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Amir begins today visits to Italy, Germany

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani will begin today a state visit to friendly Italy, followed by an official visit to friendly Germany.

During the two visits, His Highness the Amir will discuss, with leaders and senior officials of the two countries, ways to strengthen friendship and co-operation ties in multiple fields, in addition to a range of regional and global issues of common concern.

His Highness the Amir will be accompanied by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, alongside an official delegation.

His Highness the Amir's visits to Italy and Germany represent a continuation of his continental tours, which have gained significant im-

portance and momentum due to Qatar's active and dynamic role on the international stage and its distinguished position in the global economy.

These visits highlight the leadership's commitment to following a distinctive approach in shaping bilateral relations between Qatar and other countries, based on openness, dialogue and the establishment of strategic partnerships that serve mutual interests, while also enhancing co-operation to support efforts for stability and peace in the region and the world.

Italy and Germany are receiving His Highness the Amir at a highly significant time, given the rapid developments in the Middle East and the global political and economic challenges. This context adds increasing importance to the discussions he will

hold with these countries, aimed at enhancing co-operation to address regional and international developments and challenges.

His Highness the Amir's tours reflect keenness to elevate Qatar's external relations based on common interests and to boost stability, peace and development regionally and globally.

The Amir's visits to Italy and Germany are seen as a reflection of the insightful vision of the wise leadership, and a successful strategy to amplify Qatar's global presence and roles.

The visits represent a new starting point for strengthening bilateral relations at various political and economic levels, with the two friendly countries being major EU heavyweights politically and economically. (QNA) **Page 11**



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani

Qatar Population Day to be marked today

The Permanent Population Committee (PPC), in collaboration with Centre for Empowerment and Care of the Elderly (Ehsan), is set to organise an event today to mark the Qatar Population Day. The event features a symposium under the theme of elderly in Qatar: a better future through sustainable care and highlights health and socioeconomic challenges facing the elderly in Qatar, in addition to discussing strategies and policies that can be endorsed to enhance the care for elderly and improve their life quality. Members of PPC and Ehsan are due to participate in the event, alongside members of groups following up on the implementation of the population policy of Qatar, as well as those who engage in preparing this policy and the Third National Development Strategy of Qatar. **Page 3**

Harris and Trump court early voters

Democrat Kamala Harris and Republican Donald Trump hit the campaign trail yesterday, pressing their case with voters from Georgia to Pennsylvania who are already starting to cast ballots in the US presidential election. Harris and Trump are essentially tied in the most competitive states and many Americans are voting early by mail or in person, with just 17 days until the Nov. 5 election. Yesterday, Harris rallied supporters at a get-out-the-vote event in Detroit, Michigan, for the city's first day of early voting, alongside Detroit-born rapper Lizzo. (Reuters) **Page 9**

Israeli air strikes kill 73 Palestinians in north Gaza

Reuters
Cairo

At least 73 Palestinians, including many women and children, were killed and dozens wounded in Israeli strikes yesterday that hit several houses in Beit Lahiya town in northern Gaza Strip, Hamas media said.

The Hamas-run Gaza government media office also said dozens were wounded and missing in the strikes. Medics said the air strikes targeted a multi-floor building and damaged several houses nearby.

Palestinian health officials said rescue operations were being hampered by the cut-off of telecommunication and Internet services for the second day. Earlier in the day, the Gaza health ministry said Israeli military strikes killed 35 Palestinians across the enclave.

"This is a war of genocide and ethnic cleansing. The occupation has conducted a horrifying massacre in Beit Lahiya," the Hamas media office said.

Residents and medics said Israeli forces had tightened their siege on Jabalia, the largest of the enclave's eight historic camps, which it encircled by also sending tanks to nearby towns of Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahiya and issuing evacuation orders to residents.

In Jabalia, residents said Israeli army forces besieged several shelters housing displaced



Displaced Palestinians, ordered by the Israeli army to leave the school in Beit Lahiya where they were sheltered, rest as they arrive in Gaza City yesterday.

families before they stormed them and detained dozens of men. Footage circulated on social media, which Reuters could not immediately verify, showed dozens of Palestinian men sitting on the ground next to a tank, while others were led by a soldier to a gathering site.

Residents and medical officials said Israeli forces were bombing houses and besieging hospitals, preventing medical and food supplies from entering to force them to leave the camp.

Health officials said they refused orders by the Israeli army to evacuate the hospital or leave the patients, many in a critical condition, unattended.

Israeli military strikes killed at least 108 people across the Gaza Strip yesterday and its forces tightened a siege around hospitals in Jabalia in the north of the

enclave, Palestinian health officials said.

Israel's war has devastated Gaza, killing more than 42,500 Palestinians, with another 10,000 uncounted dead thought to lie under the rubble, Gaza health authorities say.

In the central Gaza Strip camp of Al-Maghzai, an Israeli strike on a house killed 11 people, while another strike at the nearby camp of Nuseirat killed four others.

Five other people were killed in two separate strikes in the south Gaza cities of Khan Younis and Rafah, medics said, while seven Palestinians were killed in the Shati camp in the northern Gaza Strip.

Later yesterday, an Israeli strike killed three Palestinians in Nuseirat in central Gaza, medics said. **Pages 6,7**

Israel pounds Beirut and Gaza

Israel struck what it said were Hezbollah arms facilities in southern Beirut yesterday after the Lebanese armed group fired rockets into northern Israel and a spokesman said a drone was launched at Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's holiday home.

Netanyahu was not there at the time, and it was not immediately clear if the building was hit.

The strikes came as health officials in Gaza, where Israel has been trying to root out Hamas for more than a year, said Israeli bombardments had killed at least 35 people and a siege around three hospitals had tightened.

In Israel's southern suburbs, Israel carried out heavy strikes on several locations, leaving thick plumes of smoke hanging over the city into the evening.

Tens of thousands of people

have fled the southern suburbs — once a densely populated zone — since Israel began regular strikes there about three weeks ago.

The US would like to see Israel scale back some of its strikes in and around Beirut, US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said.

Earlier yesterday, an Israeli strike killed two people as they were travelling on Lebanon's main highway near the Christian-majority town of Jounieh. Israel's military said it was looking into the incident.

Another strike killed at least four people in Lebanon's Bekaa valley, health authorities said. One of them was the mayor of a nearby town, the second mayor to be killed this week.

In a series of Hezbollah rocket salvos in Israel, one person was killed and at least nine injured, the Israeli ambulance service said. (Reuters)



A cloud of smoke erupts following an Israeli air strike on Beirut's southern suburbs yesterday.

Qatar, a leading global medical tourism destination

Qatar has positioned itself as a premium global destination for medical tourism, Qatar Chamber board member Ibtihaj al-Ahmadani, told the recent '16th Arab-German Health Forum', organised by the Arab-German Chamber of Commerce (Ghorfa) in Berlin.

The forum, which focused on exploring Arab-German co-operation opportunities in the healthcare sector, witnessed broad participation from German officials, Arab chambers' representatives, decision-makers, experts, busi-

ness owners, and stakeholders in the healthcare industry.

Al-Ahmadani, who is also Qatar Chamber's Health Committee chairperson, highlighted the development of a wide range of healthcare facilities in the country, including state-of-the-art hospitals, health centres, sanatoriums, and resorts offering advanced treatments.

Speaking at a panel titled 'Strategic Alliances in Medical Tourism: Enhancing Healthcare Experiences and Economic Opportunities between Arab Coun-



Qatar Chamber board member Ibtihaj al-Ahmadani addressing the forum in Berlin.

tries and Germany', she presented Qatar's leading medical tourism institutions.

She noted that Zula Wellness Resort is one of Qatar's leading institutions in the medical tourism sector. Only recently, the resort was honoured as 'Wellness Retreat of the Year' at the Destination Deluxe Awards 2024 held in Bangkok.

Al-Ahmadani also highlighted Aspetar Hospital, emphasising that it is a globally recognised, specialised orthopaedic and sports medicine hospital, the first

of its kind in the Middle East. With a global team of experts, surgeons, and researchers, Aspetar provides top-level, comprehensive medical treatment to athletes and the public in a state-of-the-art facility, setting new international standards.

She underscored Qatar's significant developments in the healthcare sector, saying it fosters co-operation and exchanging expertise with leading countries, and emphasised that Germany is one of the most advanced and distinguished in this field.

Al-Ahmadani noted that there are numerous opportunities for collaboration between Qatari and German companies, adding that Qatar is keen to attract German investments in the health sector and incorporate advanced German technology through partnerships and alliances.

"Qatar Chamber is inviting German companies to explore the Qatari market and enhance their co-operation with Qatari companies through joint ventures, whether in Qatar or Germany," she added.



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QFFD, QRCS back cholera control capacity in Yemen



With funding from Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD), Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) has launched an integrated emergency response to cholera in Yemen, with the aim of strengthening the medical capacity of 26 medical facilities to control the epidemic in six governorates, at a total cost of QR1,825,000.

To ensure an effectiveness and impactful intervention, certain

criteria were used to select the target locations, including epidemic prevalence rates and the overpopulated areas of high response priority and most affected population density in Amanat Al-Asimah, Sanaa, Taiz, Hajjah, Al-Hudaydah, and Dhale.

The three-month project provides full medical support to operate five diarrhoeal treatment centres (DTC); create 21 oral rehydration corners/therapy (ORCs/

ORTs) to provide treatment, prevention, referral, and health awareness services at the target facilities and nearby communities; provide medications, medical supplies, and hygiene/sterilisation/rapid text tools; pay for staff remunerations; provide health education training for volunteers; and distribute water purification filters to 200 families.

Earlier this year, QRCS had implemented an emergency cholera

response intervention, which involved creating/supporting ORCs/ORTs; providing medications, medical supplies, operational expenses, health workers remunerations, and referrals; and promoting health awareness at five medical facilities in Mabyan District, Hajjah Governorate, northwestern Yemen.

The three-month project helped treat 6,125 patients with acute diarrhoea. (QNA)

QMC to attend MIPCOM 2024 exhibition in France

Qatar Media Corp (QMC) is marking its inaugural participation in the 40th edition of the prestigious International Exhibition for Entertainment and Television Content Market, MIPCOM 2024, set to take place in Cannes, France, from October 21 to 24. Leading the QMC delegation will be HE Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Thani al-Thani, CEO of Qatar Media Corp.

The event brings together over 11,000 participants from 100 countries, including key television channels, production companies, and global providers of entertainment content. Qatar Media Corporation's participation in MIPCOM 2024 aims to strengthen Qatar's media presence on the international stage, showcasing the capabilities of its media institutions in television and entertainment production. This

initiative aligns with QMC's broader strategy of reinforcing Qatar's presence in global forums and advancing the development of cultural and creative content. Additionally, QMC is committed to its media mission of promoting Qatari values and Arab culture to a global audience.

At MIPCOM 2024, QMC will focus on presenting its high-quality and innovative productions, emphasising programmes that have garnered wide acclaim and prestigious awards. These include documentary series and entertainment programmes designed for an international audience, underscoring the creativity and impact of Qatari media production.

The MIPCOM 2024 exhibition provides a valuable platform for Qatar Media Corp to engage with leading global producers and distribu-



tors. The Corp is set to hold a series of high-level meetings with executives from major TV channels and production companies. These discussions will explore potential collaborations for new programme and series productions, while also presenting opportunities to sell broadcasting rights for some of QMC's most successful programmes in international markets.

In a move to further enhance Qatari media presence, Qatar's Media City will also participate in the QMC

pavilion, opening up avenues for increased international co-operation in content production and distribution. QMC plans to use its dedicated pavilion to promote several upcoming productions and announce the launch of a major new project that is expected to attract significant attention. This reflects QMC's commitment to producing innovative and purposeful media content that resonates with diverse audiences worldwide.

The pavilion will also highlight future projects and recent developments within QMC's television production sector, including internationally award-winning programmes that have achieved significant viewer success. Through engaging presentations, the Corp will showcase its progress and aspirations for the future. (QNA)

Al Noor Center hosts symposium

Al Noor Center for the Blind, a centre that operates under the Qatar Foundation for Social Work, and affiliated with the Ministry of Social Development and Family (MSDF) has organised a symposium under the theme: 'The White Cane: A Symbol of Blindness'.

The event brought together a substantial number of people with visual impairment (PVI), professionals and those interested in PVI's issues. It intended to raise the awareness of the critical role of the white cane in PVI's life and help them bolster their capabilities of commuting and being guided.

Addressing the event, head of the assistive technology department at the centre and moderator of the symposium, Fatima Abushreida, emphasised the importance of the white cane as a symbol that signifies PVI and a tool that is used while commuting.

For her part, orientation and movement specialist at the centre, Mona al-Khalidi, gave a brief

description of the white cane, its evolutionary history, and highlighted its diverse types, specifications and significance of each type in providing essential support for individuals. She noted the centre's role in promoting the use of white canes through conducting special trainings for affiliates on their use.

Chairman of Qatar Social and Cultural Center for the Blind Faisal Muhammad al-Kooheji delivered a presentation on the white cane-technology between reality and aspiration - in which he discussed the state-of-the-art technologies related to the white cane, such as canes that are fitted with cutting-edge technologies, including sensors and navigation which help individuals use them on daily basis.

Al-Kooheji noted the distinction between conventional white canes and those supported by technology, and how these modern technologies can be effective in PVI's life to help them largely interact with their surroundings. (QNA)

Ehsan event to mark Qatar Population Day

The Permanent Population Committee, in collaboration with the Centre for Empowerment and Care of the Elderly (Ehsan), will host an event today to commemorate Qatar Population Day, celebrated annually in October.

The event will feature a symposium titled 'The Elderly in Qatar: A Better Future through Sustainable Care', aimed at addressing the health, social, and economic chal-

lenges faced by older persons in Qatar. The symposium will explore strategies and policies that can be implemented to enhance care for the elderly and improve their quality of life, a statement said.

The event offers a platform for specialists and experts in health and social care to exchange knowledge and share experiences. Participants will have the chance to learn about the latest innovative approaches and best practices in

elderly care. The symposium will focus on achieving financial sustainability in providing care services and ensuring the development of a sustainable infrastructure that meets the long-term needs of older persons.

The event will also showcase successful global and local examples of elderly care, providing valuable insights for shaping future policies and improving the well-being of this population. At-

tendees will include members of the Permanent Population Committee and Ehsan Centre, as well as those involved in the development and implementation of Qatar's Population Policy, contributors to the Third National Development Strategy, representatives from population-related ministries and organisations, universities, academic and research centres, civil society organisations, and regional partners.





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Photo Credit: Diana Matar

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



Photo Credit: Alex von Tunzelmann

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Sweden king, queen receive Qatar's envoy



King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden, and Queen Silvia received Qatar's ambassador to Sweden Nadia bint Ahmed al-Sheebi during a reception hosted by the king at the Royal Palace. The event was attended by members of the Swedish royal family and high-ranking officials. (QNA)

Deputy PM meets Kyrgyz counterpart



HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Dr Khalid bin Mohammed al-Attiyah met with the visiting Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the State Committee for National Security of the Kyrgyz Republic, Lieutenant General Kamchybek Tashiyev and his accompanying delegation. An official reception ceremony was accorded to the Kyrgyz deputy prime minister at the Joint Special Forces Camp. Discussions during the meeting focused on topics of common interest, as well as co-operation relations between the two sides and ways to enhance and develop them. The meeting was attended by HE Commander of the Amiri Signal and Information Technology Corps, Major General Zayed bin Ahmed al-Kuwari; HE Commander of the Leader Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Attiyah Air College, Major General (Pilot) Salem bin Abdullah Nayef al-Dosari; and HE Commander of the Joint Special Forces, Major General Jassim bin Ali al-Attiyah along with a number of senior officials and officers from both sides. (QNA)

Official

Amir sends cables of condolences to king of Bahrain

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani and HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent cables of condolences to King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifah of Bahrain, on the death of Shaikh Hamoud bin Abdullah bin Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifah. (QNA)

Al-Muraikhi opens Qatari embassy in Czech Republic



HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi opened on Friday the premises of the Qatari embassy in Prague. The opening ceremony was attended by Czech Foreign Minister Jan Lipavsky, Qatar's ambassador Nasser bin Ibrahim al-Langawi, and a number of officials and heads of diplomatic missions accredited to the Czech Republic. (QNA)

Shura Council participates in two parliamentary meetings in Geneva

QNA
Geneva

The Shura Council has participated in the second Meeting of Preparatory Committee for Sixth Global Conference of Speakers of Parliaments and the second meeting of the preparatory committee for the 15th Conference of Women Parliamentarians that were held in Geneva, within the framework of the preparation for the two conferences slated to be convened in July 2025.

HE the Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council and representative of the Arab Group in the preparatory committees, Dr Hamda bint Hassan al-Sulaiti, represented the Council in the two meetings.

In her remarks before the meeting of preparatory committee for the Conference of Speakers of Parliaments which discussed applying of multilateralism for bright future for the generations, HE Dr al-Sulaiti highlighted the global challenges facing the international community, including armed conflicts, climate change, as well as the continuation of food gap and cybersecurity.

She affirmed that international parliaments are required to play a significant role in addressing these issues through reforming the UN Security Council and UN institutions, stressing that an executive mechanism should exist to ensure adherence to international laws. She focused on Qatar's efforts in bolstering global peace through mediation and conflict resolution via peaceful dialogue. She highlighted the new technological



challenges such as cybersecurity, emphasising the importance of utilising the technological advancements through responsible methods to achieve justice and stability.

At the meeting of the preparatory committee for the 15th Conference of Women Parliamentarians, she underlined the topic of political violence against women, noting that notwithstanding the steady progress of women engagement in the political work during the past two years, women still face massive challenges, as they are exposed to multiple forms of verbal and cyber violence, and sometimes physical threats.

She pointed out that such violence remarkably escalates during political conflicts and wars, citing the constant struggle of the Palestinian women who endured detention, violence and displacement throughout their careers to call for political and economic rights. This outright struggle underscores the fact that Arab women have been stoically enduring the political violence.

On another topic under the theme of

women's role in the political participation, HE the deputy Speaker of the Shura Council pointed out that 2024 witnessed an increase in the major elections but highlighted that many countries witnessed a decrease in the democratic process. She underlined that education, and women economic empowerment have played a critical role in increasing their engagement in policy, but there is a need for an in-depth study of the circumstances and obstacles that beset women in all countries with the aim of preferring solutions that boost their participation.

During the same meeting, she addressed the role of women in building peace, stressing that women should significantly be engaged in all phases of peace processes, starting from negotiations to reconstruction, in accordance with the UN Security Council resolution 1325, affirming that the number of women participating in official peace processes is still low, albeit the significant efforts on the part of the UN.

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- D. Submission of Proposals**
Guidelines for Electronic Bids Submission is attached in the Tender documents.



Ministry fetes students of Tumoooh programme

QNA
Doha

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) yesterday honoured 120 male and female students who had excelled in Tumoooh programme for the academic year 2023-2024. After honouring the students, HE the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education Dr Ibrahim bin Saleh al-Nuaimi told Qatar News Agency (QNA) that since its inception during the academic year 2009-2010, the programme has succeeded in encouraging and attracting the students at Qatar University's College of Education to embark on education career and be significant talents in supplying MoEHE with male and female teachers.

HE Dr al-Nuaimi said the number of female students who pivoted toward the education career has been the most substantial one since the start of the academic year, but recently there has been an increase in the number of students who are willing to embark on the teaching profession by virtue of the incentives and privileges the programme offers to

its affiliates, along with the awareness campaigns MoEHE organises at schools to promote the programme and urge students to enrol in order to have a pivotal role in human development.

HE Dr al-Nuaimi affirmed that MoEHE has embarked on expanding the programme further, especially that there are other programmes in the pedagogical field which are intended to draw teachers from both genders, primarily at Lusail University and will soon start at the University of Doha for Science and Technology.

He hoped that the programme would go global to attract students who study educational majors abroad under its umbrella, affirming that today's celebration of the excelled students aimed at honouring, catalysing and connecting them with MoEHE who will join this ministry after graduation to be a significant adjunct to the educational and pedagogical career in Qatar and have a profound role in the sustainable development.

Addressing the honouring ceremony, Acting Director of the Scholarships Department Noura al-Ansari congratulated the honorees for their excellence, asserting that their achievements are not merely a success, but rather an outcome

of the MoEHE's unflagging efforts.

Al-Ansari delivered a message to the students and called on them to maintain these achievements and continue their prominence in all walks of life during their study and after graduation and make these accomplishments the hallmarks of life. She added that Qatar always advances its generations to be a role model for their peers in taking advantage of leisure time and enrolling in student activities.

In addition, al-Ansari delivered a message to the parents and congratulated them for the milestones their students have achieved as a testament to their constructive efforts and unyielding support in providing an environment conducive for academic achievements. She affirmed that this familial awareness stems from parents' passion for advancing their students' level of education for the bright future.

She urged all community members to pursue an all-hands-on-deck approach to advance the homeland, everyone in his/her fields to achieve the Qatar National Vision 2030, emphasising that future challenges require determination and relentless work, since nations are advanced through education.



QARS, QSGA take part in World Virtual Scout Camp

The Qatar Amateur Radio Society (QARS) and the Qatar Scouts and Guides Association (QSGA) took part in the World Virtual Scout Camp on the Air and Internet (JOTA-JOTI) through a dedicated radio station located at the QARS headquarters, utilising the special call sign / A71AJOTA/ for the occasion.

In remarks to QNA, QARS Secretary-General Sabaan Mismar al-Jassim explained that the Scout Day on the Air, known as / JOTA/, is an official international event organised by the World Organisation of the Scout Movement (WOSM).

The event connects over 8mn scouts of all ages from across the globe via amateur radio stations, encouraging communication, providing an enriching scouting experience, and fostering a sense

of belonging to the global scouting community.

Al-Jassim highlighted that JOTA is co-ordinated worldwide by a specialised team under the World Scout Committee and approved by the World Scout Bureau. All related activities take place simultaneously during the third weekend of October each year. He emphasised that the event's core message is to promote cultural exchange, allowing scouts and radio amateurs to broadcast their voices from Qatar to the world, facilitating the exchange of knowledge and experiences, and maintaining year-round communication.

Al-Jassim also acknowledged the strong support from Qatar for QARS, noting the provision of a dedicated radio station for amateur operators on the Es'hail 2 satellite. This allows Qatar's ra-

dio enthusiasts to transmit their voices globally, further solidifying Qatar's presence in the amateur radio community.

He further emphasised QARS' commitment to showcasing major events hosted by Qatar. He revealed that the organisation is currently preparing special stations for the upcoming National Day and Sports Day, following its participation in high-profile events such as the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and the AFC Asian Cup.

For his part, Commissioner-General of QSGA, Jassim Mohammed al-Hardan, also shared insights with QNA, noting that the World Virtual Scout Camp (JOTA-JOTI) is the largest global digital and radio scouting event. Millions of scouts, guides and amateur radio operators come together annually through the Internet and airwaves to exchange scouting knowledge, strengthen cultural ties, and share experiences.

Al-Hardan elaborated that JOTA serves as a live "camp on the air," where scouts worldwide communicate via radio to share scouting ideas and experiences. The simultaneous JOTI camp utilises Internet technologies to further connect scouts, offering every scout, rover, and leader a profound sense of belonging to a vast and inclusive scouting movement. (QNA)



Aster DM Healthcare in strategic partnership with Golalita Trading

Aster DM Healthcare Qatar announced a strategic partnership with Golalita Trading and Application Development, aimed at providing enhanced health benefits to employees across various sectors in Qatar.

The collaboration was formalised with Aster DM Healthcare Qatar COO Kapil Chib and Golalita Trading CEO Ali al-Yafei signing a contract that will allow the former to extend exclusive offers to users of the Golalita discount programme, a statement said.

Aster DM Healthcare operates a hospital and five medical centres in Qatar. Golalita Trading's discount programme is designed for employees of organisations such as the Supreme Judicial Council, Qatar Post, Ministry of Interior, Lekhwiya, Masraf Al Rayyan, Gulf Exchange, Al Dar Exchange and Beema Insurance. Through this partnership, As-



ter DM Healthcare will provide a range of health services and discounts tailored for the members of these organisations. Chib, said: "We are excited to collaborate with Golalita Trading

to offer valuable health benefits that will empower employees and their families. This initiative aligns with our mission to make quality healthcare accessible to everyone."

ABN Corporation, in collaboration with ROCOL, successfully hosted the ROCOL Technical Seminar on 16 Oct 2024 in Radisson Blu Hotel, Doha-Qatar.



The event saw active participation from both Government and Private sector companies, bringing together Industry leaders, Professionals, and key decision-makers.

Senior officials from ABN Corporation, including Mr. J K Menon, Chairman, and Mr. Jithesh P. Senior Business Development Manager, along with representatives

from ROCOL, including Mr. Javier Manzano, Mr. Simon Parnell, and Mr. Intieaz, were present at the seminar.

The seminar featured detailed technical presentations covering ROCOL's innovative solutions in the fields of Industrial Lubricants, Cranes and Ports, and Metalworking. These sessions were followed by an interactive technical

Q&A session, where attendees, including Government Officials and representatives from Private companies, engaged in meaningful discussions on industry challenges and the latest technological trends.

The event offered a valuable platform for knowledge exchange and collaborative learning, fostering stronger connections between experts and industry stakeholders.

NU-Q to host symposium on Arabic storytelling

Media Majlis Museum (mm:museum) at Northwestern University in Qatar (NU-Q), in collaboration with global media and educational platform afkra, will host a public symposium on October 26, exploring the significance of Arabic storytelling in artificial intelligence, film and media.

The multidisciplinary event at NU-Q campus coincides with the ongoing exhibition on Arabic titled "The limits of my language are the limits of my world," curated by alumna Amal Zeyad Ali. The programme will include panel discussions, two performances and a variety of collateral activities.

The first panel, 'Screens and Scripts: The Future of Arabic in Media,' will focus on the evolving role of the Arabic language across various media platforms, from traditional news outlets to modern streaming services and social media channels. The second panel, "Algorithms and Alphabets: Advancing Arabic in Technology," will focus on how Arabic interfaces with emerging technologies.

In the final panel, Enam al-Wer, professor in the Department of Language and Linguistics at the University of Essex,



The event coincides with the ongoing exhibition on Arabic.

Lebanese author Omar Thawabeh, and Layan Abdul Shakoor, founder and creative director at Saudi-based writing and publishing house Mauzoun, will explore the evolving landscape of Arabic publishing.

Performances by DJ Amen Ra, and Bedouin Burger, a musical duo featuring Lynn Adib and Zeid Hamdan are among the highlights. Alfredo Cramerotti, director of mm:museum, said: "The symposium exemplifies the public engagement the media majlis museum promotes, featuring conversations, debates,

performances and networking on the Arabic language in media, tech and publishing. Collaborating with afkra enhances our connection with Arab communities and enriches the storytelling of Arabic culture for younger audiences."

This symposium is part of an ongoing collaboration between media majlis museum and afkra, which also includes a three-episode podcast series exploring the Arabic language, culture and identity jointly produced and published on The afkra Podcast Network.

Ministry conducts Sealine deep cleaning campaign



The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change has carried out a campaign to clean the beach and seabed of the Sealine area, with the participation of a number of volunteer divers. The campaign resulted in removing large amounts of accumulated waste and refuse materials at the seabed and the seashore. The campaign was organised by the Marine Protection Department in co-operation with the Natural Protectorates Department.



Final Announcement from Arab Bank plc – Qatar

This is to announce that the below list of cheques issued by applicants through our Bank have not been presented to date and remain outstanding for over 10 years.

In case the Bank is not contacted with regards to these cheques within 3 weeks from the date of this announcement, their proceeds shall be transferred to General Authority for Minor Affairs.

Kindly visit our Main Branch located at Grand Hamad Street or contact us at 4438 7878.

S#	Cheque No.	Currency	Amount	Applicant	Beneficiary
1	14996	QAR	311,888.73	ARAB BANK	ALI ABDALLA DARWISH AL DARWISH
2	15028	QAR	266.56	ARAB BANK	RAWDA MOHAMMED MAHMOUD SAEED
3	15030	QAR	141.32	ARAB BANK	FAWZIA MOHAMMED AL OTHMAN FAKHROO
4	15032	QAR	1648.86	ARAB BANK	SHAIKHA QASSIM DARWISH FAKHROO
5	15033	QAR	1648.86	ARAB BANK	MARYAM QASSIM DARWISH FAKHROO
6	15035	QAR	2894.96	ARAB BANK	BADR ABDULLAH DARWISH FAKHROO
7	15036	QAR	1648.86	ARAB BANK	AYSHA QASSIM DARWISH FAKHROO

Awqaf honours 29 preachers for completing advanced training

HE the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs, Sheikh Dr Khalid bin Mohammed bin Ghanem al-Thani, honoured 29 preachers at the conclusion of the 2024 "Rhetorical Skills" programme.

The intensive training, held at the Al Jazeera Media Institute, is part of the ministry's comprehensive plan to equip all mosque preachers with advanced rhetorical skills. In his remarks, HE the undersecretary emphasised the ministry's commitment to enhancing the skills and effectiveness of its preachers as part of its broader vision to strengthen the role of mosques in society.

He highlighted that one of the ministry's key objectives is to elevate the Friday sermon, both in content and delivery, to ensure it resonates more deeply with the community. Through the col-



laboration with Al Jazeera Media Institute, the undersecretary said Awqaf aims to prepare, qualify and train preachers, imams and orators, equipping them with essential communication and media skills. These specialised training

programmes are designed to improve their professional delivery and presentation, enabling a more profound engagement with the Friday sermon's message.

Head of the Institute of Preaching and Islamic Sciences at the

ministry's Department of Preaching and Religious Guidance, Omar al-Ruwaili further elaborated on the goals of the programme. He noted that the training courses focus on developing preachers' rhetorical, recitation, and vocal

performance abilities. By incorporating effective communication techniques and body language mastery, the courses empower preachers to convey their messages with clarity and impact, helping them connect with the public in a

manner that fulfils the sermon's purpose, he said.

Al-Ruwaili added that the programme aims to reinforce the ministry's efforts in educating and raising societal awareness about religious and life matters based on the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunnah.

He explained that since the partnership began in 2022, over 400 preachers have undergone training at the Al Jazeera Media Institute. Under the guidance of expert trainers, including vocal skills specialist Salem al-Jahoushi and communication consultant Ramadan al-Mawsil, participants have benefited from 30 intensive speech courses. The trainers carefully monitored the preachers' progress, identifying strengths and areas for improvement, with the goal of refining their public speaking abilities to the highest standard in both appearance and performance. (QNA)

Qatar, Jordan cultural relations witness significant growth

QNA
Amman

Cultural relations between Qatar and Jordan have witnessed significant growth, thanks to the shared cultural heritage both nations possess, allowing them to present an exceptional model on the cultural stage, both regionally and internationally.

Jordanian officials and writers, in statements to Qatar News Agency (QNA) on the sidelines of Qatar's participation in the Amman International Book Fair 2024, which concluded yesterday, described the cultural relations between the two countries as strong.

Dr Maher Naqsh, Secretary-General of the Jordanian Ministry of Culture, said that the history of cultural agreements between the two countries dates back to 1972, followed by the signing of an executive programme for co-operation in 1994 in Qatar. The most recent cultural co-operation agreement was signed in June 2021, adding to many mutual participation and events between the two countries. He noted that about 14 intellectuals, including writers, novelists, critics and researchers considered among Jordan's most prominent, won the Katara Prize for Arabic Novel between 2015 and 2020.

He added that the agreements signed between the two countries focus on strengthening and supporting joint cultural co-operation by organising art exhibitions, cultural weeks, visits by artistic, theatrical, musical and dance troupes, as well as fine arts exhibi-

tions. Dr Naqsh pointed out that there is co-operation between the national libraries of both countries through the exchange of scientific information, publications, manuscripts, and the promotion of intellectual production exchange, as well as collaboration in library training and manuscript restoration.

Jordanian writer and novelist Mufleh al-Adwan stated that the cultural relations between Qatar and Jordan are characterised by co-operation and mutual respect, reflecting a long history of interaction between the people. There are several areas that contribute to enhancing these relations, with Arabic literature being an important medium for expressing identity and culture.

He added that poetry is a fundamental aspect of the culture in both countries, with prominent poets participating in poetry evenings held in both Qatar and Jordan, aiming to highlight young talents and to strengthen cultural interaction.

Al-Adwan also noted the collaboration between Qatari and Jordanian universities through the exchange of expertise and curricula via academic conferences that focus on higher education topics. Some universities in both countries offer joint postgraduate programmes, enabling students to earn degrees recognised in both nations.

Jabr Abu Faris, director of the Amman International Book Fair, highlighted the excellent relationship between the Qatari Ministry of Culture and the Union of Jor-

danian Publishers. He noted that Jordanian publishing houses are keen to participate in the Doha International Book Fair, just as Qatari cultural institutions are dedicated to taking part in the Amman International Book Fair through an official pavilion for the Qatari Ministry of Culture.

Abu Faris praised Qatar's dynamic cultural movement and infrastructure, which has positioned Qatari culture as a remarkable model for preserving Arab and Islamic traditions. He also highlighted the integration and harmony of cultural elements within Qatari society, which manifest in Qatar's national identity, reflecting the country's strong emphasis on culture.

Taghreed Najjar, a Jordanian writer specialising in children's and young adult literature, noted the significant development in cultural relations between Qatar and Jordan, particularly in the fields of education and culture.

Regarding co-operation in education and culture, Najjar noted that Qatar provides scholarships for Jordanian students to study at its universities.

Additionally, Jordanian teachers are recruited to teach various subjects in Qatari schools, and are valued for their high qualifications. This contributes to the exchange of educational expertise between the two countries.

She also mentioned cultural agreements between Qatar and Jordan, which reflect the deep cultural ties and co-operation in various artistic and cultural fields. (QNA)

Registration opens for Sheikh Jassim Bin Mohamed Bin Thani Holy Qur'an contest

The organising committee of Sheikh Jassim Bin Mohamed Bin Thani Holy Qur'an Competition at the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs has started registration for the competition in its twenty-ninth session.

Registration is open for male, female citizens and residents and the organising committee will receive the registration until October 29.

According to a statement from Awqaf, those wishing to participate in the competition can register via the link (<https://islam.qa/jassimReg>). Also, the participants register by using the barcode in

the competition announcement. The competition is held in three categories. The organising committee of the competition has set conditions for participation on its website.

The tests for the male candidates will begin on November 9 at the Grand Mosque while female competitors can attend the tests at Awqaf's Women's Activity Building at Al Waab.

In each category, there would be five male winners and five female winners. The committee said the first-place winner in memorising the entire Holy Qur'an in recitation and intonation for the category of citizens as

well as in the categories of general memorisers and memorisers from residents will receive QR100,000.

The second place winner in these three categories will receive QR85,000 and while the third place winners will receive QR70,000. The fourth place winners will receive QR60,000. The prize money is the same for male and female contestants.

Contestants, who passed the second stage and did not qualify for the third stage of the competition in memorising the entire Holy Qur'an will be given prize money. Also, contestants with a good voice will also receive prize money.

Fearing attacks on airport, Lebanese leave by sea

AFP
Tripoli

Hassan Alik, fleeing escalating violence in the Israel-Hezbollah war, left Lebanon yesterday aboard a ship to avoid Beirut's airport, which he feared "could be bombed" at any moment.

The 31-year-old travelled to the northern port of Tripoli, on Lebanon's Mediterranean coast, which has so far been spared Israeli bombardment in a month of intense fighting across much of the tiny country.

And though Lebanon's only international airport has not been hit either, Israel's military last month warned it could strike there to stop weapons transfers to Hezbollah fighters.

Since then, many Lebanese seeking safety abroad have favoured the 13-hour sea trip to Turkey aboard cargo ships adapted for passengers, instead of flying from Beirut's airport, which was targeted during Israel's last major war with Hezbollah in 2006.

"I'm travelling from here because I'm afraid to go through the airport," said Alik at the Tripoli port.

"If I buy a plane ticket the airport could be bombed," said the man from the densely-packed south Beirut suburbs - a Hezbollah stronghold that has seen heavy bombardment over the past weeks.

On September 23, Israel



People evacuating from Lebanon board a ship bound for Turkey at the port of the northern city of Tripoli, yesterday.

launched an intense air campaign on Lebanon and later sent in ground forces after nearly a year of cross-border exchanges with the Hezbollah group over the Gaza war.

Since then, the war has left at least 1,454 people dead in Lebanon, according to an AFP tally of Lebanese health ministry figures, though the real toll is likely higher.

With the exception of national carrier Middle East Airlines, most companies have stopped serving Beirut's airport due to the violence.

The massive ships at the Tripoli port used to carry cargo to Turkey's southern shores five times a week, but about a year ago they started carrying passengers too, selling tickets for about \$350, said captain Salem Jleilati.

But demand has soared since September, from about 150 passengers a week to at least 900, he said.

Muammar Malas, 52, from

Lebanon's north, said he "chose to travel by boat because it's difficult to reach the" airport in Beirut, which is "very close to the southern suburbs", a Hezbollah bastion.

The cargo vessels are not designed to carry passengers, "but we are forced to use them," said Malas.

More than 1mn people have fled the violence across Lebanon, officials have said.

Mohammad Hawar, 22, has been displaced twice, first from the southern city of Nabatiyeh - where intense Israeli strikes this week killed a few dozen people - and then from south Beirut.

"The best thing to do now is flee Lebanon," he said as he boarded the boat.

Passenger Israa Sweidan, a Palestinian woman from the nearby Beddawi refugee camp which has also been targeted by strikes, said the sea journey out of Tripoli was "currently the safest option in Lebanon".

92% of court cases resolved during judicial season 2023-24

The rate of resolving of old court cases (dating to 2022 and earlier), which were given high priority over the past three judicial terms, amounted to 99.67%, while the general rate of cases resolve across all courts stood at 92% during the judicial season 2023-24.

Through the statistics included in the State's Internal Achievements Report (2023-2024), the Supreme Judiciary Council (SJC) confirmed that the courts issued 31,201 rulings under the One-Day Court system during this period.

The SJC explained that the courts, thanks to technological advancements and digital transformation in the litigation procedures, have successfully reduced the litigation time significantly. The litigation processes have also sped up due to the updated legislation as part of the national initiative to develop the justice system. The average litigation duration was 45 days for family and inheritance cases, 61 days for administrative cases, 27 days for investment cases, 12 days for criminal cases, and 83 days for civil cases.

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, MD FORIAZ MD KHAN
holder of

BANGLADESH Passport No. A14301987
QID No. 28305012409

hereby change my name

from

MD FORIAZ MD KHAN

to

MD FORIAZ KHAN SULTAN KHAN

Any objection, please contact
THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR
NATIONALITY AFFAIRS
within 15 days from the publication of this notice.

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, JOSIE ALFUNTIN CLEMENTIR
holder of

PHILIPPINES Passport No.P7354504C
QID No. 28960804288

hereby change my name

from

JOSIE ALFUNTIN CLEMENTIR

to

JOSIE CLEMENTIR REFUERZO

Any objection, please contact
THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR
NATIONALITY AFFAIRS
within 15 days from the publication of this notice.

Palestinians enduring 'unspeakable horrors' in north Gaza: UN

AFP
Geneva

Palestinians are living through "unspeakable horrors" in the north of the Gaza Strip, the United Nations' top aid official said yesterday, insisting the "atrocities must stop".

Israel, vowing to stop Hamas fighters from regrouping in northern Gaza, launched a major air and ground assault on October 6, tightening its siege on the war-battered area and sending tens of thousands of people fleeing.

"Appalling news from northern Gaza where Palestinians continue to endure unspeakable horrors under siege by Israeli forces," the UN's acting hu-

manitarian chief Joyce Msuya said on X. "In Jabaliya, people are trapped under the rubble and first responders are blocked from reaching them," she added. "Tens of thousands of Palestinians are being forcibly displaced. Essential supplies are running out. Hospitals, overwhelmed with patients, have been hit."

"These atrocities must stop," Msuya said that under international humanitarian law, civilians, the wounded and the sick, and health care personnel and facilities must be protected.

"International humanitarian law must be respected," she added.

Gaza's civil defence agency said yesterday that a sweeping Israeli military operation has killed more than 400 people in two weeks in the territory's north.



Gaza ministry says two patients died during Israeli siege on hospital

AFP
Gaza Strip

Gaza's health ministry said two patients at a hospital in the territory's north died during a siege by Israeli forces around the facility yesterday, while Israel's military reported its troops were operating in the area. Since dawn, Israeli forces had surrounded and shelled the Indonesian Hospital in the northern town of Beit Lahia, Gaza health officials said.

"Israeli tanks have completely surrounded the hospital, cut off electricity and shelled the hospital, targeting the second and third floors with artillery," the facility's director Marwan Sultan said.

"There are serious risks to medical staff and patients."

Later the health ministry of the Hamas-run territory said two patients in the hospital had died, blaming the Israeli military siege.

It said the military operation caused "the death of two patients inside the Indonesian Hospital in



Displaced Palestinians, ordered by the Israeli army to leave the school in Beit Lahia where they were sheltered, arrive in Gaza City, yesterday.

the northern Gaza Strip, as a result of the hospital's siege and the power outage and (lack of) medical supplies".

The ministry did not provide details about the two patients, their illnesses or the exact cause of their deaths.

It also accused the Israeli mili-

tary of imposing a siege on hospitals across northern Gaza since midnight.

In an earlier statement, the ministry said Israel had targeted the upper floors of the Indonesian Hospital, adding there were "more than 40 patients and wounded in addition to the medical staff"



Displaced Palestinians, ordered by the Israeli army to leave the school in Beit Lahia, arrive in Gaza City.

present. "Heavy gunfire" towards the hospital and its courtyard had sparked a "state of great panic" among patients and staff, it added.

When asked for a response to the ministry's allegation that the two patients had died due to the military siege, the Israeli army told AFP that its troops were "operating near the Indonesian Hospital".

"The troops operating in the area have been trained for the operational activity and briefed on the importance of mitigating harm to civilians and medical infrastructure," the military said in a

statement. "It is emphasised that the hospital continues to operate without disruption and in full capacity, and there was no intentional fire directed at it."

Israeli forces launched a new offensive in northern Gaza earlier this month, saying it was targeting Hamas fighters who were regrouping there.

Gaza's civil defence agency said an Israeli strike the night before killed 33 people in Jabalia, which is near the Indonesian Hospital.

The UN humanitarian affairs agency on Friday continued "to

sound the alarm about the increasingly dire and dangerous situation that civilians in northern Gaza are facing. Families there are trying to survive in atrocious conditions, under heavy bombardment."

Indonesian Hospital was also damaged during Israeli shelling in October 2023, residents said at the time.

Israel has come under strong international criticism for targeting hospitals in Gaza, which it has repeatedly accused of being used by Hamas fighters for military purposes.

Rally for peace in Gaza, Lebanon



People shout slogans during a demonstration for justice and peace in Lebanon and Gaza, organised by a civil society group in Dakar, Senegal, yesterday.

Iran's supreme leader says Hamas leader's death will not halt resistance

Reuters
Dubai

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said yesterday the death of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar will not halt the "Axis of Resistance" and that Hamas would live on.

"His loss is undoubtedly painful for the Axis of Resistance, but this front did not cease advancing with the martyrdom of prominent figures," Khamenei said in a statement. "Hamas is alive and will remain alive."

Sinwar, the architect of Hamas' October first week storming of Israel last year that triggered the war in Gaza, was killed on Wednesday in a gunfight with Israeli forces after a year-long manhunt, and his death was announced on Thursday.

"He was a shining face of resistance and struggle. With a steely resolve, he stood against the oppressive and aggressive enemy. With wisdom and courage, he dealt them the irreparable blow of October first week last year that has been recorded in the history of this region. Then, with honour and pride, he ascended to the heavens of the martyrs," said Khamenei. The "Axis of Resist-



A billboard with a picture of the late Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar is displayed on a building in Tehran, Iran, yesterday.

ance", built up with years of Iranian support, includes Hamas, the Lebanese Hezbollah group, the Houthi movement in Yemen, and various groups in Iraq and Syria. The groups describe themselves

as the resistance to Israel and US influence in the Middle East.

"As always, we will remain by the side of the sincere fighters and combatants, by God's grace and help," Khamenei said.

Turkiye says Israel pushing Iran to take 'legitimate steps'

AFP
Istanbul

Israel's attacks in Lebanon and Gaza are pushing Iran to take "legitimate steps", Turkiye's foreign minister said yesterday in a joint press conference in Istanbul with his Iranian counterpart.

"Israel's aggressive stance is forcing Iran to take legitimate steps," Turkiye's Hakan Fidan said alongside Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was "constantly opening new fronts in the region" and "trying to draw Iran into this war", he said.

"The risk of war spreading to the entire region should not be underestimated," Araghchi, who took

part in Friday's meeting of South Caucasus nations in Istanbul, said the rising tension in Lebanon was "very worrying". "The possibility of war in the region is always serious, and no one other than the Zionist regime wants that to happen. We want to reduce tensions, but...we are ready for any scenario," he said.

Iran backs Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon, whose top leaders have been killed by Israel in the widening Middle East crisis. Iran also backs Houthi fighters in Yemen and militias in Iraq, as well as Syria's armed forces. Tehran collectively calls these proxies and militias an "axis of resistance" against Israel. On October 1, Iran launched a barrage of around 200 missiles in retaliation for the September 27 killing of Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah in Beirut and the July 31 killing of Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran.

Gunmen kill two Mozambique opposition figures ahead of election protests



A man reacts as he holds an image of Paulo Guambe (left) and adviser and lawyer Elvino Dias (right) both working with Mozambique's leading opposition candidate for the 'Optimist party for the development of Mozambique' (Podemos), during a vigil the day after they were shot dead in Maputo, yesterday.

Reuters
Johannesburg

Gunmen killed a Mozambique opposition lawyer and a party official after firing multiple rounds at a car in which they were travelling yesterday, rights groups said, ratcheting up tensions ahead of protests against a disputed election result.

New opposition party Podemos and its presidential aspirant Venancio Mondlane reject provisional results showing a likely win for Frelimo - the party that has ruled Mozambique for half a century - and its candidate Daniel Chapo.

They have called for a nationwide strike tomorrow.

Mozambican civil society election observer group More Integrity said the attack happened in the Bairro Da Coop neighbourhood of the capital Maputo, killing Podemos lawyer Elvino Dias and party representative Paulo Guambe.

Human Rights Watch and Mozambique's Center for Democracy and Human Rights (CDD) also issued statements confirming the attack.

"They were brutally assassinated (in a cold-blooded murder)," Adriano Nuvunga, CDD director, told Reuters by telephone.

"The indications that around 10 to 15 bullets were shot, and they died instantly," he added,

describing it as a "message" to opposition protesters planning to convene tomorrow.

A Frelimo spokesperson did not respond to requests for comment.

The European Union and Mozambique's former colonial ruler Portugal condemned the killing and called for an investigation.

Mondlane's rise to become Mozambique's main challenger was a threat to Frelimo, but also to former official opposition party Renamo - once a rebel outfit backed by racist white regimes in South Africa and Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) during the Cold War.

Alex Vines, Africa programme director at London-based international affairs think tank Chatham House, called the killing a "serious escalation" that raised tensions ahead of tomorrow's strike.

Western observers have cast doubt on the credibility of the poll, noting reports of vote buying, intimidation, inflated voter rolls and poor transparency in collation - problems that have marred most polls since Frelimo introduced democracy in 1994 after two decades in power.

Full results are expected on Oct 24, but many fear tomorrow's protest could turn bloody. Mozambique's security forces have opened fire on protesters, including after last year's local elections, rights groups say.



In support of Palestinians



People attend a demonstration in support of Palestinians in Gaza, amid the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict, at Trafalgar Square in London, Britain, yesterday.



Charles given top honours as tour begins Down Under

AFP
Sydney

King Charles was granted five-star rank in each branch of Australia's armed forces yesterday, a ceremonial gesture to mark the first full day of his landmark tour Down Under. Charles, in addition to being king of realm can now call himself field marshal of Australia's army, marshal of its air force and admiral of the fleet.

It was not a bad day's work for the 75-year-old monarch, who spent yesterday recuperating and without public engagements after a marathon flight from London to Sydney.

The monarch - who received the life-changing cancer diagnosis just eight months ago - and Queen Camilla have begun a nine-day visit to Australia and Samoa, the first major foreign tour since being crowned. They landed in Sydney on Friday and were greeted by local dignitaries and posy-bearing children, before a quick private meeting with Australia's staunchly republican Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and his fiancée. "We are really looking forward to returning to this beautiful country to celebrate the extraordinarily rich cultures and communities that make it so special," the royal couple said in a social media post ahead of their arrival.

Royal tours to far-flung domains are a vital way of kindling local support for the monarchy, and the political stakes for the royals are high. A recent poll showed about a third of Australians would like to ditch the monarchy, a third would keep it, and a third are ambivalent. Visiting British royals have typically embarked on weeks-long visits to stoke support, hosting grand banquets and parading through



King Charles III and Queen Camilla greeted by the Prime Minister of Australia Anthony Albanese MP and his partner Ms Jodie Haydon while arriving at Sydney Airport, Australia, earlier this week.

streets packed with thrilled, flag-waving subjects.

This visit will be a little different. The king's health has caused much of the usual pomp and ceremony to be scaled back. A planned stop in New Zealand was cancelled altogether, and he will be in Sydney and Canberra for just six days before attending a Commonwealth summit in Samoa.

There are few early morning or late night engagements on his schedule and aside from a community barbecue in Sydney and an event at the city's famed Opera House, there will be few mass public gatherings.

There had been rumours that he may attend a horse race in Sydney yesterday, but he was not to be seen. When the time came the

well-hydrated crowd belted out Australia's anthem "Advance Australia Fair" rather than the royal anthem "God Save the King".

It is not just age, jetlag and health worries that the king has to contend with Down Under. Australians, while marginally in favour of the monarchy, are far from the enthusiastic loyalists they were in 2011 when thousands flocked to catch a white-gloved wave from his mother Queen Elizabeth II.

"I think most people see him as a good king," said 62-year-old Sydney solicitor Clare Cory, who like many is "on the fence" about the monarchy's continued role in Australian life. "It's a long time. Most of my ancestors came from England, I think we do owe something there," she said, before add-

ing that multi-cultural Australia is now more entwined with the Asia-Pacific than a place "on the other side of the world".

Some are less charitable, seeing no reason to retain a king whose accent, formal get-up and customs have little to do with the daily lives of easygoing antipodeans. "He just gives old white guy vibes," said home school teacher Maree Parker. "We don't need a king and queen, we can just do our own thing."

Still, Australia is a land of many happy memories for Charles, and he can be sure to find some support.

He first visited as a gawky 17-year-old in 1966, when he was shipped away to the secluded alpine Timbertop school in regional Victoria.

Spectre of royal meddling haunts Charles in Australia

AFP
Sydney

The cloud from a decades-old political crisis hangs over King Charles III's tour of Australia, where the 1975 sacking of a sitting prime minister continues to fuel suspicions of royal meddling. Governor-General John Kerr used his vice-regal powers in 1975 to topple Labor Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, a popular leader beset by a string of parliamentary scandals.

It remains the only time the governor-general - the throne's envoy in overseas realms - has made such a drastic intervention in Australian democracy. Almost 50 years later, intrigue still swirls around the monarchy's role in "The Dismissal". Recently unearthed correspondence exposed then-Prince Charles's stance on the interference - a source of further controversy in a decades-long simmering debate on the relevance of the monarchy. "It was an unprecedented action by Queen Elizabeth's representative in Australia," historian Jenny Hocking told AFP. "It's a stunning, volcanic moment in our history. And the potential role of the monarch has always been a question."

Hocking fought a years-long legal battle to publish a trove of secret letters between Kerr and Buckingham Palace. Finally unsealed in 2020 after a High Court ruling, the so-called "Palace Letters" showed Kerr dutifully keeping the queen's aides abreast of the unfolding political turmoil. The letters suggest Queen Elizabeth II had no hidden role in sacking the prime minister.

But one recently surfaced exchange shows then-Prince Charles was at least supportive of Kerr's decision in hindsight. "Please don't lose heart," Charles wrote to Kerr in the aftermath. "What you did last year was right and the courageous thing to do."

Hocking said this amounted to "an extraordinary interference in Australian politics". "Charles is basically praising him for dismissing an elected government, saying he'd made a courageous decision. "And we should keep that in mind as we entertain the current king, who has been described before as a meddling prince."

News of the government's removal sent Australian stock markets into meltdown, sparking mass rallies and fears of civil violence. For many Australians, it shattered their sense of independence and fuelled fears of colonial masters pulling the strings. It remains seared into the psyche of the nation, where it is still taught in schools, and debated over the airwaves and at the pub.

"It's because it was such an eruptive moment in our history," said Hocking. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese - an avowed republican - has said the imbroglio showed "the need for us to have an Australian head of state". Swept to power in 1972 - the first Labor government in more than 20 years - Whitlam lost control of parliament as a string of forced resignations whittled away his majority.

Unable to secure enough votes to pass the government budget, governor-general Kerr sacked Whitlam and installed conservative opposition leader Malcolm Fraser in his place. It remains "the most dramatic and controversial event in Australia's constitutional and political history", according to government historians.

Ironically, Whitlam and Fraser would bury the hatchet in the late 1990s to campaign together in favour of an Australian republic. That 1999 referendum failed as 54 percent of Australians backed the status quo.

A recent poll showed about a third of Australians would like to ditch the monarchy, a third would keep it and a third are ambivalent.

India ex-official charged in US murder plot had been arrested in Delhi attempted murder case

Reuters
New Delhi

A former Indian government official charged in the United States this week for allegedly directing a foiled murder plot had been arrested in New Delhi in December in an attempted murder case, according to court records and a police officer.

The US Justice Department unsealed the indictment of Vikash Yadav, 39, on Thursday, alleging he led a plot to murder a Sikh separatist in New York.

From May 2023, the US indictment alleges, Yadav, described as an Indian government employee at the time, worked with others in

India and abroad to direct a plot to kill Gurbatwant Singh Pannun, a dual US-Canadian citizen.

Delhi Police had arrested Yadav on Dec 18 in the Indian capital, the police officer told Reuters on condition of anonymity. Yadav and an associate were charged with attempted murder and other crimes, according to a filing in a Delhi district court.

Yadav's lawyer, R K Handoo, called the Indian charges "fallacious", adding there was "an international plot to bring shame on the government of India and my client". Handoo declined to comment further.

He and the police did not respond to questions on Yadav's whereabouts. *The Washington*

Post, citing American officials, reported on Thursday that Yadav was still in India and that the US was expected to seek his extradition.

Yadav's arrest was based on a complaint by an Indian businessman, who alleged Yadav and an associate kidnapped him in December, assaulted and robbed him, according to details in a Delhi district court order dated Feb 23. "The accused persons tortured and manhandled the complainant and demanded money in the name of gangster Lawrence Bishnoi," said the Feb 23 court order, summarising the complaint.

Bishnoi, in jail in India's Gujarat state, is an organised crime gang leader, according to India's Na-

tional Investigation Agency. Bishnoi's lawyer says he is contesting more than 40 cases on charges including murder and extortion, with many trials yet to begin.

Indian government agents were separately accused by Canada this week of having links to Bishnoi's gang and running a campaign to target Indian dissidents in Canada. India's government denies the allegations.

In Yadav's Delhi case, the court order citing the complaint said: "The accused persons also brought bank cheque book from the cafe of the complainant and got his signature on blank cheques and later on dropped him near his car, threatening to remain silent."

Boat carrying more than 100 Rohingya sighted off Indonesia: officials

A boat loaded with more than 100 Rohingya refugees was spotted off Indonesia's westernmost province with at least one dead body seen on board, local officials said yesterday. The mostly Muslim ethnic Rohingya are heavily persecuted in Myanmar, and thousands risk their lives each year on long and dangerous sea journeys to try to reach Malaysia or Indonesia.

The Rohingya boat is anchored around three to four miles (five to six kilometres) off the coast of South Aceh district with its engine turned off, community leader Muhammad Jabal told AFP. He said the boat was first seen on Friday when he and others set off to deliver food and water to the refugees, estimating more than a hundred were on board.

"I saw with my own eyes there

was a body. There were many children too aboard the boat," Jabal said.

The day before the sighting of the boat, the body of a Rohingya woman was found at sea. Local police chief Sabda Man Sobri confirmed she was a member of the ethnic group, but could not comment on whether she was connected to the boat.

Yuhelmi, a South Aceh district

spokesperson, confirmed the boat sighting but said locals were waiting for an immigration team from provincial capital Banda Aceh to arrive before deciding the next step for the refugees.

"Whether (the refugees) will be brought on land, that's within the authority of the immigration. For now, there has been no decision," said Yuhelmi, who goes by one name. - AFP

MAMI spotlight



Bollywood actor Ali Fazal with his wife and actress Richa Chadha pose for photos as they attend the 'MAMI Mumbai Film Festival' in Mumbai yesterday.

UN Security Council expands Haiti arms embargo

The UN Security Council voted unanimously on Friday to expand an arms embargo on Haiti, as the impoverished Caribbean nation struggles to wrest back control from powerful gangs.

All 15 members voted for the resolution, which calls for UN member states to block shipments of "arms and related materiel of all types" from entering Haiti.

A previous embargo targeted only small arms and ammunition. The resolution, drafted by Ecuador and the United States, includes a one-year renewal of a committee for monitoring sanctions against certain Haitians.

The Security Council first approved the sanctions regime in October 2022, but at the time the measures only targeted one gang leader, Jimmy Chérizier, who uses the alias "Barbecue".

In late February, Chérizier launched a co-ordinated gang revolt in the capital Port-au-Prince, which eventually precipitated in the country's unelected prime minister stepping down and handing power to a transitional council.

Since then, an interim prime minister has taken office and a Kenyan-led multinational force has arrived in the country to prop up Haiti's struggling police force, though gangs continue to wield wide control.

In early October, an attack by the Gran Grif gang in the town of Pont Sonde left at least 109 people dead and dozens wounded, in one of the worst massacres in the nation's recent history.

The leader of the gang, Luckson Elan, had been added days earlier to the UN sanctions list, which now includes seven individuals.

US representative Dorothy Shea told the Council on Friday that the situation in Haiti "remains dire".

"The US remains deeply concerned by the security and humanitarian crises in Haiti. Too many people continue to suffer from ongoing violence," she said.

Kenya is set to send 600 additional police officers in November for the support mission, which was approved by the UN Security Council last year but is not a UN peacekeeping mission. - AFP

NHC: Storm Nadine makes landfall in Belize, Oscar forms near Turks & Caicos

Tropical Storm Nadine made landfall in Belize yesterday, the US National Hurricane Centre (NHC) said.

Nadine is about 10 miles southwest of Belize City, and 75 miles south of Chetumal city in Mexico.

The NHC also said yesterday that a small tropical storm named Oscar has formed east of the Turks and Caicos islands, which may bring significant rainfall and winds.

Tropical storm Oscar is 190 miles east-southeast of the southeastern Bahamas and 495 miles east of Camaguey city in Cuba.

Tropical storm warnings in effect for the southeast Bahamas and northeastern provinces of Cuba, the forecaster added. - Reuters

Mexican navy says seizes record 8.3 tonnes of drugs in Pacific Ocean

AFP
Mexico City

The Mexican navy announced on Friday that it had seized more than 8.3 tonnes of drugs in the Pacific Ocean, a record for a single operation at sea.

"Navy personnel seized 8,361kg of illicit cargo, which represents the largest amount of drugs seized in a maritime operation, unprecedented in history," said a statement from the navy ministry.

It did not specify the type of the drugs, but said they were valued at 2.099bn pesos (about \$105mn). Twenty-three people were arrested during the bust which took place southwest of the port of Lazaro Cardenas, off the western coast of Mexico.

The drugs were distributed in six small boats and one of the vessels was a submersible, which implied a "complex" action on the part of the sailors, added the ministry.

The largest drug seizure in Mexico's history was 23 tonnes of Colombian cocaine in November 2007. Mexico has for decades been the hub of drug trafficking to the United States, with a large number of cartels fighting for control of the trade.

The state of Michoacan, off the coast of which the seizure took place, is the scene of clashes between criminal gangs, including the powerful Jalisco Nueva Generacion cartel, one of Mexico's most powerful and violent criminal groups.

The latest raid reported on Friday was carried out "days ago" by surface units backed by a helicopter.

Harris, Trump deploy celebrity power in must-win states

Reuters/AFP
Washington

Democrat Kamala Harris and Republican Donald Trump hit the campaign trail yesterday, pressing their case with voters from Georgia to Pennsylvania who are already starting to cast ballots in the US presidential election.

Harris and Trump are essentially tied in the most competitive states and many Americans are voting early by mail or in person, with just 17 days until the November 5 election.

Harris hosted a get-out-the-vote event in Detroit yesterday for the city's first day of early voting, alongside Michigan-born rapper Lizzo.

She then travelled to Atlanta, Georgia, for a rally with pop singer Usher, who is currently headlining a sold-out, three-date concert tour in the southern city.

Early voting started in Georgia this week.

"Donald Trump has proven himself to be increasingly unstable and unfit and he is trying to take us backward," Harris told reporters in Detroit.

Harris will need strong results in the majority non-white cities of Detroit and Atlanta and their surrounding suburbs to repeat US President Joe Biden's 2020 wins in Michigan and Georgia.

Meanwhile, the world's richest man Elon Musk is to stump for Trump in Pennsylvania.

Musk, who endorsed Trump in July, is one of President Joe Biden administration's fiercest critics and has emerged as a loud voice in US politics since taking over Twitter, now known as X.

The Tesla and SpaceX chief executive has taken an increasingly visible role in Trump's campaign and has donated almost \$75mn to his political organisation America PAC.

Trump planned to stage a rally in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, seeking to take advantage of what he felt was an improved position for him in opinion polls that show a deadlocked race.

Some voters already have mailed in ballots in the state, which is the biggest prize on Election Day among battleground states and could tip the 2024 race.

Early voting also starts this weekend in Nevada, where former president Barack Obama was expected to campaign for Harris in Las Vegas.

Both 2024 candidates spent the day on Friday in closely contested Michigan, trading jabs about their fitness for office.

Trump, 78, dismissed accusations from Harris that he was exhausted by the pace of the campaign's closing days.

Harris turns 60 today.

Trump said he had not cancelled any events. However, an October 22 Na-



Residents participate in early voting at a community centre in Detroit yesterday. Detroit is the first Michigan community to have early voting. - AFP

tional Rifle Association of America (NRA) event in Savannah, Georgia, that he had planned to attend, was cancelled, according to organisers.

"I'm not even tired," Trump said, and dismissed Harris's calls for him to release his health records, adding that Harris should take a cognitive test.

G7 concerned over Lebanon situation, vow Kyiv support

AFP/Reuters
Naples

G7 defence ministers met yesterday against the backdrop of multiple ongoing military conflicts, expressing concern over escalation in Lebanon while pledging "unwavering support" for Ukraine.

Italy, holding the rotating presidency of the Group of Seven (G7) countries, organised the body's first-ever gathering of defence ministers, staged in the southern city of Naples that is home to a Nato base.

Italian Defence Minister Guido Crosetto, who hosted the meeting, told reporters that the G7 could not solve global tensions alone, but needed to stimulate action across the international community.

"The G7 must be like a gadfly that has the strength to sting the rest of the world," he said at a news conference.

At the top of the agenda was Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine, now in its third year.

In an earlier speech to kick off the meeting, Crosetto warned of a "deteriorated security framework" across the world and said near-term forecasts for conflict resolution "cannot be positive".

Tensions are fuelled by confrontation between "two different, perhaps incompatible visions of the world", he said.

"We underscore our intent to continue to provide assistance to Ukraine, including military assistance in the short and long term," read the G7 defence ministers' final statement that pledged "unwavering support".

However, the G7 defence ministers - from Italy, France, Germany, Britain, Japan, Canada and the United States - also warned of the dangers of further intensification in the Middle East, including in Lebanon where the United Nations has blamed Israel for strikes on UN peacekeepers.

"We are concerned by the latest events in Lebanon and the risk of further escalation. We express concern over all threats to UNIFIL's security," read a final statement from the ministers.

The summit came two days after Israel announced it had killed Hamas chief Yahya Sinwar, mastermind of the events of October 7, 2023 in Israel that triggered the devastating retaliatory war in Gaza.

Also in attendance were North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) chief Mark Rutte



Demonstrators clash with police officers in Naples as the G7 Defence Ministers summit is being held. - AFP

and the EU's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, who echoed the words of US President Joe Biden that the death of Sinwar could mark an opportunity to bring about the end of hostilities.

"Certainly after the killing of Yahya Sinwar, a new perspective is open and we have to use it in order to reach a ceasefire, to release the remaining hostages and to look for a political perspective," Borrell told journalists.

The morning session included discussions over recent strikes on UN peacekeepers Unifil in Lebanon, where Israel is also at war with Hamas ally Hezbollah.

Borrell suggested that the peacekeepers' mandate should be beefed up by the UN Security Council to give them more scope to act amid repeated attacks on their positions, which they blame on Israeli forces.

"They cannot act by themselves, it is certainly a limited role," he said.

Earlier yesterday Borrell wrote on social media that "a more robust mandate for UNIFIL" was needed.

In Lebanon on Friday, Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni slammed as "unacceptable" the recent strikes on Unifil.

Italy has around 1,000 troops in the UN peacekeeping force in Lebanon, which has soldiers from more than 50 countries.

The G7's pledge of continued support for Ukraine comes as the country enters its third winter at war, with battlefield losses in the east and the prospect of reduced US military support should Donald Trump be elected to the White House next month.

Biden urged Nato allies during a visit to Berlin on Friday not to step down in backing Ukraine, saying that supporters of Kyiv "cannot let up".

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, under mounting pressure from Western allies to forge a winning strategy against Russia, on Thursday presented what he called a "victory plan" to the European Union and Nato.

Its main thrust is a call for immediate Nato membership, deemed unfeasible by alliance members.

It also demands the ability to strike military targets inside Russia with long-range weapons, and an undefined "non-nuclear strategic deterrence package" on Ukrainian territory.

Another worry for Ukraine are reports, based on South Korean intelligence, that North Korea is deploying large numbers of troops to support Moscow's war against Ukraine.

Nato was not as yet able to confirm that intelligence, Rutte said on Friday.

Gunmen attack Sinaloa media outlet amid intra-cartel war

Gunmen sprayed with bullets the office building and several cars of respected Sinaloa media outlet El Debate on Friday, the news organisation said, amid a bloody war between the two biggest factions of the Sinaloa Cartel.

El Debate, which usually reports on violent events across the northwestern Sinaloa state, was attacked early on Friday morning, the company reported on social media.

The local prosecutor's office said it was investigating the attack, which caused no casualties.

"Today the complaint for damages is going to be received," Claudia Sanchez, the state prosecutor, told AFP.

Sanchez said that at least four vehicles were damaged by bullets during the incident.

Sinaloa governor Ruben Rocha described it as "an attack on freedom of expression", ordering an increased police presence at the newspaper.

It is unclear who carried out the attack. Sinaloa has seen a surge of violence since September 9, when the two most powerful groupings in the Sinaloa Cartel came to blows.

The daily shootouts have disrupted life in the state capital, Culiacán, where schools have closed on some days and restaurants and stores have shortened their opening hours.

Sánchez said that since the war began, there have been 172 homicides and 209 people have been kidnapped, of which 72 were found alive and 27 dead.

President Claudia Sheinbaum said on Friday that she "condemns" the attack against El Debate.

Her government has sent hundreds of military personnel with armoured vehicles and high-powered weapons to Sinaloa to protect the population but the troops have struggled to quell the violence.

Rampant cartel-related violence makes Mexico one of the world's most dangerous countries for journalists.

More than 150 members of the media have been killed in the Latin American nation since 2000, according to rights group Reporters Without Borders. They include Javier Valdez, an award-winning journalist and AFP contributor who was murdered in Sinaloa in 2017. - AFP/Reuters

Blackout drags on for second day in Cuba

Cuba remained without electricity yesterday as a nationwide power outage dragged on for a second day.

At dawn, most neighbourhoods in Havana were dark, except for hotels and hospitals with emergency generators and the very few private homes with that kind of backup in this economically challenged island nation that has grown accustomed to periodic power outages.

The capital Havana came to a virtual standstill on Friday at midday as schools closed, public transport ground to a halt and traffic lights stopped functioning.

The power grid collapsed in a chain reaction due to the unexpected shutdown of the Antonio Guiteras power plant, the biggest of the island's eight decrepit coal-fired power plants, said the head of electricity supply at the energy ministry, Lazaro Guerra.

The national electric utility UNE said that on Friday night it had managed to generate a minimal amount of power to get those plants running again and start to bring things back to normal.

"I cannot assure you that we will be able to complete linking the system today, but we are estimating that there should be important progress today," Guerra said yesterday.

However, at 6.15am, just prior to Guerra's statement, "a new, total disconnection of the electrical grid occurred", said the official news outlet Cubadebate.

Guerra did not directly confirm the total collapse, leaving some confusion as to what exactly had taken place.

"Everything is very difficult. For almost a day we have had this blackout that makes life so hard for us," Yaima Vallares, a 28-year-old dancer, told AFP. "I am trying to remain calm because there is too much stress over everything in this country."

Isabel Rodriguez, 72, said shorter outages were common in Cuba and her house often had no water. "Believe me, it is hard to live like this."

The blackout followed weeks of power outages, lasting up to 20 hours a day in some provinces, which prompted Prime Minister Manuel Marrero on Thursday to declare an "energy emergency".

The government on Thursday suspended all nonessential public services in order to prioritise electricity supply to homes.

Schools across the country have now been closed until tomorrow.

Authorities in Havana said hospitals and other essential facilities, which are powered by generators, would remain open.

"This is crazy" Eloy Fon, an 80-year-old retiree living in central Havana, told AFP on Friday. "It shows the fragility of our electricity system. We have no reserves, there is nothing to sustain the country, we are living day-to-day."

For three months, Cubans have been battling chronic blackouts as they became longer and more frequent.

President Miguel Diaz-Canel said on X on Friday that the government would "not rest" until the lights were back on.

He blamed the situation on Cuba's difficulties in acquiring fuel for its power plants, which he attributed to the tightening, during the Donald Trump presidency, of a six-decade-long US trade embargo.

On Friday the United States denied any role in the grid collapse in Cuba. - AFP/Reuters



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GULF TIMES

Concerns as global public debt may exceed \$100tn by end-2024

Is global public debt probably worse than it looks? According to some IMF economists, global public debt is very high. It is expected to exceed \$100tn, or about 93% of global gross domestic product by the end of this year and will approach 100% of GDP by 2030.

This is 10 percentage points of GDP above 2019, before the pandemic, noted IMF's Era Dabla-Norris, Davide Furceri, Raphael Lam and Jeta Menkulasi.

While the picture is not homogeneous – public debt is expected to stabilise or decline for two thirds of countries – the 'October 2024 Fiscal Monitor' shows that future debt levels could be even higher than projected, and much larger fiscal adjustments than currently projected are required to stabilise or reduce it with a high probability.

The report argues that countries should confront debt risks now with carefully designed fiscal policies that protect growth and vulnerable households, while taking advantage of the monetary policy easing cycle.

The fiscal outlook of many countries might be worse than expected for three reasons: large spending pressures, optimism bias of debt projections, and sizeable unidentified debt.

Previous IMF research has shown that fiscal discourse across the political spectrum has increasingly tilted toward higher spending.

In a severely adverse scenario global public debt could reach 115% of GDP in three years

And countries will need to increasingly spend more to cope with ageing and healthcare; with the green transition and climate adaptation; and with defence and energy security, due to growing geopolitical tensions.

On the other side, past experience suggests that debt projections tend to underestimate actual outcomes by a sizeable margin. Realised debt-to-

GDP ratios five-years ahead can be 10 percentage points of GDP higher than projected on average.

The Fiscal Monitor presents a novel 'debt-at-risk' framework linking current macro-financial and political conditions to the entire spectrum of possible future debt outcomes.

This approach goes beyond the typical focus on the point estimates of debt forecasts and helps policymakers quantify risks to the debt outlook and identify their sources.

This framework shows that in a severely adverse scenario global public debt could reach 115% of GDP in three years – nearly 20 percentage points higher than currently projected. This could be due to several reasons: weaker growth, tighter financing conditions, fiscal slippages, and greater economic and policy uncertainty.

Importantly, countries are increasingly vulnerable to global factors affecting their borrowing costs, including spillovers from greater policy uncertainty in systematically important countries, such as the United States.

Sizeable unidentified debt is another reason for public debt to end up being significantly higher than projected. An analysis of more than 30 countries finds that 40% of unidentified debt stems from contingent liabilities and fiscal risks governments face, of which most are related to losses in state-owned enterprises.

Historically, unidentified debt has been large, ranging from 1 to 1.5% of GDP on average, and it increases sharply during periods of financial stress, IMF noted.

If public debt is higher than it looks, current fiscal efforts are likely smaller than needed.

Fiscal adjustment plays a crucial role in containing debt risks, IMF noted.

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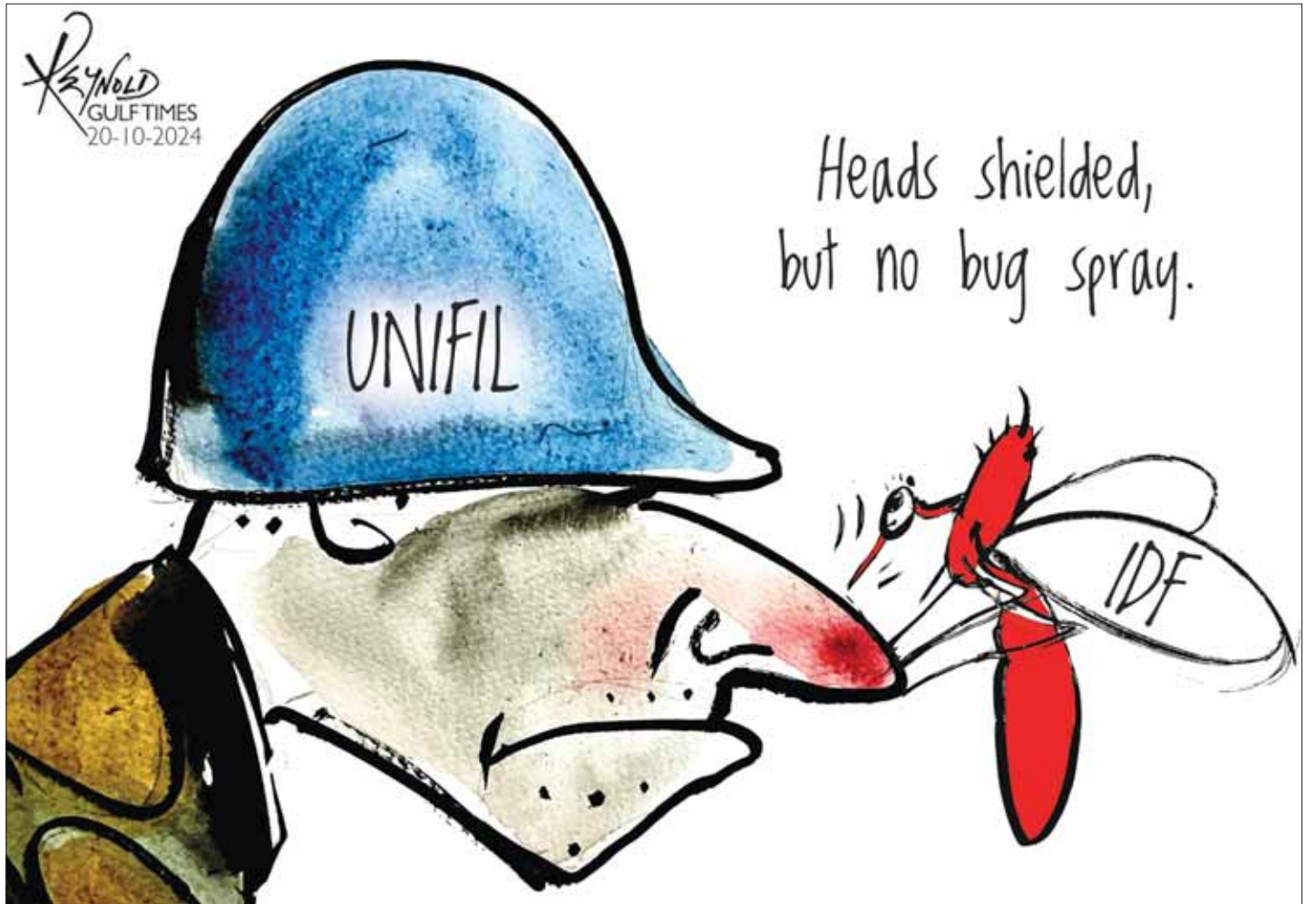
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Outsourcing our future to for-profit AI

Recent developments suggest that policymakers and others in positions of public authority are more than happy to cede total control to the corporations commercialising artificial intelligence. Once again, the returns will remain private, but any future costs will inevitably be borne by the public

By Katharina Pistor
New York

Within the past month, California governor Gavin Newsom has vetoed an artificial-intelligence safety bill, and the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry to David Baker, a professor at the University of Washington, and to Demis Hassabis and John M Jumper, employees of Google's subsidiary DeepMind and its spin-off Isomorphic Labs.

These two events may seem to have little in common, but, taken together, they suggest that outsourcing humanity's future to profit-maximising private corporations is something to be celebrated.

While the California bill was not flawless, it did represent the first substantial effort to hold developers accountable for the potential harms that their AI models might cause.

Moreover, it focused not just on any risk but on "critical harm," like developing weapons of mass destruction or causing at least \$500mn worth of damage.

The tech industry, Google among them, lobbied fiercely against the bill, making a very old argument. As the Financial Times editorial board put it, new regulations could "stunt ... the emergence of an innovation that

could help diagnose diseases, accelerate scientific research, and boost productivity."

Once again, such opportunity costs are deemed more harmful than whatever damage AI might do to people's ability to control their own destinies, or even to live peacefully in their societies.

The 2024 Nobel marks the first time that the prize has been awarded in a natural science to employees of a multinational corporation. All previous awardees were or had been university professors or researchers at government-funded research institutes, all of whom had published their results in peer-reviewed journals and made their findings available to the world.

Whether the Swedish Academy intended it or not, its decision to include the Google researchers helps to legitimise the privatisation of science, which is no longer part of humanity's commons. Like so many resources before it, the science of AI is enclosed within a walled garden accessible only to those who can pay the entrance fee.

True, the AI model AlphaFold2, which earned Hassabis and Jumper the prize, together with its source code, has been made publicly available. According to the AlphaFold.com, "Google DeepMind and EMBL's European Bioinformatics Institute (EMBL-EBI) have partnered to create AlphaFold

DB to make these predictions freely available to the scientific community?"

On the other hand, DeepMind holds multiple patents to AlphaFold.

According to the logic of property rights, the company, not the public, will always have the final say over the technology's use. AlphaFold's website is a ".com," denoting something fundamentally different from, say, the Human Genome Project, with its ".gov" URL.

In the world of information technology, "free" is never free. Payments are tendered in data, not in dollars. The data that enable AlphaFold to predict the three-dimensional structure of a protein come from the public domain.

DeepMind's partner in developing AlphaFold is an intergovernmental research organisation funded by more than 20 member states of the European Union. According to Jumper, "public data were essential to the development of AlphaFold."

Without data that was compiled and organised by scientists who received taxpayer money for it, there would be no AlphaFold.

Notwithstanding the presence of public officials in creating this huge database, governments are regularly disparaged for lacking the knowledge, skills, resources, and foresight to promote innovations

and advance scientific and economic progress. We are constantly told that only the private sector, with its compelling monetary incentives, can do what it takes to propel the world forward.

In reality, the private sector regularly gets a free ride on work produced by scientists who were supported by public money or employed by public research institutes. The first satellite was launched by the US government, not Elon Musk; the US military developed the Internet before it was commercialised; and pharmaceutical companies rarely invest in basic research. Why bother when you can just wait for scientists funded by the US National Institutes of Health or similar agencies to advance a field to the point where profitable investments can be made?

Such is the logic of profit-seeking corporations. Their purpose is financial returns, not human progress. Once in the game, they seek to monopolise scientific knowledge by securing patents or hiding their findings behind the barriers provided by trade-secret law. Without the helping hand of the state, they would have neither basic science nor legal protections for the monopolies that furnish them with large returns – which they then hold up as proof of their superiority to government.

It is not hard to understand why private companies enjoy this game. The mystery is why governments willingly play into industry's hands, handing over years of publicly funded research without guaranteeing that the public has its say in determining how it is used. The California legislation would have mandated that AI models include a capacity for full shutdown in case things go wrong, but that provision was killed off with the rest of the bill.

There is nothing new to the argument that if we do not know enough about future damages, we should refrain from interfering in "private" markets, which always perform best without government "interference."

Oil and gas companies relied on it when denying the risk of climate change and their contribution to it, even as their own research told them otherwise. Yet here we are again. Apparently, we should place our future in the hands of private corporations whose sole purpose is maximising shareholder value. What could possibly go wrong? – Project Syndicate

• Katharina Pistor, Professor of Comparative Law at Columbia Law School, is the author of *The Code of Capital: How the Law Creates Wealth and Inequality* (Princeton University Press, 2019).



DeepMind's partner in developing AlphaFold is an intergovernmental research organisation funded by more than 20 member states of the European Union. (Picture: Bloomberg)



Amir 'keen to boost global peace and development'

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's foreign tours reflect a keenness to elevate Qatar's external relations based on common interests and to boost stability, peace and development regionally and globally, said the Chairman of the Shura Council's Internal and External Affairs Committee, Yousef bin Ali al-Khater (pictured left).

In a statement to the Qatar News Agency (QNA), he hailed His Highness the Amir's visits to Italy and Germany as a reflection of the insightful vision of the wise leadership, and a successful strategy to amplify Qatar's

global presence and roles.

His Highness's visits to Italy and Germany represent a new starting point for strengthening bilateral relations at various political and economic levels, with the two friendly countries being EU heavyweights politically and economically, Al-Khater said.

His Highness the Amir's visits to these two countries, he said, reflect this trend and keenness to strengthen Qatar's relations with European countries and expand co-operation, in addition to leveraging these relations to support security and stability, not only in the Middle East, but globally,

amid Qatar's growing role as an international mediator.

Al-Khater added that expanding relations and co-operation is a key pillar of the Qatar National Vision 2030, which aims to achieve sustainable development and economic and social well-being for current and future generations.

He said that the visits also bear positive impacts on the growing bilateral parliamentary relations, contributing to opening fresh communication channels between the Shura Council and the parliaments of the two countries, a move intended for boosting

multi-level bilateral relations and exchanging views on pressing international issues such as climate change and regional security.

Al-Khater added that parliamentary relations contribute to building deeper understandings about common challenges and support Qatar's role as a pivotal state in international dialogue, especially since the Shura Council has extensive parliamentary relations with international parliaments such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the European Parliament and the Mediterranean Parliament. - QNA

Envoy: Amir's visit to Italy opens new horizons for co-operation

Qatar's ambassador to Italy Khalid bin Youssef al-Sada (pictured) has highlighted the significance of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's visit to Italy in bolstering the bilateral relations and opening up new horizons for co-operation across multiple fields.

In remarks to the Qatar News Agency (QNA), the envoy said the visit comes at an important time in light of Qatar's pivotal role in securing energy supplies to Europe.

Italy is the second largest importer of Qatari gas in Europe. In reference to the most important topics to be discussed during the visit, the ambassador said the two sides will discuss topics related to economic co-operation and cultural co-operation.

He indicated that Qatar believes that economic co-operation with Italy will see significant growth in the future, with bilateral trade reaching QR20bn last year.

The envoy also expects the two sides to discuss new diplomatic and security initiatives to enhance military co-operation, in light of the regional security challenges. - QNA



Amir's visit to Italy will 'cement bilateral ties'

Italy's ambassador to Qatar Paolo Toschi (pictured) said that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's visit to Italy will cement the relations between the two countries and elevate bilateral co-operation to the highest level across all fields.

In an interview with the Qatar News Agency (QNA), the envoy said: "We welcome His Highness as a global leader of diplomacy, international law, and as a stalwart supporter of the international multilateral order."

"We are engaged together in a number of endeavours that are continuing and that we want to further bolster, starting with the many crises that are part of today's global agenda," Toschi said.

He noted that Italy and Qatar have worked together to affirm the rule of international law, provide humanitarian assistance, pursue peaceful resolutions to conflicts rather



than violence, and protect civilians under any circumstances.

He expressed concern about the situation in Lebanon, where Italy is engaged in the UNIFIL mission and is working for a ceasefire as G7 President, noting that it is a signifi-

cant source of concern for everyone.

Toschi emphasised that Italy supported Qatari mediation for a ceasefire in Gaza, adding that both countries are working together on the humanitarian front: "We continue to do this work ... really trying to do everything is in our power to help civilians."

He anticipated that co-operation between the two countries would further expand in 2025 and 2026.

"We are very committed to working together with Qatar in renewable energy and sustainable solutions, including waste to energy processes and other opportunities," he said.

Other areas of co-operation, the envoy said, include the defence sector, and noted that the two countries have strategic and high-level relations, and that mechanisms have been established for the armed forces to work side by side. - QNA

Amir's foreign tours reflect Qatar's role on world stage

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's visit to Italy and Germany is a continuation of his continental tours, which have gained importance and momentum due to Qatar's active and dynamic role on the international stage and its position in the global economy.

These visits highlight the leadership's commitment to following a distinctive approach in shaping bilateral relations between Qatar and other countries.

Italy and Germany are receiving His Highness the Amir at a highly significant time, given the rapid developments in the Middle East and the global political and economic challenges.

Journalists and analysts noted in statements to the Qatar News Agency (QNA) that this approach in Qatar's foreign policy reflects a clear strategy to strengthen relations with various countries, based on mutual trust, respect and shared interests, as well as co-operation for stability and peace, which is clearly evident in His Highness the Amir's tours and foreign visits.

Gulf Times editor-in-chief Faisal al-Mudahka said that the tours and visits of His Highness the Amir to various countries around the world are part of his strategic approach, which is based on building bridges and strengthening and establishing closer and stronger ties with various brotherly and friendly nations.

These tours and visits, he said, contribute to elevating bilateral relations to broader and wider horizons, opening up avenues for co-operation and partnership in trade, investment and various other economic and developmental sectors, as well as enhancing consultation and co-operation on pressing issues such as migration, climate change, and regional and international crises.

Al-Mudahka noted the significance of His Highness the Amir's foreign tours and visits, which are vital in mobilising efforts to confront crises and wars and in promoting peace and stability in the face of current conflicts.

Qatar, he emphasised, is an important player in resolving many global conflicts through diplomatic means.

Al-Mudahka also spoke about the broader implications of the various tours and visits of His Highness the Amir, which included, in this year alone, Poland, the Netherlands, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Greece, Cyprus, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Canada.

These visits witnessed the signing of dozens of agreements and memorandums of understanding that enhance co-operation and partnership in various fields.

Driven by a deep belief in the importance of international co-operation, Qatar's wise leadership exerts remarkable efforts in diplomacy and international development.

Through its commitment to international co-operation, Qatar helps poor and developing countries to achieve self-reliance and overcome humanitarian crises and natural disasters.

HH the Amir's Foreign Tours and Visits
Strategic Partnerships and Cooperation to Promote Stability and Peace

Italy and Germany are welcoming HH the Amir at a highly significant time, given the global political and economic challenges

HH the Amir's visit to Italy and Germany represents a continuation of his continental tours, which have gained significant importance and momentum

Exclusive Statements to Qatar News Agency |

Faleh Al Hajri
Editor-in-Chief of Al-Arab Newspaper
"HH the Amir's tours strengthen Qatar's standing as an active player on the global level and open new avenues for cooperation in various fields"

Faisal Al Mudahka
Editor-in-Chief of Gulf Times
"HH the Amir's tours and visits are vital in mobilizing efforts to confront crises and wars and in promoting peace and stability"

Dr. Khaled Mahmoud
Jordanian Political Analyst
"HH the Amir's tours to various countries around the world are part of Qatar's soft power strategy to enhance its global standing"

Dr. Ahmed Ghaith Al Kuwari
International Relations Expert
"Under the leadership of HH the Amir, Qatar remains steadfast in its efforts to resolve crises and end wars in the Middle East"

Additionally, al-Mudahka said, Qatar works through mediation to resolve conflicts through peaceful means, boasting an impressive track record in this field.

He pointed out that this soft diplomacy has contributed to enhancing Qatar's international standing and has earned it the trust and respect of the world.

Al-Arab editor-in-chief Faleh al-Hajri said that the tours and visits of His Highness the Amir play a crucial role in enhancing and developing political relations and economic partnerships with various countries around the world.

He said that these visits also provide an opportunity to discuss international and regional issues of mutual interest with the leaders of those countries.

On the economic front, al-Hajri noted that these tours contribute to the opening of new horizons for investment and enhancing bilateral trade, as Qatar aims to diversify its income sources and increase the volume of its foreign investments, thereby supporting its developmental objectives and economic aspirations.

His Highness the Amir's visits, he added, are also an opportunity to solidify Qatar's position on the international stage and affirm its role as a mediator in resolving re-

gional and international conflicts, enhancing its influence in international decision-making.

Al-Hajri affirmed Qatar's commitment to leveraging its regional and international relations to promote development and peace, through the use of its soft diplomatic and economic power to support peaceful solutions to regional and global conflicts.

He pointed out that this balanced policy makes Qatar an active and reliable partner in the promotion of peace and development at both the regional and international levels.

Jordanian political analyst Dr Khaled Mahmoud stated that the tours of His Highness the Amir to various countries around the world are an integral part of Qatar's soft power strategy to enhance its global standing.

He said that Qatar is one of the countries that has effectively utilised the concept of "soft power", adding that this strategy has clearly manifested through His Highness the Amir's tours, which result in numerous bilateral agreements, strengthening political and economic relations.

These visits, Dr Mahmoud added, directly contribute to opening new avenues for co-operation in areas such as trade, investment,

education, culture, and sports, all of which are key tools of soft power.

He said that Qatar has become a model of soft power that combines a smart diplomatic approach with economic and cultural influence, and the ability to build bridges of co-operation between nations, earning Qatari diplomacy the trust and respect of the world.

International relations expert and consultant Dr Ahmed Ghaith al-Kuwari shared a similar view.

He highlighted the wise leadership's commitment to advancing the nation's highest interests while also playing an active role in mobilising efforts and exploring solutions to confront the various regional and global challenges.

Dr al-Kuwari said that in every tour and official foreign visit of His Highness the Amir, we have witnessed the signing of numerous agreements and memorandums of understanding that strengthen co-operation and partnership between Qatar and these countries.

He added that Qatar remains steadfast in its efforts to resolve crises and end wars in the Middle East, including the current conflicts in Gaza and Lebanon, while working to mitigate their repercussions on the region and the world. - QNA



Dr Hazim Rahahleh



Prof Mahjoob Zweiri

Qatar's ties with Germany and Italy on verge of a new phase

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's official visit to Italy and Germany, which begins today, marks decades of friendship and co-operation between Qatar and the two European countries.

Doha's relations with Rome and Berlin are expected to enter a new stage of fruitful strategic partnership at all levels.

His Highness the Amir's visit is expected to contribute to the development of existing economic co-operation and relations between Qatar and the two countries, establishing an advanced stage of trade and investment co-operation that increases the pace of trade and adds vital sectors of co-operation between the two sides, whose relations have been characterised in recent years as strong economic relations, according to figures from the National Planning Council (NPC).

Based on these figures, bilateral trade between Qatar and Italy witnessed remarkable growth in recent years, reaching nearly QR1.1bn in 2023 compared to QR6.8bn in 2022, an increase of 4.4%.

The director of the Economic Studies Unit at the Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies, Dr Hazim Rahahleh, said that anyone who follows the development of the economic relations between Qatar and the European Union (EU) over recent years would clearly notice that they have entered a remarkable positive turning point heading towards broader and deeper areas of co-operation in the coming stage.

He said in a statement to the Qatar News Agency (QNA) that the most prominent feature of this phase of the partnership is that it came during a period in which Europeans are convinced that partnership with Qatar is a strategic necessity, not only for its remarkable role in ensuring the security of their energy in the darkest geopolitical circumstances that the European continent has experienced for decades, but also as a promising trade and investment partner.

Between 2018 and 2022, Dr Rahahleh said, Qatar's exports to the EU surged more than 1,100%, rising from nearly QR9bn to around QR106.7bn, while Qatar's imports from EU countries witnessed a relatively moderate growth of 16.6%, reaching about QR33bn in 2022.

In terms of investment, there is a clear and qualitative presence of Qatari direct investments in the EU countries, the volume of which reached about €23bn in 2021, constituting about 55% of the total Qatari direct investments abroad, while the volume of European investments in Qatar in the same year reached about €6.4bn, which

constitutes about a quarter of foreign direct investments in Qatar.

Regarding bilateral economic relations with Italy and Germany, Dr Rahahleh said that they have also witnessed a remarkable boom over the past years.

He noted that the solid political and economic relations with these countries and the active role played by Qatar in ensuring energy security at the global level have helped both countries and enabled them to compensate for a large part of the gas supply shortage resulting from the repercussions of the raging military conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which explains the steady increase in Italian imports of Qatari oil and gas over the past few years, from €1.4bn in 2018 to about €5.2bn in 2022, making it the second largest European country importing from Qatar and the eighth globally.

Dr Rahahleh said that Italy is Qatar's fourth-largest exporter, with a value of about €2bn in 2022, up 47% over its levels in 2018.

Germany, he continued, is also a strategic and promising partner for Qatar.

Despite the decline in the volume of its imports from Qatar compared to other European countries and the trade balance tilting in its favour, Germany has previously relied on Qatar in the past to compensate for part of the shortage in its supplies of Russian gas, which explains the increase in its imports from Qatar in 2021 to about €1.6bn before stabilising at about €538mn in 2022.

Meanwhile, Qatar's imports from Germany reach about €1.4bn, most of which concentrated in vehicles, equipment, electrical appliances, and supplies for Qatari industries.

Professor of Contemporary History and Politics of the Middle East at Qatar University (QU), Prof Mahjoob Zweiri, said in a similar statement to the QNA that Qatar's relations with both Italy and Germany are about strong partnerships.

He said that Germany is known as an important economic power at both European and international levels.

As a result, Zweiri said, Qatar has developed important relations with Germany, with Qatar's investments in Germany having exceeded \$30bn, and more than 150 German companies operating in Qatar.

Meanwhile, he added, Italy has a strong and very important economic partnership with Qatar, especially regarding LNG supplies, indicating that there is a strong partnership between the Italian company Eni and QatarEnergy, especially in projects related to the North Field and Qatari LNG.

He noted that the Adriatic LNG Terminal in Italy receives large quantities of more than 8bn cu m per year of Qatari LNG. - QNA

QIC Group promotes early breast cancer detection and prevention among its female workforce

Qatar Insurance Group (QIC) commemorated Breast Cancer Awareness Month through an initiative to increase medical awareness of breast cancer and emphasising the critical importance of early detection among the company's female workforce.

The initiative featured comprehensive presentations by the Qatar Cancer Society and Qatar Biomedical Research Institute.

These presentations educated female staff on risk factors, prevention strate-

gies, early screening methods that can save lives, and answered frequently asked questions.

Additionally, a flower workshop provided a therapeutic and engaging activity for participants while reinforcing the significance of mental well-being as part of a holistic approach to wellness.

"Qatar Insurance Group is committed to supporting awareness initiatives that enhance the well-being of our community," said QIC Group chief administrative officer Rashid al-Buainain.



"This campaign underscores our dedication to raising awareness about health issues and showcases our unwavering support for those affected by breast cancer," he said.

As the leading insurer, QIC is steadfast in promoting medical awareness and encouraging the adoption of a healthy lifestyle to mitigate the risks of developing critical diseases.

This endeavour is an integral part of QIC Group's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities, reflecting ongoing efforts to provide value and benefit the community.



Rain across Qatar

Rain, ranging from light to thundery, was received across Qatar yesterday. There is no rain forecast today. Yesterday's minimum and maximum temperatures were in the 26°-30° Celsius and 33-37C range, respectively. The minimum and maximum temperature forecast for today are in the 25-30C and 34-36C range, respectively. Picture shows scenes from Doha roads during the rain yesterday.

PICTURES: Thajudheen

HMC receives coveted green lab certification

Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC)'s Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology (DLMP) has received the Green and Sustainable Medical Laboratories certification from the European Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine.

This recognition makes the HMC's laboratories the first in the Middle East and outside Europe to achieve this certification.

The HMC's DLMP has previously achieved several international accreditations, including those from the College of American Pathologists, the American Association of Blood Banks, the Joint Commission International, and the American Society for Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics.

To further build on this foundation, the HMC's DLMP pursued the Green Labs certification, aligning with Qatar's Third National Development Strategy, which emphasises a more sustainable and environmentally friendly future.

DLMP chairperson Dr Einas al-Kuwari (pictured) said that the Green Labs certification has been awarded to all the major specialities within the HMC's laboratories, including the Clinical Chemistry Laboratory, Microbiology Laboratory, Haematology Laboratories, Anatomic Pathology Laboratory, Immunology Laboratories, Cellular Therapy Laboratories, Diagnostic Genomics Laboratories, and Transfusion Medicine Services.

"Qatar is making great strides in implement-



ing environmentally friendly and sustainable policies across all levels of society, aiming for a healthy and sustainable environment," she said. "Every healthcare organisation should contribute to a sustainable healthcare system and environmentally-friendly services, ensuring that resources are used efficiently from ecological, social, and economic perspectives, while providing high-quality services to patients."

The Green Labs certification criteria included the management of hazardous chemicals, energy efficiency, waste management, and water management.

To support this initiative, a multidisciplinary team was formed from various HMC support and operational departments, including Hospitality, Environmental Services, Health Facilities Planning, Engineering, and Supply Chain Management.

A sustainability committee was also established to ensure continuity and monitor progress in this initiative.

The European Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine is leading the laboratory medicine community toward carbon neutrality, in line with the European Green Deal Investment Plan, also known as the Sustainable Europe Investment Plan, which aims to make Europe the world's first climate-neutral continent by 2050.

The green initiatives implemented by the HMC's DLMP are primarily aimed at improving daily practices and optimising the use of resources.



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