries to the territory.

UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini told a press conference in Berlin that "there is a real risk today... that we enter a situation where famine or acute malnutrition is unfortunately again a likelihood," pointing to the upcoming winter and the weakened immune systems of Gaza's population.

Vast areas of Gaza have been devastated by Israel's retaliatory assault on the territory after the October first week storming last year by Hamas.

Israel has been intensifying operations in the north of the besieged Palestinian territory, where the UN has warned hundreds of thousands of people are trapped.

Lazzarini painted a dire picture of the humanitarian situation in Gaza, saying it had "become a kind of wasteland, which I would say is almost unlivable".

In relation to aid deliveries to Gaza he said that "over the last two to three weeks there was no convoy entering into the north except yesterday".

"We have a huge drop of convoys in the south with only an average of fifty to sixty for two million people, while we estimate the number needed much, much higher," Lazzarini said.

He pointed out that the convoys which had managed to enter had been subject to looting "because of the total breakdown of law and order".

However, he stressed that with appropriate action a hunger crisis in Gaza "can be avoided" if convoys and food are allowed to enter.

"We have shown that we can have a polio cam-



UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini.

paign, so why can we not bring food?" he asked.

On Tuesday the US State Department said Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin sent a joint letter making "clear to the government of Israel that there are changes that they need to make again to see that the level of assistance making it into Gaza comes back up from the very, very low levels that it is at today".

COGAT, the Israeli military body supervising civilian affairs in Palestinian territories, said yesterday that "50 trucks carrying humanitarian aid - including food, water, medical supplies, and shelter equipment provided by Jordan - were transferred today to northern Gaza".

Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz told Germany's *Bild* newspaper yesterday that "we are doing everything to let the international community supply humanitarian aid to Gaza".

"I think that we did, and (are) doing more than any other country ever did for their enemies," he said.

UK govt 'weighing sanctions against Israeli ministers'

AFP
London

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said yesterday that the government was considering sanctions against far-right Israeli ministers Itamar Ben Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich.

Asked in parliament if the government would sanction the two officials, Starmer said: "We are looking at that because there are obviously abhorrent comments along with other really concerning activity in the West Bank".

National Security Minister Ben Gvir and Smotrich, who is finance minister, are vocal supporters of settlements in the West Bank,

which are considered illegal under international law.

Smotrich has also triggered international uproar by suggesting it would be justified to starve two million Gazans to free Israeli hostages in the Palestinian territory.

After Starmer's comments, Smotrich remained defiant, vowing to fight Israel's enemies in Gaza, Lebanon and Iran while working to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Earlier this week, former foreign secretary David Cameron revealed that the previous Conservative government had been "working on" sanctions against the "extreme" politicians.

Starmer's Labour government announced separate sanctions

Tuesday against seven Israeli settler outposts and organisations.

Israeli settler violence and military raids have intensified in the occupied territory following Hamas's October first week storming last year.

Pointing to the "dire" humanitarian situation in Gaza, Starmer also called for Israel to "take all possible steps to avoid civilian casualties, to allow aid into Gaza in much greater volume".

Foreign Secretary David Lammy meanwhile announced that Britain, France and Algeria had called an urgent meeting of the UN Security Council after UN reports that "barely any food has entered" North Gaza in the last two weeks.

Burned Palestinian's relatives describe aftermath of attack

Reuters
Deir Al-Balah

The family of a Palestinian man seen being burned to death in footage broadcast around the world of a blaze in tents after an Israeli strike on a Gaza hospital compound recounted their indescribable feelings as flames engulfed the camp.

Israel says the attack early on Monday targeted a Hamas command and control centre at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir Al-Balah, and that it is investigating the cause of the blaze but believes it was probably set by a secondary explosion. It accuses Hamas of putting civilians in harm's way by operating among them. Hamas denies any fighters were present.

Vivid footage of the incident has resonated strongly at a time when Israel faces concern from allies about its conduct of the war in Gaza. The US State Department has described the incident as "horrific".

Footage of the aftermath showed Shaban al-Dalou, who would have turned 20 yesterday, lying on his back amid burning debris and waving his arms as flames raged all around him. Three other people died, including Dalou's mother Ala'a Abdel Nasser al-Dalou, 37.

"I can't describe the feeling. I saw my brother burning in front of me and my mother was burning," said Dalou's younger brother Mohammed, 17, who said he ran out of the tent when he heard the blast.

The initial scene was filmed by several witnesses in video which was posted online and appeared around the world in news reports. Reuters was able to verify the time



Mohammed (right), the brother of Palestinian Shaban al-Dalou, who was burnt to death in an Israeli strike on tents sheltering displaced people at Al-Aqsa hospital, looks on at the site of the strike, in Deir Al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip.

and location of two of the videos of the incident by matching structures, debris, and benches.

A journalist contracted by Reuters who reached the scene later filmed a rescue worker lifting Dalou's charred body wrapped in a blanket.

Israel's military said it had "conducted a precise strike on fighters who were operating inside a command and control centre in the area of a parking lot" next to the hospital.

"Shortly after the strike, a fire ignited in the hospital's parking lot, most likely due to secondary explosions. The incident is under review. The hospital and its functionality were not affected from the strike," it added.

Israeli officials have not said what might have caused a secondary explosion to ignite the tents.

In one of the videos Reuters reviewed, a series of more than 20 small bangs were audible amid the fire, as well as two small explosions that sent showers of sparks flying. A medic at the hospital told Reuters

those blasts were caused by cooking gas canisters exploding, which Reuters could not immediately independently confirm.

"I heard the sound of bombing, I looked out and saw very black smoke next to our tent," said Mohammed al-Dalou, speaking to Reuters at the location of the strike in Deir Al-Balah, where charred ground and twisted debris lay between still-standing tents.

He ran out of the tent and saw his father pulling out his younger siblings. Then he saw his older brother Shaban in flames. He tried to reach him, but people held him back, he said. Dalou's aunt Karbaha al-Dalou and her family were also there. "I suddenly woke up to fire burning towards me and my children," she said.

She saw her nephew and sister-in-law burning and waving their hands. "I can't describe to you how disturbing it was," she said at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis where her family was taken after the fire.

POLITICS Kenya impeachment hearings open against deputy president

Kenya's senate began impeachment hearings against Kenya's deputy president yesterday, hours after a court said the proceedings were constitutional, clearing the way for a vote on his dismissal this week. Reuters reported from Nairobi. Kenya's National Assembly voted on Tuesday last week to impeach the deputy president, Rigathi Gachagua, on 11 charges which included corruption, undermining the government and stirring ethnic hatred. Gachagua has denied all charges.

Cholera confirmed in Lebanon, risk of spread 'very high': WHO

The risk of cholera spreading in Lebanon is "very high", the World Health Organisation warned yesterday, after a case of the acute and potentially deadly diarrhoeal infection was detected in the conflict-hit country, AFP reported from Geneva.

The WHO highlighted the risk of cholera spreading among hundreds of thousands of people displaced since Israel escalated an air campaign against Hezbollah and launched a ground offensive intended to push the group back from its northern border with Lebanon. "If the cholera outbreak... spreads to the new displaced people, it might spread very fast," Abdinasir Abubakar, WHO's representative in Lebanon, told reporters in an online news conference.

Lebanon's health ministry said a cholera case had been confirmed in a Lebanese national who went to hospital on Monday suffering from watery diarrhoea and dehydration. The patient, from Ammouniyeh in northern Lebanon, had no history of travel, the ministry said. Lebanon suffered its first cholera outbreak in 30 years between 2022 and 2023, mainly in the north of the country.

The disease, which causes severe diarrhoea, vomiting and muscle cramps, generally arises

from eating or drinking food or water that is contaminated with the bacterium, according to the WHO. The UN health agency has for months been warning that the disease could resurface amid "deteriorating water and sanitation" among the displaced and their host communities, Abubakar said.

The number of displaced swelled even before the escalation last month, as Hezbollah exchanged cross-border fire with Israel over the past year, saying it was acting over Israel's war on Gaza. While people in northern Lebanon had recently been exposed or vaccinated, Abubakar cautioned that some communities on the move from southern Lebanon and the Beirut area had not built up any cholera immunity for three decades. If the disease gets into those populations, he warned, "the risk of spread is very high". WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told reporters the agency had strengthened "surveillance and conduct tracing, including environmental surveillance and water sampling".

In August, he said, the Lebanese health ministry launched an oral cholera vaccination campaign targeting 350,000 people living in high-risk areas, but the campaign was "interrupted by the escalation in violence".

Nigeria fuel tanker explosion kills almost 150

AFP
Majija

An explosion tore through crowds of people who had rushed to collect fuel spilling from a crashed tanker in northern Nigeria, killing at least 147, officials said yesterday.

The tragedy is the latest such accident at a time when petrol has become a precious commodity in the country, which is suffering its worst economic crisis in a gen-

eration. The fuel tanker veered to avoid another vehicle and crashed in the town of Majija, Jigawa state late on Tuesday, police said.

Following the crash, residents crowded round the overturned tanker to gather the leaking fuel.

Student Sanusi Lawan told AFP he had heard "shouts of joy" and rushed to join hundreds of people scooping up the fuel with buckets. The 21-year-old had taken his bucket home and his brother had persuaded him not to return for more, when they heard

"a huge explosion and cries of pain and fright".

"We rushed to the place and it was a scene of horror," Lawan said. "People were running while on fire and shouting for help." "Had I not listened to my brother's advice, I would have been among the dead," he said.

The national emergency agency said 147 people had died.

Local government chairman Hambali Zarga told AFP this figure only accounted for bodies buried in one mass grave, and



A motorcyclist rides past the remains of a fuel tanker whose explosion killed almost 150 people in northern Nigeria, yesterday.

warned the toll was likely to rise. Dozens of victims were "burnt

beyond recognition," he told AFP at the graveside.



PEOPLE

Musk donates \$75mn to Trump's presidential cause

Billionaire Elon Musk has donated almost \$75mn to the political action committee he created to support Donald Trump's US presidential campaign, according to filings, illustrating the Tesla founder's growing commitment to the Republican's cause. Musk has taken an increasingly visible role in Trump's campaign, accompanying him on stage at a recent rally in Pennsylvania and frequently lambasting his opponent, Democrat Kamala Harris, on social media. Trump frequently name-checks Musk at rallies, and has promised to appoint him to a committee tasked with slashing government bureaucracy.

CONCERN

Spate of executions in US 'deeply worrying': UN

The United Nations voiced alarm at a recent spate of executions in the US, where two men are due to be put to death. The UN rights office is "deeply concerned by the impending execution of two men" in Texas and Alabama today, a statement said. Derrick Ryan Dearman is due to be executed today in Alabama, where he was reportedly convicted of murdering several people with an axe in 2016. On the same day, Robert Roberson, an autistic 57-year-old, is scheduled to die by lethal injection at the state penitentiary in Huntsville, Texas over the February 2002 death of his two-year-old daughter, Nikki.

CRIME

France opens murder probe as motorist runs down cyclist

French prosecutors yesterday said they had opened a murder probe after a motorist ran over a cyclist following an altercation in the heart of Paris, as tensions rise in the battle for street space in the congested capital. Witnesses said the driver, 52, appeared to deliberately target the cyclist who died at the scene near the Madeleine in the capital's wealthy 8th district. According to daily *Le Parisien*, quoting witnesses, the driver at the wheel of a SUV hit the cyclist with his car, and then drove over him, crushing his body under the heavy vehicle. Efforts to save the cyclist, 27, failed.

CONTROVERSY

Pakistan college denies alleged rape claims

Senior directors of a Pakistan college yesterday said there was no evidence that a student had been raped on campus after reports that spread online sparked days of protests. Hundreds of students have protested since Monday in response to social media posts that said a woman was raped in the basement of a Punjab College for Women campus in the eastern city of Lahore. "The incident does not exist. I will resign and I will leave this profession and stand with the students if the incident took place," Arif Chaudry, the Lahore director of the private Punjab Group of Colleges that runs the women's college, said.

Zelensky rules out ceding Ukrainian land in 'victory plan'

AFP
Kyiv, Ukraine

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky yesterday unveiled his long-awaited "victory plan" to end Russia's invasion, rejecting any territorial concessions and urging ramped-up Western backing, including an invitation to join Nato.

The US announced a \$425mn arms package for Kyiv hours after Zelensky's speech, vowing to give Ukraine the "equipment it needs to prevail".

After pushing back Russian troops at the start of the invasion in February 2022, Kyiv is now facing mounting pressure to find an exit strategy as its troops suffer battlefield losses and Moscow intensifies its strikes on infrastructure.

Russia has seized around a fifth of Ukraine's territory since the invasion began, reducing towns and cities to rubble and killing thousands of civilians.

But in his address to lawmakers in Kyiv yesterday, Zelensky ruled out the possibility that Ukraine could cede some territory to secure peace and also dismissed any pause in the conflict.

"Russia must lose the war against Ukraine. And this does not mean a freeze (in fighting) and it does not mean any trade in Ukraine's territory or sovereignty," the 46-year-old leader said, flanked by European Union and Ukrainian flags.

The number one priority in the

five-part plan, the Ukrainian leader said, was closer integration with the US-led Nato defence alliance.

"The first point is an invitation to Nato, now," Zelensky said, claiming that Moscow had been undermining security in Europe for decades because Kyiv was not a member.

Zelensky also said that his country's Western allies should lift restrictions on Ukraine's use of long-range weapons so Kyiv can target Russian military sites on occupied Ukrainian territory and also within Russia.

The Kremlin immediately dismissed Zelensky's roadmap to end the grinding conflict, describing it as "some ephemeral peace plan".

"The only peace plan there can be is for the Kyiv regime to realise the futility of the policy it is pursuing and understand the need to sober up," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

The foreign ministry meanwhile said Zelensky's plan meant "trouble for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people".

"He is pushing Nato members towards a direct conflict with our country," spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said.

Russia has demanded Kyiv abandon territory Moscow already controls in the east and south of Ukraine as a precondition for peace talks.

The Russian military announced during Zelensky's address that it had captured two more villages in eastern Ukraine, where its forces are steadily advancing.

Trump addresses Latino voters

Republican presidential nominee, former US president Donald Trump speaks next to moderator Enrique Acevedo during a Univision Noticias town hall event yesterday in Doral, Florida. Trump addressed undecided Latino voters as he continues campaigning against his rival, Democratic presidential nominee, US Vice-President Kamala Harris.

First migrants arrive in Albania under contested Italy deal

AFP
Shengjin, Albania

The first migrants sent by Rome to Albania under a controversial deal that is being closely watched in Europe arrived yesterday, though two who claimed to be minors had then to be sent to Italy.

The 16 men from Bangladesh and Egypt disembarked from an Italian navy vessel in the port of Shengjin three days after they were intercepted in the Mediterranean.

The men were escorted in small groups to the

gates of a new processing centre where their asylum requests will be handled.

Two of the men from Bangladesh claimed to be minors, a category classed as vulnerable under Italian law, which meant they could not be kept in the Albanian centres and were being sent to Italy instead, a government source in Rome said.

Italy's far-right Prime Minister Georgia Meloni vowed to cut the number of people crossing from North Africa when she took office in 2022.

Rome has boasted that the Albania deal is attracting interest within the European Union and EU leaders were to discuss the offshore process-

ing centres at a summit this week.

Amnesty International has, however, called the centres a "cruel experiment (that) is a stain on the Italian government".

Italy will run two centres in Albania surrounded by high walls and security cameras, one in Shengjin and the other in Gjader, 20km away.

The centres will be operated under Italian law, with Italian security and staff, with judges hearing asylum request cases by video from Rome.

More than 300 Italian soldiers, doctors and judges are involved in the operation, according to Italian diplomats.

Judge blocks rule requiring hand-count of US election ballots

A Georgia judge temporarily halted a new rule requiring poll workers to hand count ballots in November's US elections, in a defeat for Donald Trump, whose Republican allies pushed the change after he lost the battleground state in 2020. The hand-count rule was passed on September 20 by a pro-Trump conservative majority of Georgia's election board, who said they were attempting to make the November 5 election more secure and transparent. Democrats had said the change would sow chaos and delay results. Georgia, where early voting began in record numbers on Tuesday, is one of seven battleground states likely to determine the presidential contest between the former president and his Democratic opponent, Vice-President Kamala Harris. In 2020, Trump made false claims of widespread voting fraud in the state. Superior Court judge Robert McBurney said it was appropriate to pause the vote counting rule because it introduced fresh uncertainty into the process.

Brazil faces 'worst drought'

A drone view shows floating houses on the dry bed of the Taruma Acu river, tributary of the Rio Negro river, during what the national disaster monitoring agency Cemaden has already called Brazil's worst drought since at least the 1950s, near Manaus, Amazonas State, Brazil, yesterday.

Some MPs could be involved in foreign interference: TrudeauReuters
Ottawa

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said some members of the opposition Conservative Party could be involved in foreign interference and alleged the party was not taking the matter seriously. Trudeau made his remarks to an independent commission probing foreign interference in Canadian politics. Polls show the Conservatives would easily beat Trudeau's Liberals in the next election, which must be held by end-October 2025.

The probe has already heard evidence that China and other nations tried to meddle in Canadian politics. "I have the names of a number of parliamentarians, former parliamentarians and or candidates in the Conservative Party ... who are engaged, or are at high risk of, or for whom there is clear intelligence around foreign interference," Trudeau said. A few seconds later he appeared to temper his comments, saying

the intelligence about Conservative activities could be "shoddy or incomplete or just allegations from a single source".

He did not give further details.

Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre has declined to apply for the security clearance needed to read all the intelligence uncovered by the probe, on the grounds this would prevent him from commenting on the public proceedings. Trudeau said he had asked the Canadian Security Intelligence Service spy agency to warn Poilievre about Conservative members who could be vulnerable. Poilievre's decision not to get clearance for classified briefings was "bewildering to me and entirely lacks common sense," Trudeau said. Poilievre accused Trudeau of lying.

"My chief of staff has received classified briefings from the government. At no time has the government told me or my chief of staff of any current or former Conservative parliamentary or candidate knowingly participating in foreign interference," he said.

Pakistan urges expansion of China's Belt and Road Initiative

Reuters
Islamabad

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif yesterday called for the expansion of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to enhance regional co-operation at a meeting of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO) in Islamabad.

He was addressing a heads of government meeting of the SCO, a Eurasian security and political group formed in 2001, being attended by officials from 11 coun-

tries, including host Pakistan, China, Russia and India.

"Flagship projects like the Belt and Road Initiative of President Xi Jinping...should be expanded focusing on developing road, rail and digital infrastructure that enhances integration and cooperation across our region," Sharif said in his speech as the chair of the meeting.

The BRI is a \$1tn plan for global infrastructure and energy networks that China launched a decade ago to connect Asia with Africa and Europe through land and maritime routes. More than

150 countries, including Russia, have signed up to participate in BRI since Xi unveiled it.

Beijing's rivals see the BRI as a tool for China to spread its geopolitical and economic influence.

Western countries, under the G7 platform, last year announced a \$600bn plan to launch a rival connectivity infrastructure development plan. BRI has also been criticised for increasing unsustainable debt in developing countries.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a part of the BRI and has seen Beijing pump in

billions of dollars into the country for road networks, a strategic port and an airport.

Sharif said CPEC would also help enhance co-operation, adding that 40% of the world's population lived in SCO's 10 full member states. He also called for a special development funding mechanism under the SCO.

The SCO meeting is the highest-profile event hosted by Pakistan in years. Seven prime ministers are attending, including Chinese Premier Li Qiang.

Sharif also said stability in neighbouring Afghanistan, which

lies between South and Central Asia, was essential to fully realising trade opportunities for the SCO member states.

Also in attendance was India's External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, who is the first Indian foreign minister to visit Pakistan in nearly a decade with ties between the nuclear-armed rival neighbours continuing to be frosty.

No bilateral meeting has been planned, both sides have said, although Sharif and Jaishankar did have a short talk when the Indian official attended a dinner hosted

by the Pakistani premier.

Jaishankar, in his speech at the meeting, congratulated Pakistan on the presidency of the SCO's Heads of Government Council and extended India's "full support" to Islamabad, according to a transcript shared by India's foreign ministry.

He said India supported regional co-operation but added that mutual respect as well as territorial integrity and sovereignty were essential.

New Delhi has also been at odds with Beijing over border disputes.

COMMENT

Here to help people in need, says Prince William

Prince William says one of his roles as Britain's heir to the throne is to try to help people in need, as he explained his efforts to end homelessness in a documentary to be broadcast later this month. Last June, William, 42, launched the five-year project "Homewards", which he said was inspired by his late mother Princess Diana who had alerted him to the crisis when he was a child. Critics have said it was hypocritical for someone with William's wealth and many homes to be talking about battling the issue. When he launched Homewards, William said visits to homelessness shelters with his mother, the first when he was 11, had left a deep and lasting impression.

PROJECT

New rail link with China to cost \$7.2bn: Vietnam

Vietnam has estimated the cost of building a new railway linking it with China's Yunnan province at 179tn dong (\$7.2bn). The 427km railway would run from the border province of Lao Cai through Hanoi and the port city of Haiphong to Ha Long City, the Vietnam News Agency said. Vietnam has been seeking to upgrade its ageing railway systems, including plans to build a high-speed railway running along the length of the country and lines linking with China, its largest trading partner. Vietnam Railway Authority has submitted the plan to build the Lao Cai-Ha Long railway to the transport ministry for review and approval, the report said.

PEOPLE

Malaysia's ex-PM Mahathir in hospital again: aide

Malaysia's nearly 100-year-old former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad has been hospitalised for a respiratory infection, his aide said yesterday. The two-time former prime minister was last hospitalised in July for "continuous coughing". His aide yesterday said Mahathir was admitted to the National Heart Institute on Tuesday morning. "The reason as stated by the hospital was for 'lower respiratory tract infection'," Sufi Yusoff said. "He is expected to be receiving treatment for the next few days." Mahathir just turned 99 in July. He has suffered several heart problems in recent years and underwent bypass surgeries.

TRAGEDY

Nepali teams retrieve bodies of five Russian climbers

Nepali rescuers dangling from a rope beneath a helicopter swooped in to retrieve the frozen corpses of five Russian high-altitude climbers killed earlier this month, mountain officials said yesterday. The five Russians went missing on October 6 during an attempt to summit the world's seventh-highest mountain Dhaulagiri, a 26,795-foot Himalayan peak. Bad weather delayed efforts to collect the bodies, which lay on an icy slope about 7,000 metres high. "The five bodies have been retrieved through a long line rescue, and were brought to the base camp," Nima Nuru Sherpa, president of the Nepal Mountaineering Association, said.

China says will not renounce use of force over Taiwan

Reuters
Beijing/Taipei

China will never commit to renouncing the use of force over Taiwan, the government in Beijing said yesterday after another bout of war games and a visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping to the scene of a famous defeat for Taiwanese forces.

China, which views Taiwan as its own territory, staged a day of large-scale drills around the island on Monday that it said were a warning to "separatist acts" following last week's national day speech by Taiwan President Lai Ching-te.

"We are willing to strive for the prospect of peaceful reunification with the utmost sincerity and endeavour," Chen Binhua, spokesperson for China's Taiwan Affairs Office, told a regular press briefing in Beijing. "But we will never commit ourselves to renouncing the use of force," he said.

That is, however, aimed at the interference of "external forces" and the very small number of Taiwan separatists, not the vast majority of Taiwan's people, Chen said. Taiwan has close though unofficial relations with the US, a major arms supplier, and its allies.

"No matter how many troops

Taiwan has and how many weapons it acquires, and no matter whether external forces intervene or not, if it (Taiwan) dares to take risks, it will lead to its own destruction," he added.

"Our actions to defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity will not cease for a moment."

Chinese state media reported yesterday that President Xi had arrived the previous day on Dongshan island in China's Fujian province, which faces Taiwan and where in 1953 China beat off an invasion attempt by Taiwan-based military.

The defeated Republic of China government fled to Taiwan in 1949 after losing a civil war with Mao Zedong's communists. No armistice or peace treaty has ever been signed.

Xi was on the island to learn about efforts to revitalise the countryside and the "passing on of red genes and strengthening the protection of cultural heritage", the official *People's Daily* said, referring to the colour of the Communist Party.

He urged officials from Fujian to promote cross-strait cultural exchanges, and "enhance the ethnic, cultural and national identity of Taiwan compatriots," according to Xinhua news agency.

Taiwan's government rejects China's sovereignty claims, saying only the island's people can decide

their future. Speaking to reporters in Taipei earlier yesterday, Taiwan National Security Bureau director-general Tsai Ming-yen said China's drills had backfired given the international condemnation they generated, especially from Washington.

"The Chinese communists' military exercise has created a negative effect in that it made the international community more supportive of Taiwan," he said.

Lai, in his October 10 speech, said China has no right to represent Taiwan, but the island was willing to work with the government in Beijing to combat challenges like climate change, striking both a firm and a conciliatory tone which Taiwan officials said was a show of goodwill.

Chen, the Chinese spokesperson, said Lai had stuck to his "stubborn separatist position".

"There was no goodwill to speak of," Chen said.

Lai has repeatedly offered talks with China but been rebuffed.

China's military on Monday held open the possibility of more drills around Taiwan depending on the level of "provocation".

In a report to lawmakers, Taiwan's defence ministry said China was trying to legitimise the use of force against Taiwan, to undermine military morale and to "deplete the military's combat power".

India issues alert as rain pounds south



People wade through a flooded street amid heavy rainfall in Chennai, India, yesterday. Intense rain lashed southern India yesterday, with weather officials issuing a red alert warning of flash floods and landslides. India's meteorological department warned of "heavy to very heavy" rainfall expected in parts of the southern state of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala. Heavy rain and strong winds have battered southern India since Tuesday forcing many schools shut and disrupting train services.

India's high food prices curtail spending in early festive season

Reuters
New Delhi

Rising prices of edible oils and vegetables like onions and tomatoes have driven up grocery spending for Indian households ahead of the festival season, prompting some consumers to limit more expensive purchases like electronic items, retailers said.

India's annual festival sea-

son, which runs from late September to early November, sees households scramble to buy food and other goods, encouraged by discounts offered by both online and brick-and-mortar retailers.

But the start to the festive season this year has been slow.

Sales of electronics and home appliances so far in October have risen just 5-7% from last year, against estimates for an 8%-10% climb, said Nilesh Gupta, direc-

tor at Vijay Sales, a retail chain with 143 stores.

"We remain optimistic that sales will pick up," he said.

India's economy is projected to grow by 7.2% in 2024-25, driven by increased rural demand, according to the central bank's estimates.

But high-frequency indicators such as auto sales and manufacturing purchasing managers index (PMI) have suggested weakness in the economy.

Indian airplane forced to divert after bomb hoax

An Indian passenger aircraft was diverted yesterday after the latest in a string of hoax bomb threats made to airline companies involving the country.

The Akasa Air flight, which was flying from India's capital New Delhi to the southern city of Bengaluru, "received a security alert" and the flight was ordered to return as a "precaution".

Akasa Air said the captain had followed "all required emergency procedures for a safe landing in Delhi". The flight had 184 people on board, including three infants, the airline said.

Another flight, the domestic carrier IndiGo flying from Mumbai to New Delhi, was diverted to Ahmedabad in Gujarat.

Zulfikar Hasan, director-general of the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), told the *Times of India* newspaper that "Indian skies are absolutely safe" and said police were working to identify the culprits.

Child killed in house blast



Firefighters and emergency services inspect the scene of an explosion in Benwell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, northern England, yesterday. Northumbria police confirmed that a child had died and six people were taken to hospital following the explosion of a house.

Aquarium's 'fake' whale shark angers visitors

AFP
Beijing

Visitors to a new aquarium in China were left furious this week after discovering one of its top aquatic stars was a robot, despite it being marketed as such.

Xiaomeisha Ocean World in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, opened on October 1 but was quickly slammed for its high prices, long queues, and poor conditions for its marine life.

Much of the criticism, however, centred on the park's star attraction: a "mechanised whale shark".

Photos of the shark showed joints in the body where parts of the robot had been joined together.

On the online review platform Dazhong Dianping, users flooded the aquarium's page with negative

comments. "I'm speechless about the fake whale shark. I really want to report and ban this place," one visitor wrote. "Why are they using fake props as fish?" read another review.

"Are they trying to trick children?"

The park, which charges around 240 yuan (\$34) for adult tickets, has a rating of just 2.9 out of 5 stars on the popular review platform.

Many social media users posted under the hashtag "Netizens complain about spending hundreds of yuan at Xiaomeisha Sea World to see fake fish".

In response, the park said that whale sharks are not allowed to be traded and keeping a real one in captivity would be cruel, while the robot was meant to raise awareness for protecting the species, local media reported.

1.4mn N Koreans 'apply to join army amid Seoul tensions'

Reuters
Seoul

North Korean state media yesterday said around 1.4mn young people had applied to join or return to the army this week, blaming Seoul for a provocative drone incursion that had brought the "tense situation to the brink of war".

The fiery rhetoric comes after North Korea last week accused Seoul of sending drones over Pyongyang that scattered a "huge number" of anti-North leaflets. The North then blew up inter-Korean roads and rail lines on its

side of the border on Tuesday, and warned that the South would "pay a dear price".

The young people, including students and youth league officials who had signed petitions to join the army, were determined to fight in a "sacred war of destroying the enemy with the arms of the revolution," the official KCNA news agency said.

"If a war breaks out, the ROK will be wiped off the map. As it wants a war, we are willing to put an end to its existence," the KCNA report said, using the initials of the South's official name, the Republic of Korea.

North Korea has previously

made similar claims about young people scrambling to enlist at a time of heightened tensions, though such statements from the isolated state are difficult to verify.

Last year, state media reported on 800,000 of its citizens volunteering to join the North's military to fight against the US. It also said in 2017 that nearly 3.5mn workers, party members and soldiers volunteered to serve.

According to data from the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), North Korea has 1.28mn active soldiers and about 600,000 reservists, with 5.7mn Worker/Peasant Red Guard re-

servists among many unarmed units.

Seoul's defence ministry did not comment on the latest KCNA report, but has warned that if North Korea inflicts harm on the safety of South Koreans, that day will be "the end of its regime."

Later yesterday, vice-foreign ministers of South Korea, the US and Japan held a news conference after talks in Seoul and strongly condemned the North for "intentionally raising tension" by claiming the drone intrusion and sealing the southern border.

Western countries have long accused North Korea of sending weapons to help Russia fight

in Ukraine. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky yesterday said the North was also sending personnel, becoming effectively a participant in the war.

Asked about that issue, US deputy secretary of state Kurt Campbell said there were signs of the North's enhanced material support for Russia "which is being felt on the battlefield", but that Washington was still evaluating the reports.

The three officials earlier in the day announced a new, 11-nation team to monitor the enforcement of sanctions against the North after Russia and China thwarted a UN mechanism.

An official at Seoul's unification ministry handling inter-Korean affairs said Pyongyang might be seeking to consolidate people's unity and build logic for a provocation by kindling and exaggerating tension against the South.

There also seemed to be public pressure on North Korean leader Kim Jong-un over economic challenges, the official said.

Park Won-gon, a professor at the Ewha Woman's University in Seoul, said North Korea appeared to be using the drone incident to rally people against the South in line with its push to sever cross-border ties and promote a "two-state" system.



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GULF TIMES

For Europe's economy, US election risks outweigh upside

For Europe's economy, the November 5 US election offers a "least bad" outcome of a challenging Kamala Harris presidency or a second encounter with Donald Trump which threatens to be yet more bruising than the first.

On two key areas - trade policy and the sharing of rising security costs among Nato allies - Europe expects few favours from a Harris presidency which it sees as "Biden continuity".

Trump 2.0, on the other hand, presents multiple dangers: if he were to pull US support for Ukraine, European governments would need to ramp up defence spending fast; and if he triggered a global trade war, Europe fears it would be the big loser.

Anti-China measures are a rare area of bipartisan agreement in the US election campaign. For Europe's export-driven economy, that raises the question as to whether it can continue to juggle trade ties with both the US and China.

Whoever the winner of the US election is, it is unclear whether Europe can continue to benefit from US growth without reducing trade with China itself.

Both US candidates have the same direction of travel - Trump less predictable and perhaps willing to be more confrontational with the European Union.

Half of Europe's output comes from trade, double the rate in the US, while the region's 30mn manufacturing jobs - compared to only 13mn in the US - mean it is highly vulnerable to anything that restricts commerce.

While Harris is seen pursuing a path similar to Biden, Trump has threatened to go further with across-the-board tariffs of 10-20% on all imports

Support for free trade in Washington has evaporated in the past decade. Joe Biden chose not to scrap outright tariffs levied in Trump's first presidency and has added his own focus on US jobs with the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) subsidies.

While Harris is seen pursuing a path similar to Biden, Trump has threatened to go further with across-the-board tariffs of 10-20% on all imports - including those of Europe, with whom America still has annual trade worth over 1tn euros.

Spanish olive producers have seen their exports to US, once their main foreign market, slump by 70% after

Trump in 2018 imposed tariffs which remain in place despite World Trade Organisation (WTO) rulings against them.

For those European companies with US presences, the added uncertainty is whether Trump will follow through on promises to scrap Biden's IRA green energy subsidies.

German machinery firm Trumpf, which employs 2,000 US staff and supplies equipment for electric vehicle batteries and solar, said it was not expanding those activities in the US due to uncertainty about the election outcome.

The US election could also have major implications for the defence budgets of European governments struggling with debt levels inflated by post-pandemic recovery spending.

Again, the question is more one of timing than destination: Harris is expected to pursue US pressure on Europe to pick up more of the tab for regional security while the lack of clarity around Trump's commitment to Ukraine hugely ups the ante.

While a Harris presidency could have little measurable impact on Europe's economy, the downside risks of a second Trump term in office are clearly tangible.

Goldman Sachs economists estimate that if Trump went ahead with his tariffs, their direct effect plus the trade uncertainty they would generate could shave one percentage point off output in the 20 countries of the euro area - more than the weak 0.8% growth they are forecast to eke out this year.

Any economic growth benefits to be had if an ebbing US commitment to Ukraine forced Europe to boost defence spending would be cancelled out by the hit the regional economy would take from the resulting geopolitical risk.

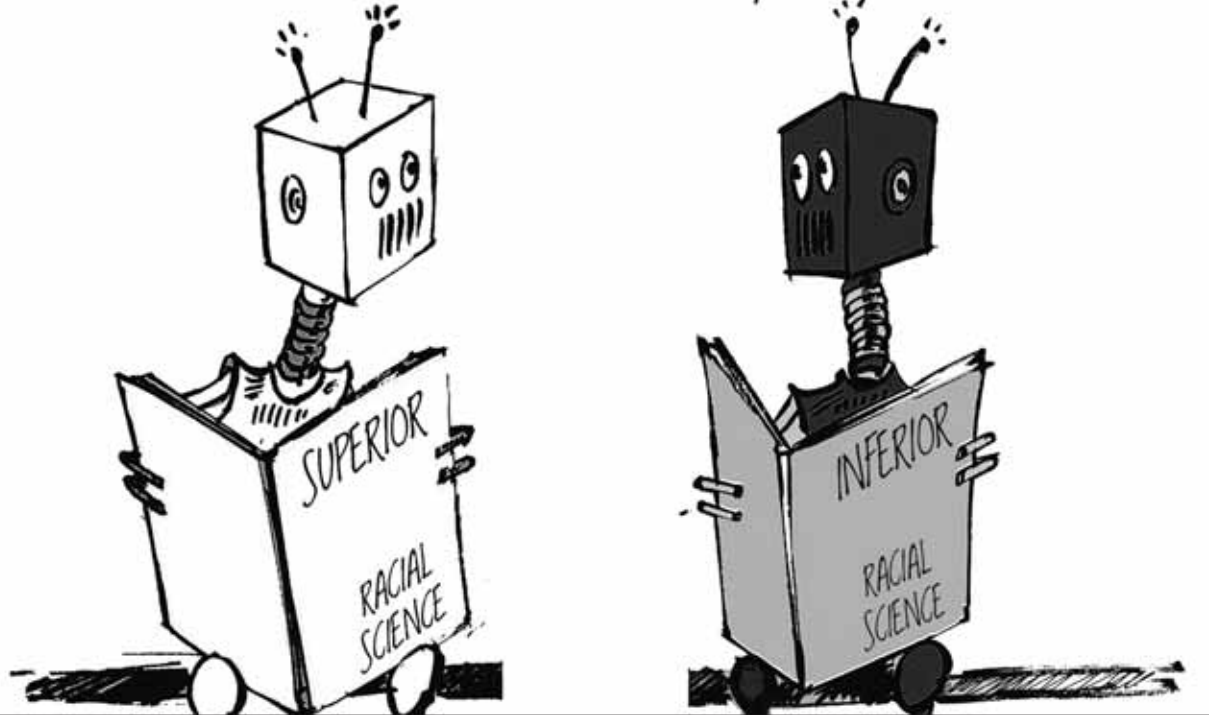
The European Commission has a closed-door team of officials to study how the EU will be affected by the election outcome. But any policy conclusions they draw will need to secure an EU consensus - which, as shown by the bloc's divisions over how to deal with Chinese electric vehicle imports, can be elusive.

Pro-European optimists suggest the US election - especially in the event of a Trump victory - could have a salutary shock effect of finally spurring the region to adopt the type of deep reforms proposed by former ECB chief Mario Draghi last month. - Reuters

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Europe's wake-up call

Given the interlocking challenges identified by the Draghi Report on Europe's future, identifying mutually advantageous policy trades among member states is a promising approach to achieving deeper integration. This is because national governments are more likely to agree to deeper integration when it strengthens them domestically

By Barry Eichengreen
Berkeley

Mario Draghi's report on the state of the European economy is meant as a wake-up call. But will Draghi's alarm be heard, or will European policymakers hit the snooze button?

The report points to three areas where Europe is economically challenged. The European Union lags behind the US and China in innovation, especially in areas involving advanced technologies. Its competitiveness is handicapped by high energy prices. And its fragmented defence industry weakens its security.

The report then argues that deeper integration is needed to address these shortfalls. Europe needs to complete its capital markets union to foster its venture capital industry. It needs fewer regulatory roadblocks in order for new companies to scale up. It must build an integrated power grid and co-ordinate investments in decarbonisation to bring down energy costs. And Europe must undertake more defence spending at the EU level. Here the costs of failing to collaborate are reflected in the fact that Europe produces and operates 12 battle tanks, whereas the US focuses on just one.

All of this implies the need for more joint decision-making, which puts Europe at another of those critical junctures where it must choose between the status quo and a quantum leap to deeper integration.

It has taken such leaps before, agreeing to create the Single Market in 1986, introducing the euro in 1999, and moving to Banking Union in 2012. But will the challenges identified by the Draghi Report prompt a similar reaction?

One answer, espoused by Jean Monnet, the intellectual godfather of the EU, is that quantum leaps in European integration occur when leaders realise there is no other way to avert the worst. The Draghi Report seeks to leverage this theory by adopting the language of crisis.

But not everyone will agree that Europe's challenges rise to the level of an existential crisis. Moreover, some quantum leaps in European integration have occurred during periods of relative stability.

The Delors Report, which laid the groundwork for the euro, was followed by financial crises, rather than negotiated in response to them. Some crisis-ridden periods, such as the 1970s, did not hasten integration. Rather, they ushered in a "dark age" or lost decade of stagnant progress toward "ever-closer union." Monnet's theory, clearly, is underspecified.

Then there are so-called neo-functional theories of European integration, which suggest that if Europe can somehow get the integration process going in one domain, the progress it makes will spill over into other issue areas.

Thus, creation of the Single Market, which entailed the removal of capital controls, applied pressure to move to a single currency, which in turn

created pressure for banking union.

Economically, a single currency implied further efficiency advantages once the Single Market was established, as did a single banking supervisor once the single currency was introduced. Politically, the removal of capital controls created an exit option for financial interests, which used their leverage to push for the single currency and banking union.

Recent events are a reminder, however, that political decisions are not always driven by efficiency considerations. Nor is it obvious which way special interests will push.

Currently, politicians in Berlin are pushing back, neo-functional spillovers be damned, against efforts by Italy's UniCredit to purchase a controlling stake in Germany's Commerzbank. Evidently, pressure to hasten integration can equally precipitate a backlash, as opposed to creating forward momentum.

Alternatively, some argue that European integration is driven or stymied by hard-headed bargaining among governments.

Integration will occur if national interests converge - if governments all see themselves as beneficiaries of, say, more collaboration on defence spending. History suggests, however, that some governments will fear that their countries will be harmed - their domestic defence industries will be the ones going out of business - leading them to resist calls for deeper integration.

Or perhaps governments can concoct mutually advantageous policy trades, as in the 1990s, when France dropped its opposition to German reunification in return for Germany's commitment to proceed with monetary unification.

Given the multiple, interlocking challenges identified by the Draghi Report, identifying such mutually advantageous policy trades is an approach that may have legs.

A final view holds that national governments agree to deeper integration when it strengthens them domestically. If they can more effectively deliver on domestic political promises when acting in concert, then national actors will reap popular (and electoral) support.

In the 1950s, governments enhanced their constituents' sense of security by creating a European Coal and Steel Community that locked Germany peacefully into Europe. In the 1980s, they delivered prosperity by creating the Single Market. As a result, national governments were strengthened by these integrationist initiatives.

The Draghi Report has opened the door to similar steps. Whether European leaders are prepared to walk through it will be evident soon enough. - Project Syndicate

• Barry Eichengreen, Professor of Economics and Political Science at the University of California, Berkeley, is the author, most recently, of *In Defense of Public Debt* (Oxford University Press, 2021).



Italian former prime minister and economist Mario Draghi speaks during a joint press conference about the future of European competitiveness at the EU headquarters in Brussels on September 9, 2024. (AFP/File Picture)

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Amir meets Czech and Greek prime ministers



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani met yesterday with Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala on the sidelines of the first GCC-EU Summit at the EU headquarters' Europa Building in Brussels.

The two sides discussed the existing bilateral relations and ways to boost them. They also exchanged views on regional and international issues of common interest, especially the developments in the Gaza Strip, the occupied Palestinian territories and Lebanon.

The deliberations also covered the key topics on the summit agenda.

Also present were HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani; HE the Chief of the Amiri Diwan, Sheikh Saoud bin Abdulrahman al-Thani; HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs, Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi; HE the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Qassim al-Thani; and HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi; along with the members of the official delegation accompanying the Amir. It was also attended on the Czech by several senior officials. (QNA)



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani met yesterday with Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, on the sidelines of the First Summit of the GCC and the European Union at the EU headquarters' Europa Building in Brussels. The two sides discussed the existing bilateral relations and ways to boost them across various fields. They also exchanged views on regional and international issues of common interest, especially the developments in the Gaza Strip, the occupied Palestinian territories and Lebanon. The deliberations also covered the key topics on the summit agenda.

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Amir calls for closer GCC-EU ties

From Page 1

We value in this respect the European Union's adoption of the Joint Communication of the EU on Strategic Partnership with the Gulf states in 2022 and the appointment of a special representative for the Gulf region. We, in the GCC, are keen on enhancing Gulf-European relations in various fields through coordinated efforts on regional and international issues, stimulating trade and investment cooperation, exchanging expertise in research and innovation, combating climate change, preserving the environment and promoting economic diversification.

On the economic front, we are confident that the future of our Gulf-European co-operation is promising, as the volume of trade exchange between our countries reached \$204.3bn in 2022, accounting for 13.2% of the total trade volume of the GCC countries.

Furthermore, foreign direct investment (FDI) from these countries in the European Union has increased significantly over the past decade, reaching \$177.8bn in 2022. Likewise, the volume of FDI from the EU in the Gulf Co-operation Council countries has grown substantially since 2017, amounting to \$233.6bn in 2022. I call in this respect for the strengthening and deepening of this cooperation through existing mechanisms, and the establishment of new mechanisms, if necessary, in line with the promising cooperation prospects between Gulf and European countries.

Honourable Audience, We are all aware of the magnitude of the dangers and security, political, and economic challenges facing the world, particularly the Middle East and Europe, amidst the ongoing war in Gaza, Lebanon, and the war between Russia and Ukraine.

Given the polarisation experienced by the international order, the importance of strengthening relations between the Gulf and Europe is increasing. We hope that this will contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of the international system in promot-

GCC-EU Summit to be a turning point in bilateral ties, says Amir

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani hoped that the first summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the European Union will represent a turning point in the bilateral relations between the two sides, in alignment with the promising co-operation prospects, in addition to bolstering the GCC-EU ties in multiple fields. In a post on his official X account, the Amir said that he participated on Wednesday in the first GCC-EU summit

being held to embody the deep-rooted historic relations between the Gulf states and their shared interests. His Highness the Amir hoped that such an important global event would represent a turning point in these relations, either through investing in the existing co-operation, or strengthening these ties in alignment with the promising co-operation prospects, as well as enhance the GCC-EU ties in wide-ranging fields. (QNA)

ing principles of justice and international legitimacy, away from the policies of double standards and biases that undermine the collective security framework agreed upon by the international community since World War II, and which now threaten global stability, security, and peace.

In this context, we appreciate the prominent role played by the European Union in maintaining global security and peace, and contributing effectively to finding peaceful solutions to ongoing international crises, and its efforts in driving the global economy forward and encouraging development efforts in various countries around the world.

Honourable Audience, Middle Eastern issues hold significant importance for Europe, just as European matters are of special importance to our countries. The two regions share a direct geographical proximity and persistent political, economic, and cultural connections throughout history.

The destructive war that has been waged by Israel on Palestinian territories and Lebanon, where war crimes have become a terrifying routine in the absence of any international accountability, stresses the urgent need for a comprehensive settlement of the conflict based on a just solution for the Palestinian issue according to international resolutions. This includes the complete with-

drawal from the Arab territories occupied in 1967 and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, alongside the State of Israel.

We call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon, and for an end to the military-backed settlers' provocations in the occupied West Bank. In this context, we in the State of Qatar reaffirm our ongoing mediation efforts with the Arab Republic of Egypt and the US of America to reach a ceasefire.

In Qatar, we see that the ceasefire should pave the way for serious negotiations leading to a comprehensive, just, and sustainable solution to the Palestinian issue in accordance with international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative.

We appreciate the role of those European countries that have taken a stance against the crimes perpetrated by Israel against civilians and support the Palestinian peoples right to self-determination and the establishment of their independent state. We look forward to a greater European role in reinforcing the international consensus on the two-state solution and concretise it from words into action through a reliable and irreversible process for establishing a Palestinian state on the 1967 borders.

In this regard, we value the role

of the countries that have recognised the Palestinian state and urge other countries to follow suit.

Regarding the situation in Lebanon, we reiterate our rejection and condemnation of the ongoing Israeli aggression against the sisterly Republic of Lebanon, which has claimed the lives of thousands of innocent civilians and has even targeted the UN peacekeeping forces (Unifil) in Lebanon, in flagrant violation of international law and international humanitarian law. We call on the international community to work seriously to achieve a ceasefire and implement UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which is clearly supported by the Lebanese government and is committed to its implementation.

Concerning the Russian-Ukrainian crisis, we affirm the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC)'s stance, which is based on the principles of international law and the UN Charter. This position emphasises respect for States' sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence, non-interference in their internal affairs, and the prohibition of the use of force or threat thereof. The GCC supports all mediation efforts, initiatives and good offices aimed at reaching a political solution to this crisis.

We understand European concerns about the waves of illegal immigration into Europe and are willing to co-operate in addressing this issue. At the same time, we believe that the basic thing lies in the need for joint efforts and investment to tackle major disasters, such as civil wars, genocides, and poverty that lead to displacement and waves of illegal immigration.

In conclusion, we hope that this summit will be a turning point in the history of the Gulf-European relations in a way that enhances political and economic security and stability for both sides.

I reiterate my thanks to everyone who contributed to the preparation of this summit, hoping it achieves the desired goals for the benefit of our peoples and all humanity.

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

Cabinet praises Amir's speech at Shura Council

His Highness the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Dr Khalid bin Mohamed al-Attiyah chaired the Cabinet's regular meeting held at the Amiri Diwan yesterday.

After the meeting, HE the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali al-Mohannadi issued a statement indicating that at the beginning of the meeting, the Cabinet praised His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's speech on Tuesday at the inauguration of the fourth ordinary session of the first legislative term, corresponding to the 53rd annual session of the Shura Council, and its important contents which set a roadmap for the future, outlined the features of the upcoming phase, defined the priorities and requirements for national development, in line with the objectives of the Third National Development Strategy, and emphasised the need to focus on developing human competencies and expertise in all fields, evaluating workers according to the standards of professionalism, efficiency, and quality of outputs, in addition to enhancing work ethics and ensuring diligence on public affairs.

The Cabinet expressed pride in the Amir's vision regarding adopting the results of the Cabinet's study concerning the necessary constitutional and legislative amendments, with the aim of enhancing national unity, equal citizenship, social responsibility, establishing justice, and achieving equality in rights and duties among citizens, and protecting public liberties under the rule of law.

The Cabinet pointed to the importance of co-operation between the legislative and executive authorities as stipulated in the constitution to achieve the supreme interest of the country under the wise leadership.

The Cabinet praised the Amir's emphasis on supporting joint Gulf work and Qatar's efforts in this regard, especially during its current presidency of the Gulf Co-operation Council. It also reaffirmed Qatar's commitment to establishing its foreign policy on fundamental principles that achieve national objectives and interests, reflect Islamic, Arab, and Gulf affiliation, and fulfil international commitments and effective partnerships with the international community to address global challenges for the benefit of humanity as a whole.

The Cabinet praised the Amir's reiteration of Qatar's steadfast positions regarding the Palestinian cause and its intensive efforts to reach an agreement that ends this war, stops the bloodshed of the brotherly people in Palestine, ensures the delivery of aid to them, and secures the release of prisoners and detainees, as a prelude to a political path towards a just solution, in addition to re-

iterating Qatar's condemnation of the airstrikes and military operations unleashed by the Israeli occupation forces against sisterly Lebanon.

The Cabinet regarded the directives contained in the Amir's speech as a framework for the government's work in the upcoming period and directed their immediate implementation.

The Cabinet approved a draft law adopting the states general budget for the fiscal year 2025 and decided to refer it to the Shura Council.

The Cabinet also agreed, in principle, to a draft law concerning attracting non-Qatari investment and its role in economic activities. The preparation of this draft law aims to attract and incentivise investment in the country's economic activities and to facilitate and simplify procedures for non-Qatari investment in line with the Third National Development Strategy.

The Cabinet approved a draft law adopting the states general budget for the fiscal year 2025 and decided to refer it to the Shura Council

Additionally, the Cabinet approved a draft decision by the Minister of Municipality to specify areas where certain vehicles are prohibited from parking, both inside and outside designated parking spaces across all municipalities, which aims to prevent visual and environmental pollution caused by the parking of trucks and vehicles within cities and residential areas, to prevent random parking of trucks in open spaces, and to improve the quality of life in urban and residential neighbourhoods while reducing congestion on main roads, ensuring that suitable alternatives are provided in co-ordination with relevant authorities.

The Cabinet also reviewed the Permanent Population Committee's study regarding persons with autism and its recommendations, and took the appropriate decision in its regard.

The Cabinet concluded its meeting by approving the National Archives of Qatar's joining certain international organisations and centres, a draft Letter of Intent between the Ministry of Interior of Qatar and the German Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community regarding security co-operation in training and exchange of expertise, two draft executive programmes for the memorandum of understanding between the Qatari Ministry of Sports and Youth and the Omani Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth in sports and youth for the years 2025-2027, in addition to approving an executive programme in the field of youth between the governments of Qatar and the Philippines for the years 2024-2025. (QNA)

Qatar participates in GCC-EU ministerial meeting



Qatar participated in the ministerial meeting between the GCC and the European Union (EU), in Brussels yesterday. HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi represented Qatar at the meeting. (QNA)



«And yet, it moves»

Galileo

Coined in 1633. Possibly said around November 2, perhaps

«...counterclockwise»

Swatch

November 2 2024, to be exact