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Foundation stone for e-bus plant laid

HE the Minister of Transport Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Thani laid the foundation stone yesterday for an EU-standard electric bus assembly plant at Um Al Houf Free Zone. The plant is a collaboration between Mowasalat (Karwa), Chinese commercial vehicle manufacturer Yutong, and the Qatar Free Zones Authority (QFZ). **Page 12**



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includes a 4-page
special supplement on
Shukran Qatar

Qatar's GDP growth to average 4.1% between 2025-2029: Al-Kuwari

Medium-term outlook bolstered mainly by huge expansion of Qatar's LNG production, says HE the Minister of Finance

By Pratap John and Tawfik Lamari

Qatar's GDP growth is expected to average 4.1% between 2025 and 2029, HE the Minister of Finance Ali bin Ahmed al-Kuwari said yesterday.

The medium-term outlook is bolstered mainly by the huge expansion of Qatar's LNG production at the North Field, HE al-Kuwari said at a press conference in Doha.

Next year, Qatar's economy is expected to grow at 2.4%, he said. The GDP growth expected in 2026 is 5.2% and 7.9% in 2027, 3.5% in 2028 and 1.6% in 2029.

This year, the GDP is expected



HE the Minister of Finance Ali bin Ahmed al-Kuwari addressing a press conference in Doha yesterday.

PICTURE: Shaji Kayamkulam

to grow at 1.7% with non-hydrocarbon GDP growing at 1.9% and hydrocarbon GDP at 1.4%.

The rate of inflation this year

will be around 1%. Next year, it is projected to be 1.4% and 1.9% in 2026. Between 2027 and 2029, the rate of inflation is projected at 2%.

Tourist arrivals in Qatar this year will be around 4.6mn, he said.

Qatar's 2025 budget approved by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani clearly aligns with the country's plans and strategies to support its ongoing economic growth and achieve economic diversification within the framework of the Qatar National Vision (QNV) 2030.

Giving details of the 2025 budget, which was presented last week, HE al-Kuwari said it expects total revenues of QR197bn and an expenditure of QR210.2bn with an anticipated deficit of QR13.2bn. **To Page 4**

Al Jazeera cameraman among 22 killed in Gaza

Gaza's civil defence agency reported yesterday that Israeli strikes across the Palestinian territory had killed at least 22 people, including an Al Jazeera TV cameraman and three rescuers. Al Jazeera said its cameraman

Ahmed al-Louh was killed "in an Israeli bombardment" that targeted Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza.

Civil defence spokesman Mahmud Bassal said that rescuers working through the

night recovered the bodies of 18 people. Bassal said four people were killed in an Israeli air strike targeting a house in central Gaza City. Another four were killed when an Israeli missile hit a tent in Deir Al-Balah.

Amir restructures QFFD Board

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani issued yesterday Amiri Decision No. 78 of 2024, restructuring the Board of Directors of the Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD).

The decision stipulated that the QFFD shall be restructured with HE Sheikh Thani bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani as chairperson and HE Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad as vice-chairperson.

The QFFD members shall include HE Loiwah bint Rashid bin Mohammed AlKhatir, Sheikh Thamer bin Hamad bin Thamer al-Thani, a Ministry of Foreign Affairs representative, a Ministry of Finance representative, a Qatar Development Bank representative,



along with an independent candidate selected by the Board Chairperson.

The decision is effective starting from its date of issue and is to be published in the official gazette. **(QNA)**

Amir, Macron discuss Gaza, Syria and ties

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani discussed with President of the friendly French Republic Emmanuel Macron key regional and international developments, primarily the situation in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territories, in addition to the developments in Syria. This came in a phone call, His Highness the Amir received yesterday from the French president. The call also dealt with bilateral relations between the two friendly countries and ways to bolster them. **(QNA)**

Qatar's embassy in Syria to open tomorrow

Qatar has announced the resumption of operations at its embassy in the Syrian Arab Republic, starting from Tuesday. Khalifa Abdullah al-Mahmoud al-Sharif has been appointed as the charge d'affaires. In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that the resumption of the embassy's operations in Damascus comes after nearly 13 years of severing all diplomatic relations with the Syrian regime in 2011, expressing Qatar's principled stance alongside the Syrian people's revolution and its steadfast support for their demands for a dignified life, freedom, and social justice. It also reaffirmed Qatar's categorical rejection of the regime's repressive policies against the Syrian people. **To Page 4**

Dec 18 and 19 Qatar National Day holidays

On the occasion of Qatar National Day (QND), observed annually on December 18, the Amiri Diwan has announced that December 18 and 19, 2024, will be official holidays. Regular working hours will resume on December 22, 2024. **(QNA)**

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Qatar slams Israeli plan for settlement expansion in Golan Heights

Qatar strongly condemned the Israeli occupation government's approval of a plan to expand settlements in the occupied Golan Heights, describing it as a new chapter in a series of Israeli attacks on Syrian territories and a blatant violation of international law. In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasised the need for the international community to fulfil its legal and moral responsibilities to compel the Israeli occupation to stop its attacks on Syrian lands and adhere to international legitimacy resolutions, as well as to stand in solidarity to counter its opportunistic plans. The ministry reiterated Qatar's unwavering support for Syria's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity, and expressed its backing for all regional and international efforts aimed at achieving security and stability in Syria and fulfilling the aspirations of its people. **(QNA)**

Labour ministry briefs officials on digital services

The Ministry of Labour (MoL) organised yesterday an induction seminar titled "Introductory Meeting for Government Entities on Digital Services", aimed at raising awareness among representatives of government and semi-government entities regarding the latest updates to the ministry's services.

This initiative comes as part of the MoL's strategy to enhance and develop smart electronic services in the labour sector, facilitating faster and more efficient service delivery to its stakeholders.

During the seminar, representatives from the Labour Permits and Labour Relations Departments



showcased the most notable service updates implemented in recent months as part of the MoL's digital transformation plan.

The services highlighted included the Work Transfer Notification Programme, the Service for Overseas Labour Recruitment Applications, as well as a

reminder of previously launched services by the Ministry of Labour. At the end of the seminar, the MoL's representatives addressed queries and concerns raised by participants from government and semi-government entities regarding the new labour sector services. **(QNA)**

NHRC awareness campaign for schools concludes

The National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) has wrapped up the second phase of the awareness training package campaign for schools, which targeted 572 students from 11 schools.

Director of the NHRC Programmes and Education Department, Hamad al-Hajri, said the awareness of human rights in early ages fundamentally contributes to preventing human rights violations over the long haul, and represents a major investment in pursuit of promoting a community where justice prevails, and human rights of all people are respected and appreciated. He added that knowledge of rights and duties is the way to advance individuals and communities and lay the groundwork for freedom and peace, highlighting that there would be no communities without advancing the individuals and no advancement without raising the awareness of their rights. Therefore, NHRC is always committed to advancing future generations to be a beneficial driver in building a community where everyone enjoys dignity and humanity, he underlined, highlighting that NHRC is committed to spreading awareness of human rights among students in primary, intermediate, and secondary schools, and for both boys and girls, as part of enhancing their knowledge of their rights and duties toward their families, homeland

and the entire world. Al-Hajri stressed that such a knowledge is the source of altering the behaviour and improving it, highlighting that spreading awareness and education among those students comes as part of NHRC's interest in the fact that they constitute the foremost educational inputs. He emphasised that advancing their capabilities represents a core objective that affects their proclivities in the future. The training package for students included a detailed explanation of the fundamental human rights instruments, along with human duties and responsibilities, in addition to reviewing the characteristics of human rights, human rights generations, as well as principles and sources of these rights, in addition to the UN human rights criteria and illustrating the difference between human rights declarations and conventions, highlighted al-Hajri. He added that the package focused on the inclusiveness of human rights, including all civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, their integration and interconnection, as well as their indivisibility, noting that the event included a paper on protecting children in a safe and secure digital environment, given the digital transformation that led to the engagement of vast majority of world population in digital environment, leading to their interaction with various aspects. **(QNA)**

PM meets Bosnian FM



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met yesterday with the visiting Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina Elmedin Konakovic. Discussion during the meeting focused on co-operation between the two countries, and ways to support and develop them. The two sides also discussed developments in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories and the latest developments in Syria, in addition to a host of topics of common interest. **(QNA)**

PM receives phone call from EU High Representative

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani received a phone call yesterday from High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission Kaja Kallas. During the call, they discussed the co-operation between Qatar and the European Union. They also discussed the updates in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories, the developments in Syria, in addition to a number of topics of common interest. **(QNA)**

Al-Misnad meets Oman, Ukraine envoys

HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad met yesterday with Oman's ambassador in Doha Sayyid Ammar bin Abdullah bin Sultan Albusaidi. The two sides discussed co-operation between the countries. **(QNA)**



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad met yesterday with Ukraine's ambassador to Qatar Andrii Kuzmenko. The meeting dealt with co-operation between the two countries. **(QNA)**

On the occasion of
Qatar National Day, 18th of December
and in remembrance of the historic day in 1878 when
Sheikh Jassim Bin Mohammed Bin Thani,
founder of the State of Qatar,
set up the pillars of the Modern State of Qatar,

We extend our heartiest congratulations and greetings to

His Highness
Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani
Amir of the State of Qatar





His Highness
Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani
Father Amir



His Highness
Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hamad Al Thani
Deputy Amir



and to all the honorable people of Qatar

We hope for more returns of this memorable occasion and wish that Qatar always enjoys security, welfare and prosperity under the wise leadership of His Highness The Amir



اليوم الوطني
١٨ ديسمبر

Sidra Medicine performs Qatar's first C-section in angiography suite

Sidra Medicine, a member of Qatar Foundation, has become the first hospital in the region to successfully perform a high-risk caesarean section (C-section) in its state-of-the-art angiography suite.

The procedure, a collaboration between the hospital's Interventional Radiology (IR) and Obstetrics teams, marks a significant advancement in maternal care for high-risk pregnancies.

The angiography suite – a highly specialised operating room equipped with advanced imaging technology – provides the ideal environment for procedures requiring precise image guidance. For patients at high risk of bleeding during delivery, performing the C-section in this setting allows for immediate access to critical interventions like endovascular embolisation.

Prof Johnny Awwad, chair of Women's Services at Sidra Medicine, said: "Traditionally, IR teams have provided backup support for high-risk deliveries performed in the obstetrics operating rooms (OR). However, patient transfer



Sidra Medicine IR Gynaecology team.

times from the obstetrics OR to the IR suite are lengthy, especially when patients are unstable and we have to factor several safety protocols. This multidisciplinary collaboration between obstetrics and IR, is what makes a difference in successfully managing high-risk pregnancies."

Performing C-sections for high-risk patients directly in the angiography suite, can significantly reduce transfer times from the obstetrics waiting room to the IR from approximately 60 minutes to zero. This approach will allow

for faster intervention if bleeding occurs.

Dr Walid Mubarak, Interventional Radiology Attending Physician and Clinical Lead at Sidra Medicine, said: "For women at high risk of postpartum haemorrhage, this technique can be lifesaving. The angiography suite allows us to instantly access cutting-edge technology and perform minimally invasive procedures. We can quickly navigate the patient's blood vessels with tiny catheters and precisely deliver embolic agents to stop bleeding."

Qatar attends child and family forum in Muscat

Qatar, represented by the Ministry of Social Development and Family (MSDF), has participated in the first child and family forum that was held in Muscat, Oman.

Senior administrative affairs expert at the Family Empowerment Department, Ghanem Mohammed al-Diab, and international co-operation development consultant, Mona Ibrahim al-Malik, represented the MSDF at the forum.

The MSDF's participation comes in response to the invitation of the organising committee, where 'Aseel' character aimed at children was launched to encourage and inspire them to adhere to the mores that constitute the core part of the nation's identity and culture, and to safeguard cultural heritage, to be circulated among the generations.

The forum's inauguration featured an operetta with the participation of a host of children, with various areas being devoted to enhancing children's skills, such as drawing, colouring, photography,

music, poetry, and others. The forum included a range of sections such as theatre, children's play zone, skills zone, an exhibition of diverse Omani products such as perfumes, incense, Omani frankincense, Omani sweets, traditional clothing, and other products, as well as an international consumer exhibition, and heritage village.

The event primarily intends to promote awareness of childhood notion, offering a recreational and educational environment for children, in addition to encouraging familial interaction and propagating national cultural values and awareness of child rights.

The forum generates benefits for children, in terms of advancing their art skills and learning through entertainment, as well as polishing their skills and engagement, in addition to having a glimpse of the Omani and international heritage and developing innovative thinking, problem-solving, and enhancing of national belonging. (QNA)

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'National Day carries symbolic greatness of achievements'

HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs and the President and CEO of QatarEnergy Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi said that the National Day holds a special symbolism, connecting the greatness of current achievements with the rich history, values and noble principles that strengthen our national unity and pride. The establishment of the State of Qatar by Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani embodies the spirit of strength, unity, and love for the homeland that he instilled in the people of Qatar, starting with the symbol of a single maroon flag named Al-Adaam, he added.

Speaking to Qatar News Agency (QNA), HE al-Kaabi pointed out that the founder was not only a national leader but was also known for his generosity, kindness, and charity, as he was sought by those who were oppressed and frightened, adding that Qatar itself, which was loved by all who lived on its land, including guests, visitors, and residents, mirrored these qualities.



He explained that these noble values continue today, preserved and protected by the wise and prudent leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani. He emphasised that the founder's approach was principle shared by all rulers of Qatar, who maintained the State's integrity, elevated its stature, and strengthened the unity of its people, who, in turn, rallied around the flag in solidarity. His approach was a covenant they adhered to and carried day after day, generation after generation. HE al-Kaabi added that His Highness the Amir continues to build on the foundations laid by

his predecessors for current and future generations, meeting the aspirations of citizens and the interests of the nation through equal citizenship, justice, and wise governance, highlighting the recent constitutional amendments to the Permanent Constitution of the State.

He explained that QatarEnergy continues to play its leading role in the optimal investment of the country's natural resources of oil and gas, in accordance with the principles set forth by Qatar National Vision 2030. The goal is to meet the country's energy needs and provide the national economy with the financial resources necessary for the comprehensive development of the country.

He said that QatarEnergy is working tirelessly to achieve the objectives of the Third National Development Strategy, which is summarised by the slogan "Building our sustainable future", which constitutes the path to achieving the goals and aspirations of Qatar National Vision 2030.

QatarEnergy pays great attention

to enhancing the country's production capacity of liquefied natural gas to be the most important tributary to the country's GDP, he said, in addition to the accompanying activities and industries in the petrochemical sector and others.

QatarEnergy built partnerships with many international companies, one of the most important returns of which was the transfer of knowledge to a new generation of Qatari youth who became capable of managing and developing the resources available.

HE the Minister pointed out that QatarEnergy charted a new course that will put it on the road to becoming one of the best companies in the world by adopting an updated business strategy based on the progress achieved by the company in recent years and taking into account supply and demand scenarios, potential risks and opportunities, and global trends, especially with regard to efforts to transition to low-carbon energy, to be a partner in this transformation. (QNA)

Amir appoints undersecretaries of ministries of justice, labour and sports and youth

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani yesterday issued three decrees appointing undersecretaries of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Sports and Youth. Decree No 105 of 2024 appoints HE Saeed bin Abdullah bin Saeed al-Suwaidi as Undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice. Decree No 106 of 2024 appoints HE Sheikhha Najwa bint Abdulrahman bin Nasser al-Thani as Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour. Decree No 107 of 2024 appoints HE Yasir bin Abdullah bin Ahmed al-Jamal as Undersecretary of the Ministry of Sports and Youth. The decrees are effective starting from their date of issue, and are to be published in the official gazette. (QNA)

Amir congratulates 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 congratulations to Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifah on his country's National Day. (QNA)

Qatar's embassy in Syria to open tomorrow

From Page 1

The ministry emphasised that the resumption of embassy operations, coinciding with the triumph of the Syrian people's revolution, reflects the continued firm and supportive position of Qatar towards the Syrian people and their struggle to attain their legitimate rights for a dignified life. It also enhances Qatar's relief efforts that began with an air bridge to assist the Syrian people in overcoming the requirements

of the transitional phase and providing urgent humanitarian aid.

The ministry renewed Qatar's commitment to actively contributing to regional and international efforts to achieve a transitional political process that ensures the unity, sovereignty, and stability of Syrian territories and leads the new Syria towards a future that meets the aspirations of its people for security, stability, development, and prosperity. (QNA)

Ambassador says QND is a dear occasion for Saudis as well

Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Qatar Prince Mansour bin Khalid bin Farhan al-Saud affirmed that the Qatar National Day (QND) is a dear occasion for his country, as it is dear to the Qatari people.

He told Qatar News Agency (QNA) that the QND is a dear occasion not only for the brothers in Qatar but also for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which has strong historical, fraternal, and family ties with Qatar, its leadership, and its dear people.

The historical ties between the two countries extend back more than 146 years, since the era of the founder of the State of Qatar, Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani, who had friendly relations with King Abdulaziz, in which the leaders of the two countries have strengthened over these decades until the present era, he added.



The ambassador extended his sincere congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani on this national occasion. He also congratulated the Qatari people and wished Qatar continued goodness, security, and prosperity.

He praised the achievements made by Qatar under its wise leadership, thanking the wisdom of His Highness the Amir and his

insightful vision, in which the State has made great development achievements and renaissance that has covered all aspects of life.

He praised Qatar's successful and effective diplomatic approach at the regional and international levels, based on the principle of mediation, peace, and harmony, in addition to efforts to resolve disputes peacefully, which is appreciated and commended.

The ambassador expressed his pride and honour in representing his country in Qatar, referring to Qatar as a neighbouring brotherly country that is dear to the kingdom.

He also expressed his pride in the important achievements made in developing bilateral relations in all fields, affirming his great confidence in the two countries moving forward towards a promising future for the path of these distinguished relations. (QNA)

Qatar's GDP growth to average 4.1% between 2025-2029

From Page 1

Qatar has set an oil price of \$60 per barrel in preparing the budget, he noted.

HE al-Kuwari said, "Qatar continues to adopt a conservative approach in estimating oil and gas revenues, with an average oil price of \$60 per barrel. This approach aims to enhance financial flexibility and ensure spending stability."

The minister noted that Qatar's total expected revenues for the 2025 fiscal year budget are estimated at QR197bn, reflecting a 2.5% decrease compared to the 2024 budget revenues.

He stated, "The anticipated oil and gas revenues for 2025 are QR154bn, down from QR159bn in the 2024 budget, marking a 3.1% decrease. Non-oil revenues for 2025 are estimated at QR43bn, which remains unchanged from 2024 levels."

Two key sectors - education and health have been allocated a significant outlay they deserve - QR41.4bn, which accounts for 20% of the total budget. QR21.9bn has been set apart for Municipality and Environment, QR3.6bn for tourism and culture, QR6.6bn for sports, QR3.9bn for transportation and QR3bn for communications.

These sectors, he said, have been allocated significant resources to support economic diversification and sustainable development efforts. They play a vital role in shaping a knowledge-driven, innovative economy. Allocations for salaries and wages are set to rise by 5.5% in 2025 compared to 2024, totalling QR67.5bn. On the anticipated deficit of QR13.2bn in the next year's budget, HE al-Kuwari clarified it is "theoretical deficit".

"Qatar has set an oil price of \$60 per barrel in preparing the budget. This is a very conservative price. If there is a surplus, it will be used to repay debt, strengthen Qatar's foreign exchange reserves and also channelled into the sovereign wealth fund," he said. He said a "dedicated fund" will be set up by the Ministry of Finance to ensure the economy did not suffer even if the energy prices plummet. "While there are goods days, there will be bad days too. We need to be prepared for such situations," the minister emphasised.

The Finance Minister said Qatar recently listed green bonds on the London Stock Exchange. The first issue of its kind issued by the Ministry of Finance in Qatar is aimed at financing environmentally friendly projects.



On the Occasion of
Qatar National Day, 18th of December
and in remembrance of the historic day in 1878, when
Sheikh Jassim Bin Mohammed Bin Thani, founder of the
State of Qatar set up the pillars of the Modern State of Qatar.

We extend our heartiest congratulations and greetings to

His Highness
Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani
Amir of the State of Qatar

His Highness
Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani
Father Amir

His Highness
Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hamad Al Thani
Deputy Amir

And to all the honourable people of Qatar
We hope for more returns of this memorable occasion
and wish that Qatar always enjoys security,
welfare and prosperity under the wise leadership of His Highness The Amir










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

Darb Al Saai activities instil national values, pride in identity: al-Sulaiti

HE Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council Dr Hamda bint Hassan al-Sulaiti along with several members of the Council, visited Darb Al Saai in Umm Salal on Saturday evening, where she was briefed on National Day activities and events organised by the Ministry of Culture, running until December 18.

Accompanied by HE the Minister of Culture Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-

Thani on the tour, Her Excellency learned about the cultural activities taking place at Darb Al Saai, in addition to the national march, a central piece to the National Day celebrations.

HE Dr Hamda bint Hassan al-Sulaiti expressed her admiration for the remarkable diversity of events at Darb Al Saai this year, which has attracted a large audience from both Qatari and resident families, particularly children who engaged with

the educational, recreational, and cultural activities in place. Her Excellency emphasised these activities' significant role in instilling in younger generations national values and solidifying their sense of loyalty, belonging, and pride in their national identity.

HE the Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council also praised the creativity in the activities at Darb Al Saai, most notably 'Sana Qatar', held for the first time this

year. She also highlighted the interactive play areas, theatres, museums, and the Qatari house, which add a special touch to this year's celebrations.

Dr al-Sulaiti commended the Ministry of Culture for its outstanding organisation and creativity, and for putting these activities and events together, and inviting all citizens and residents to visit Darb Al Saai to enjoy the festive atmosphere and to celebrate National Day. (QNA)

Buildings light up for Qatar National Day festivities



A number of buildings across Qatar have been lit up in the colours of the Qatar flag ahead of the National Day being celebrated on December 18. Views from Doha Corniche and Lusail, yesterday.

PICTURES: Thajudheen, Shaji Kayamkulam



QIIB names November winners of 'Joud' savings account draw

QIIB has named the 10 lucky winners of the monthly prizes for its 'Joud' savings account, a unique product that offers customers opportunities to win a variety of cash prizes throughout the year, including monthly, quarterly and annual draws, with a grand prize of QR1mn.

The fourth draw since the launch of the 'Joud' savings account, took place at the QIIB headquarters, in the presence of senior bank officials and a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The winners of the QR10,000 prizes for the November draw are: Abdullah Turki T al-Turki, Layla Hassen Ashkanani, Mehsan Mohammed



In addition to these opportunities, account holders benefit from quarterly dividends, as well as the flexibility to make deposits and withdrawals based on their needs. The total number of prizes for the 'Joud' savings account from QIIB is 141 throughout the year. This includes the annual grand prize of QR1mn, 20 quarterly prizes (five per quarter) each valued at QR50,000, and 120 monthly prizes (10 per month) each worth QR10,000.

Every QIIB customer with a 'Joud' savings account is eligible to participate in these draws. For every balance of QR10,000 maintained, customers receive an additional entry into the prize draws conducted throughout the year.

al-Shamari, Khalid Ali Saifeldin, Taha Abdullah Saho, Hussain Mohammed al-Amadi, Mohammed Abdulla al-Yafei, Reem Ali al-Mazrey, Hadi Sidiq and Hamda Najji al-Kurbi.

According to QIIB, 'Joud' savings account stands out as a competitive product, offering a wide range of benefits to QIIB customers. Among the most attractive features is the chance to win significant cash prizes.

Education ministry holds events to mark National Day



The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) marked yesterday the Qatar National Day.

Students, teachers and MoEHE affiliates in traditional clothing and draped with the national flag over their shoulders commemorated the occasion at the MoEHE's permanent headquarters in Al Qutaifiya.

The Qatar National Day is observed annually on December 18. This year's celebration comes under the slogan "in love of the homeland".

An MoEHE statement yesterday said the celebration aims to boost the values of loyalty and belonging to the homeland among the youth on the day of pride and honour, the foundations of which were laid by the Founder Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani in 1878.

HE MoEHE Undersecretary Dr Ibra-



him bin Saleh al-Nuaimi said that Qatar was observing this year's commemoration while being the peak of its global political leadership and economic prosperity.

Dr al-Nuaimi hailed the occasion as the day of solidarity and loyalty that represents a source of inspiration for a

better tomorrow, pointing to Qatar's scientific renaissance.

Extending the highest congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani for the remarkable achievements across various fields, Dr al-Nuaimi wished the people of Qatar further prosperity and progress and the Qatari students excellence in the first semester exams of the academic year 2024-2025.

Meanwhile, Assistant Director of Schools and Students Affairs Department Fatima al-Obaidli highlighted the MoEHE's activities to enhance the spirit of loyalty and belonging including the organising of national operettas and participation in Darb Al Saai events.

On the sidelines of the celebration, there were cultural competitions, an accompanying art exhibition and an exhibition of traditional clothing.

The MoEHE affiliates expressed their pride in the National Day as an occasion boosting the national identity and highlighting the country's development achievements. (QNA)



TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Sl. No.	Tender No.	Subject	Tender Fee	Closing Date
1	AT/C/1170/24	Supply of Security Guards for 3 Years at Various Hotels	QR.500/-	31.12.2024

- The tender documents are available for collection from the Finance Department (Tel.: 44465612) of The Torch Doha upon presentation of a formal letter of authorization on Company letterhead, copy of the Commercial Registration and a non-refundable fee as specified above.
- The closing time will be at 12.00 noon on the closing date mentioned above, any offer arriving thereafter will not be considered.
- Tenders (**Technical and Commercial envelope separately in duplicate**) are to be submitted in a sealed envelope addressed to The Chairman, General Tender Committee, The Torch Doha and deposit in the tender box available at The Torch Doha Purchasing Office.

Auction Announcement

ARPM Tender and Auction Committee announce the following Auction:

Auction Subject				
Sale of Furniture and Accessories for villas and palaces				
Launching Date	Closing Date	Auction Bond QR.	Auctions Documents Price QR.	Auction Method
16/12/2024	30/12/2024	10,000 (Qatari Riyals Ten Thousand) (refundable subject to conditions)	200 (Qatari Riyals Two Hundred only)	One Closed Envelope

Auction description:

Auction purpose is for the following:

Sale of Furniture and Accessories for villas and palaces
The awarding will be made to the highest bid among the applicants.

General Conditions:

- Auction Documents / Conditions shall be obtained from Purchasing Department, ARPM Co., located on the 9th Floor, Al Rayyan Building, Old Salata, Zone 18, Al Muthaf Street, Next to Al Bustan Hotel during working hours 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (Fri. & Sat. Closed).
- Auction Documents Fee (QR 200 – Qatari Riyals Two Hundred only) - non-refundable, will be paid in cash in ARPM Co. Headquarter.
- Site visit for the Furniture & Accessories and its Location shall be according to the Auction Conditions and the attendance of the visit shall be limited to those who obtain the Auction documents and pay the prescribed fees as per Item 2 above.
- To obtain Auction documents, the following documents are required:
Authorization letter from the bidding company in Arabic signed by the officially authorized manager and stamped with the company's seal - Copy of the establishment card - ID of the authorized person to receive the documents - Copy of the valid company's commercial registration - Company's classification certificate (if any).
- The Bid must be submitted according to the Conditions stated in the bidding documents. The Bid shall be enclosed with an Auction Bond in the name of Al Rayyan Project Management Company (to be placed in separate envelope inside the Bid envelope) in the form of a payable cheque certified by one of the banks operating in the State of Qatar of only QR10,000 (Ten Thousand Qatari Riyals only), and it will be returned back within 90 days from the closing date subject to the Terms & Conditions, noting that no bid shall be accepted unless it has been enclosed with Auction Bond document.
- The bid (Price of the Furniture & Accessories for villas and palaces) shall be submitted in local currency (Qatari Riyal) and shall be valid for 90 days from the closing date of the bid and cannot be revoked within that period.
- Deadline for accepting bids is 12:00 pm of the closing date (Monday 30/12/2024).
- All forms attached to the Auction documents including the form of undertaking, shall be filled, completed and authorized as stated therein and returned with the other documents.
- All necessary data for the company (contacts & follow-up) must be attached: Mobile - Phone - Fax - E-mail - company address of where the correspondence to be sent, clarifying the tasks of each individual (when purchasing Auction documents) and within the company bid.
- For any queries related to documents and bidding, contact Al Rayyan Project Management Co. - Tel: 40341846 – 40341804, Fax: 40341899 – email: L.cabral@arpm.com.qa; m.aseef@arpm.com.qa
- Deadline for accepting inquiries and requests 23/12/2024.
- The extension of the closing date may be requested in case of necessity (with justifications), not less than (5) working days prior to the closing date for Tender and Auction committee decision and decision.
- In case the closing date is extended or any modifications are made during the announcement period, the company will be notified by fax or e-mail formally.

Tenders and Auctions Committee
ARPM



Increasing demand seen for QND-themed items

Demand for items used to celebrate Qatar National Day (QND) has been steadily increasing over the past few days.

Clothes and gift shops in Souq Waqif offer a wide variety of clothing for boys and girls, accessories, swords, and other supplies.

A number of salesmen told local Arabic daily *Arrayah* that all modern items, accessories, and clothing for the QND are available at competitive prices.

Salesman Ali Mohamed said that shops at Souq Waqif offer flags in various sizes for prices ranging from QR3-35, maroon-coloured youth caps for QR15, women's velvet caps in maroon and white for QR20, and scarves for QR10 and QR20.

Girls' dresses for the QND are priced between QR35 and QR50, while boys' T-shirts are available for QR25, adult T-shirts QR30, and maroon-coloured children's sets range from QR20-25.

Brooches are priced at QR8, and QND-themed keychains are available for QR10.

Another salesman, Basir Abdullah, said that all related items are available at prices suitable for all budgets.

QND 'an occasion to enhance values of loyalty, belonging'

HE the Minister of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs Ghanem bin Shaheen al-Ghanem considers Qatar National Day (QND) an occasion to enhance the values of loyalty and belonging to the country, and a renewed and continuous covenant with the fathers who built the nation and the lofty values on which they laid the foundations of the modern State of Qatar.

HE al-Ghanem said, in a statement to the Qatar News Agency (QNA), that the QND is a distinctive day in the lives of the people of Qatar for what it represents in terms of unity and harmony among all who live on this good land.

It recalls, he said, the journey of a state full of pride, proud of the glories of the past and the achievements of the present and filled with hope for a bright future.

The QND is an opportunity to affirm the commitment to continue the path of development and progress that the founder began, said HE al-Ghanem.

He reviewed the various and numerous achievements made by the different departments of the Ministry of Endowments, which adopted a clear vision consistent with its mission and competencies, within the framework of its organisational structure and its national commitments and responsibilities towards Qatar National Vision 2030, by communicating the call and spreading Islamic culture using all means, sites and platforms, according to a moderate approach, and working to update and develop programmes to prevent and protect young people in society from ideas of deviation and extremism.

HE al-Ghanem added that the ministry held educational lessons and lectures in mosques and preaching centres in all regions of the country, and held qualification courses to develop imams, muezzins, preachers, muftis and others, believing in their effective role in advancing the values and morals of members of society.

The minister noted that within



the framework of the country's architectural expansion, the ministry has opened dozens of mosques in a number of regions and centres for teaching the Holy Qur'an.

The General Administration of Endowments has strengthened the partnership with governmental and civil entities, HE al-Ghanem said, noting that the demand for new endowments and the number of endowments from the people of Qatar has increased, endowment resources have diversified, and a number of major endowment projects have been opened, the latest of which was laying the founda-

tion stone for three endowment projects in Lusail City.

He highlighted the contribution of Zakat revenues in helping families in need in Qatar through the Zakat Affairs Department.

In the field of religious advocacy and guidance, the ministry's programmes have expanded and diversified, and educational lessons and advocacy lectures have been held in all regions of the country, and qualifying courses have been held in the fields of advocacy and Islamic sciences.

HE the Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs expressed the ministry's keenness to develop its strategic plan (2023-30) in line with the Third National Development Strategy of the state and Qatar National Vision 2030, striking a balance between keeping pace with modernity and development and preserving the national identity and virtuous values derived from the teachings of Islam and the good values of Qatari society. - QNA

Kimshhealth doctor wins best psychiatrist award

Kimshhealth has announced that Dr Jery Antony, a psychiatrist at its Al Mashaf branch, has been honoured with the "Best Psychiatrist Award" at the first edition of Qatar Medicare 2024, held recently.

This accolade, presented by HeliumDoc, recognises Dr Antony's exceptional contributions to mental healthcare in Qatar, a statement said.

The award was based on three key criteria: the volume of patient visits, reviews of service quality, and an extensive survey involving more than 11,000 patients.

Dr Antony specialises in diagnosing, managing, and treating a wide spectrum of mental health conditions, including anxiety and panic disorders, major depressive disorders, bipolar affective disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorders (OCD), post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD), psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia, stress-related conditions, and sleep disorders.

At Kimshhealth, he leads initiatives to raise awareness about mental health, providing educational workshops and counselling sessions to reduce stigma



and encourage early intervention. "This award is a testament to our team's collective effort to provide compassionate, high-quality psychiatric care," Dr Antony said.

"Mental health is often an underserved area, and we are proud to see Dr Jery Antony recognised for his impactful contributions to this vital aspect of well-being," said Kimshhealth Group chief executive Dr Sherif M Sahadulla.

CRA's milestones meet needs of major domestic, global events: president

Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA) president Ahmad Abdulla al-Muslemani has said that the CRA has proven over the past decade its capability of managing and monitoring of radio spectrum usage in Qatar in full compliance with legal frameworks.

This is particularly evident, he said, across critical sectors such as telecommunications, security, as well as in the oil and gas, aviation, maritime navigation, and other essential industries.

Speaking to the Qatar News Agency (QNA), al-Muslemani underlined that the CRA enhances its position as the responsible entity for this resource by issuing regulations and regulatory tools, granting licences, permits, and approvals for the optimal use of the radio spectrum.

He emphasised that the CRA has worked tirelessly to monitor and oversee the use of the spectrum, ensuring its optimal utilisation, underscoring its crucial and central role in maintaining the sustainability and security of communications in Qatar.

Al-Muslemani said that the CRA has cemented its reputation with achievements in meeting the requirements of major local and international events hosted by the country, including the landmark event, the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, in addition to playing a key role during these events, ensuring the frequency plans and management were in place to enable all stakeholders to use and operate various radio applications, equipment, and broadcasting systems as required, without interruption due to any radio interference.

He said that in recent years the CRA has achieved significant milestones in fostering productive international co-operation in the area of spectrum management and monitoring, through the signing

of agreements with countries such as Turkiye, Morocco, the Gambia, Somalia, Korea and Romania.

Al-Muslemani added that over the past 10 years, the CRA has played a pivotal role in ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of telecommunications networks and services in Qatar, particularly through the management of numbering, the cornerstone of building a communications system that meets users' needs and supports economic growth.

He stated that the CRA issued the national numbering plan, along with other relevant regulations, and worked on the allocation and distribution of numbers used in all telecommunications services or for any other numbering-related purposes, in addition to allocating about 11mn mobile phone numbers and around 2mn landline numbers to the telecommunications companies.

Additionally, it supported innovation and development in the telecommunications sector, allocating 300,000 numbers for Internet of Things (IoT) and machine-to-machine (M2M) applications.

Over the past decade, al-Muslemani said, the CRA has dedicated its resources to advancing the digital community in the country and worked on expanding Qatar's digital presence on the global stage, strengthening the foundations of digital infrastructure, and cybersecurity levels.

He said that this has been achieved through a series of initiatives aimed at encouraging institutions and individuals to adopt the use of Qatari Internet domain names, thereby emphasising its role in supporting innovation and technological advancement in line with the CRA's aspirations, and contributing to the country's ambitions to lead globally in the field of information and communications technology (ICT). - QNA

Mercury dips as wind, dust descend on Qatar



Windy and dusty weather has descended on Qatar with the forecast today of minimum temperature in the 10-14° Celsius range and a maximum in the 20-22C range, according to the Met office. Yesterday's minimum and maximum temperatures were in the 14-18C and 19-22C range, respectively. Date palms are seen swaying in this scene from Doha Corniche last evening.

PICTURE: Thajudheen

GU-Q student brewing success with 'Casual Coffee'

Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q) student Khalid al-Kawari is showcasing his entrepreneurial spirit in an unexpected way.

The Qatari student from the Class of 2024 has turned a gap in the coffee market into a thriving business.

With the closure of a popular café on campus, al-Kawari saw a golden opportunity to bring students, faculty and staff together over coffee with the launch of "Casual Coffee".

"Knowing I'd have the support of the university community made it an easy decision," he said.

"The name 'Casual Coffee' was not chosen at random," al-Kawari continued. "The name was originally my father's idea for a café he had planned to open. When I decided to start my own café, he suggested I use it."

"It felt right - like continuing a legacy," he said.

Launching a business on campus was

not without its hurdles.

With the support of dean Safwan Masri, he successfully secured the opportunity to open Casual Coffee at the GU-Q.

Another challenge was balancing affordability with quality.

"As a small business, dealing with high operational costs while striving to provide quality coffee was tough," said al-Kawari, who is studying international politics. "Fortunately, Georgetown has different coffee providers, allowing us to offer a range of pricing options that cater to different segments of the community."

From sourcing suppliers to building a loyal customer base, he credits the success of Casual Coffee to a dedicated team.

Baristas Karyl Pasco and Haldane Alfonso bring extensive industry experience, while Mohammed Ashraf and Jomaa Mohammed handle logistics and procurement.

"Their expertise has been crucial to maintaining the high standards that define

Casual Coffee," al-Kawari said.

Feedback from friends and students has also been pivotal.

"Their insights helped us refine our offerings and create a welcoming environment for everyone," said al-Kawari, who created a feeling of community by offering a variety of special drinks named after faculty and students who had requested them.

Balancing academics with business is not easy, but Khalid has mastered the art of time management.

"I keep a strict schedule to separate time for coursework and business tasks, using digital tools to stay organised," he said. "Trusting my team with daily operations allows me to focus on my studies when necessary."

"Plus, I do have other businesses that I am launching soon, in real estate and the food and beverage industry, and I do the same for the rest," al-Kawari added.

"The biggest lesson I've learned is resil-



ience," he noted. "From rejections to operational challenges, every obstacle has been a learning experience. It is all about adaptability and seeking creative solutions."

With plans to expand beyond its current locations at the GU-Q and Sidra Hospital, he envisions Casual Coffee becoming a staple in Qatar.

However, that is just the beginning for the ambitious young man.

"I'm working on two other businesses in different sectors to create a diverse portfolio," al-Kawari said.

"It's important for me to keep Casual Coffee at Georgetown as an inspiration for any student looking to start their own business," he stated. "I hope to show them that with determination and the right support, they can turn their entrepreneurial dreams into reality."

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, SIVADASAN PILLAI BINDU PILLAI

holder of

INDIA Passport No. Y4221792
QID No. 27635603862

hereby change my name

from

SIVADASAN PILLAI BINDU PILLAI

to

BINDU KUMARI SIVADASAN PILLAI

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

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, MARTINE ISABELLA SAMSON MILITANTE

holder of

Philippines Passport No. P6670183B
QID No. 28560810144

hereby change my name

from

MARTINE ISABELLA SAMSON MILITANTE

to

MARTINE ISABELLA MILITANTE VALENTINO

Any objection, please contact
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ANNOUNCEMENT

I, CHAND MOHAMMED KHALIFEY MOHAMMED

holder of

INDIA Passport No. U0228252
QID No. 28235601568

hereby change my name

from

CHAND MOHAMMED KHALIFEY MOHAMMED

to

MAZHAR CHAND MOHAMMED KHALIFEY

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ANNOUNCEMENT

I, PRINCE YOUNES H ALI

holder of

PHILIPPINE Passport No. P9300684B
QID No. 31060800601

hereby change my name

from

PRINCE YOUNES H ALI

to

PRINCE YOUNES GAUS H. ALI

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



On the Occasion of
Qatar National Day, 18th of December

and in remembrance of the historic day in 1878, when
Sheikh Jassim Bin Mohammed Bin Thani, founder of the State
of Qatar set up the pillars of the Modern State of Qatar,

We extend our heartiest congratulations and greetings to

His Highness

Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani

Amir of the State of Qatar

His Highness

Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani

Father Amir

His Highness

Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hamad Al Thani

Deputy Amir

And to all the honourable people of Qatar

We hope for more returns of this memorable occasion and wish that
Qatar always enjoys security, welfare and prosperity under the wise
leadership of His Highness The Amir.



آل عبدالغني موتورز
Al Abdulghani
Motors



UDST commemorates Qatar National Day with festivities

University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) celebrated Qatar National Day with an event that brought together students, faculty members, staff and their families to honour the nation's rich heritage and values. The celebration featured a series of cultural and educational activities aimed at fostering national pride and unity. Dr Salem Al-Naemi, president of UDST said: "Qatar National Day is a time to celebrate our nation's achievements and reflect on the values of unity, resilience, and progress. It reminds us of the vision

that drives Qatar forward and the collective efforts that have brought us to where we are today. "At UDST, we take pride in our role in preparing the next generation of leaders across various industries, equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary to contribute to achieving the nation's vision and continue its success." The event featured a display of cultural booths, celebrating Qatar's rich heritage and showcasing its remarkable achievements. Also, a photo gallery highlighted key milestones, offering a deeper insight into the nation's journey of



Dr Salem Al-Naemi

progress and innovation. The celebration featured a variety of engaging activities, including

a student poem recitation by Abdallah Ahmed from the College of Health Sciences that paid tribute to the country's history, and a traditional Qatari attire fashion show that highlighted its cultural heritage. Furthermore, an interactive contest added an element of fun and excitement to the day, while a screening of the film "Ode to Our Land" provided a cinematic tribute to Qatar's journey and its people. Attendees also had time to connect and try traditional Qatari cuisine, which created a sense of community and togetherness.



One of the activities at the event.

QND celebrations begin at Katara

Qatar National Day (QND) 2024 celebrations at the Katara - the Cultural Village started yesterday evening with the participation of various institutions and entities.

The festivities include a variety of activities appealing for all visitors of different age groups and interests. The events will continue daily from 3pm-9pm, until December 18 alongside the Katara Corniche.

The celebrations include musical performances such as the traditional Qatari Ardha and a performance by the Qatar Armed Forces, presented in collaboration with the Centre for Military Performances and Music.

A Street Arts Festival is also underway, featuring a number of talented artists and musicians. There are heritage activities, including contributions from Al-Galayel and Al Gannas Qatari Society, with shows of falconry and Saluki hunting.

Tawasol Company is participating with heritage-focused activities and an exhibition highlighting Qatar's achievements. Local families are offering traditional foods and handmade products.

The Al Thuraya Planetarium is hosting daily film screenings on the space theme, featuring three films: *Journey Through Space*, *Eight Planets in the Solar System*, and *The Stars*.

On Monday, the schedule includes *The Small Perfect Planet* at 4pm, *The Stars* at 5pm, and *The 3D Astronaut* at 6pm. Entry requires booking through the website, and the screenings are open to all age groups.

The Qatari Fine Art Exhibition was inaugurated at Building 19 as a permanent exhibition, showcasing 47 artworks, including paintings, ceramics, and Arabic calligraphy by 17 artists.

A daily theatrical performance titled *Suhail and Thuraya* is also part of the events, featuring traditional songs, storytelling, and competitions for children. The Al-



Dana Girls Centre is contributing with a musical operetta for kids.

The Visual Arts Centre is presenting a special National Day mural, while Qatari and expatriate artists are participating in Qatar: A Nation of Art competition, showcasing artworks that express their love for Qatar.

On the southern side of Katara, hot air balloon displays are being conducted in collaboration with Safe Flight Solutions, while the Moto Art event is taking place across Katara, where artists paint national symbols and slogans on cars.

For the eleventh consecutive year, the Book of Loyalty is on display, showcasing messages of de-

votion from previous years while allowing visitors to express their love for Qatar.

The Oud Center will host musical evenings on December 17 and 18 in Building 6.

The Katara Corniche Theater will today feature a seminar titled *Qatar Through the Eyes of Its People*, with participants including Dr Yousef Ali al-Kazim, Abdulaziz Ahmed al-Maaraifi, and Haya al-Nuaimi.

A poetry evening in celebration of Qatar will take place tomorrow featuring poets Ali Mirza, Mohamed al-Sada, and journalist-poet Mostafa Matar. The event will be moderated by poet Mohamed al-Shahwani.

Marza Hypermarket launches QND promotions

Marza Hypermarket has announced its special Qatar National Day (QND) promotional offers from today to December 31, 'bringing incredible savings and exclusive deals'.

As part of the celebrations, shoppers can enjoy discounts on a wide range of products, including fresh food, groceries, household items, electronics, garments, and fashion.

"Visit any Marza branch to take advantage of unbeatable deals on more than 1,800 products, with prices starting at QR18, 12, 20, or 24. Additionally, enjoy an exclusive 18% discount on selected garments, footwear, ladies handbags, toys and household items," a statement said.

"Marza, which opened at Ain Khalid in 2011, now also has branches at J Mall Markhiya, Bin Omran and Msheireb. In 2025, Marza will open more outlets.



"In addition, branches of Arabic sweets Laziz Marza, a sister organisation of Marza, operates in Muaither and Izghawa. Our speciality is to deliver the best quality products at a good price and customers' satisfaction is of utmost value," it was explained. Marza managing director Jafar Kandoth expressed his gratitude to customers for their

continuous support and loyalty. "Qatar National Day is a time for us to give back to the community that has been an integral part of our journey," he said. Group general manager Haris Kader added: "We have carefully curated these promotions to ensure that every family can make the most of this special occasion."

Exclusive Qatar National Day offer for 'QNB First' members

QNB Group has launched a 'special campaign' for its 'QNB First' members, offering them 'exclusive discounts' on the occasion of Qatar National Day. QNB First cardholders can simply use their cards at participating QNB First lifestyle partners ranging from hotels, restaurants, health and beauty, shopping and much more across Doha until December 21 to avail of discounts up to 50%. They can view offers through QNB Explorer Mobile application and enjoy these benefits.

Commenting on this campaign, Adel Ali al-Malki, Senior Executive Vice President of QNB Group Retail Banking, said: "We are proud to launch this exclusive campaign allowing QNB First Members to celebrate



Qatar's National Day wherever they go with a wide range of our lifestyle partners. Through QNB First exclusive products and unparalleled privileges, we are always keen to promote our proud occasions and national

culture, in line with the group's values." QNB Group is one of the leading financial institutions in the MEA region and among the most valuable banking brands in the regional market.

GIRARD-PERREGAUX LAUREATO 38 MM SAGE GREEN & LAUREATO 38 MM MIDNIGHT BLUE



مجوهرات الفردان
Alfordan Jewellery



Following numerous requests from 'GP-lovers', the Swiss Maison from La Chaux-de-Fonds is pleased to unveil two additional steel versions of the Laureato 38 mm, one executed in Sage Green and the other in Midnight Blue. These references incorporate the much loved Laureato design codes, first seen on the inaugural model released in 1975. Both watches are equipped with an in-house Manufacture movement that's been optimally designed for these models.

A LESSON IN PROPORTIONS

Since it was first released in 1975, the Laureato has always been blessed with delightful proportions. Now, the brand from La Chaux-de-Fonds is pleased to unveil two additional Laureato models, both housed in a 38 mm stainless steel case, perpetuating the model's reputation for aesthetic balance and cohesive design. Complementing existing Laureato models, these new references are slender, while the bracelets are optimally designed to envelop the arm, making them ideal for both male and female wrists. Beyond mere dimensions, these new Laureato models wonderfully play with lines and curves. Moreover, the width of the bracelet and the interaction between the caseback and the wearer's skin is the product of much consideration. Offered in a choice of Sage Green or Midnight Blue, both options incorporate several Laureato signature elements, including baton-type hands and indexes with luminescent treatment, a Clous de Paris dial and a colour-coordinating date display at 3 o'clock.

Despite both references sharing a familial resemblance to one another, they each exhibit their own distinctive look. The GP logo gracing the Sage Green dial is presented in a rich golden hue, a colour that is also repeated on the centre seconds hand. Alternatively, should you appraise the Midnight Blue version, you will find that the GP logo and centre seconds hand are presented in a cool shade of silver. However, irrespective of the colour selected, each dial, courtesy of its three-dimensional textured surface, wonderfully plays with



light. From some angles the Sage Green dial appears grey, whereas the Midnight Blue dial sometimes assumes an intense shade of royal blue. When GP selected these dial hues, it gave much consideration to the light's interaction with the case and bracelet. Likewise, the colour of the hands, indexes, minute track and GP logo are also the result of much thought.



REASSURINGLY LAUREATO

Both versions of the Laureato 38 mm will prove instantly recognisable to legions of watch aficionados courtesy of their distinctive case, dial and bracelet ensemble. Upholding the beloved Laureato design, the octagonal bezel sits atop a circular plinth that rests upon an angular tonneau-shaped case. It's an arrangement



that endows the model with an enduring charm. Laureato devotees will also notice the alternation of polished and satin finishes on both the case and integrated bracelet. A folding clasp secures the watch to the wrist, contributing to the impressive levels of wearer comfort.

At the heart of both watches sits a Manufacture movement, the GP03300 calibre. Made at the company's production facility in La Chaux-de-Fonds, the self-winding movement features a pink gold oscillating weight adorned with circular Côtes de Genève motif. Additional movement refinements include straight Côtes de Genève on the bridges, bevelling, mirror-polished screws, circular graining on the main plate and engraved gilded text, all executed to the company's no-compromise standards.



QNL to lead transformation as IFLA Mena Regional Office

Qatar National Library (QNL) celebrated its new role as the IFLA Regional Office for the Mena region, with a two-day event that brought together industry experts for a series of panel discussions, interactive workshops and lectures aimed at empowering libraries, fostering regional partnerships and driving innovative solutions to global challenges in librarianship.

QNL executive director Tan Huism and IFLA secretary-general Sharon Memis inked the agreement during a signing ceremony yesterday, attended by HE the QNL President and Minister of State Dr Hamad bin Abdulaziz al-Kawari, and IFLA president Vicky McDonald.

"The designation of Qatar National Library as the IFLA Regional Office for the Mena region underscores Qatar's prominent standing in the field of libraries and information on both regional and global levels," HE Dr al-Kawari said.

"It also highlights our country's role as a strategic partner to leading international institutions in

their pursuit of a sustainable future for knowledge and scientific research," he added.

The partnership positions QNL as a key regional hub for librarianship, with a focus on facilitating collaboration, innovation and the dissemination of information throughout the Mena region.

"The designation of Qatar National Library as the IFLA Regional Office for the Mena region underscores Qatar's prominent standing in the field of libraries and information on both regional and global levels"

'Partnerships and Global Librarianship' was the focus of the inaugural panel discussion, which provided insights into the vital role that collaboration and resource sharing play in advancing library services globally.

McDonald said the IFLA's partnership with QNL will enable both institutions to deliver on their mission in terms of empowering libraries and the com-

munities they serve across the region.

Sharon said the IFLA's regional centres play a pivotal role in advancing the federation's objectives. "The work of regional centres is essential to ensuring that we are not just an international federation but a truly global one, helping library and information workers everywhere benefit from being part of this worldwide field. Qatar National Library is a model for this work in its dedication and innovation, and I look forward to many years of collaboration," she added.

Since its opening in 2017, QNL has played a key role in this regard, organising over 3,000 events that attracted more than 150,000 participants.

Eiman Saleh al-Shamari, manager of the IFLA Mena Regional Office at QNL, said the library, as the IFLA representative in the region, is cementing its role as a cultural hub and advancing its objective of promoting cultural dialogue.

"At the IFLA Regional Office, we are committed to support-

ing libraries in the region to keep pace with the latest global standards and practices in the field, which will, in turn, enhance the quality of services they provide. The office will serve as a platform for training and capacity building, improving the skills of professionals in this sector and strengthening their ability to meet the needs of their communities," she said.

The second day of the event will feature interactive workshops and lectures offering practical solutions for libraries in the Mena region. Key topics will include enhancing library capacities, fostering partnerships, integrating digital technologies, and addressing regional challenges in the digital age.

Since its nomination as the IFLA Regional Office on the sidelines of the 88th edition of the IFLA General Conference and Assembly last year, QNL has organised numerous workshops and sessions to develop librarianship skills across the region with a focus on leveraging technology to enhance education and learning.

AFG College with University of Aberdeen holds alumni gala dinner

AFG College with the University of Aberdeen held their annual alumni gala reception.

The event was attended by Al Faleh Educational Holding founder and chairperson Sheikh Dr Aisha bint Faleh al-Thani, CEO Sheikh Anwar bint Nawaf al-Thani, the British embassy's deputy head of mission Duncan Hill, University of Aberdeen vice-principal Prof Siladitya Bhattacharya, Siemens Qatar CEO Hakan Ozdemir and other dignitaries.

An award ceremony acknowledged alumni who have excelled in their respective fields.

This year's alumni award winners were Rajesh Kunnath and Maha Mubarak Alnaimi. Sheikh Anwar formally opened the event as she welcomed attendees and noted the many successes of the alumni.

Sheikha Anwar said: "I'm always astounded by the astonishing work and roles that our alumni play both in Qatar and globally. Our alumni are drawn to a diverse range of sectors, whether that be governmental, private enterprises or third sector organisations. In whatever field our alumni find themselves, they are equipped to succeed and are working hard in the pursuit of knowledge and contributing to the development of their communities and society."

Hill commented: "It was a privilege to be invited to the AFG/Aberdeen alumni event and see firsthand the successes of those graduates who have left with a British university degree. I look forward to next year's event and hearing first hand from the alumni of what they've achieved. These graduates are testament to the continued cultural links that are being fostered between both nations."

During the evening, attendees heard from the University of Aberdeen alumnus, Ebraheem al-Samadi, TV personality and successful businessman, who spoke about his journey and the importance he attached to life-long learning and networking.

Ebraheem said: "It was such a wonderful opportunity and a real privilege for me to be invited to speak at the alumni dinner. As a proud graduate of the University of Aberdeen I am always willing to help where I can and am happy to pass on my knowledge and advice to those seeking to build and grow in their own careers."

Award winner Kunnath said: "It was a great opportunity for us to reconnect with our colleagues, some we've not seen since graduating. We were able to talk with our former lecturers and reminisce about the good times we enjoyed during our time on campus."



Msheireb Museums hosts leadership summit

Msheireb Museums, a cornerstone of Msheireb Properties' commitment to cultural preservation and innovation, hosted the Positive Impact Leadership Summit 2024 last week.

The event, organised in collaboration with the Youth Entrepreneur Club, brought together CEOs, executives, and thought leaders from across the Middle East and Qatar, to explore new leadership paradigms.

Held in the heart of Msheireb Downtown Doha, the world's first sustainably redeveloped downtown, the summit served as a platform for reimagining leadership.

With a focus on supporting employee well-being alongside organisational success, the discussions highlighted groundbreaking research underscoring the unique strengths of Qatari leadership – rooted in values of loyalty, service, and cultural heritage.

"We were honoured to host so many visionary leaders during the Positive Impact Leadership Summit," Msheireb Museums general manager Abdulla al-Naama said. "At Msheireb Properties, we believe leadership is about cre-



ership Summit," Msheireb Museums general manager Abdulla al-Naama said. "At Msheireb Properties, we believe leadership is about cre-

ating impact beyond the boardroom. Community spaces like Msheireb Museums provide a unique opportunity for learning and dialogue, bridging the past and the future while inspiring innovative approaches to leadership in communities and workplaces."

The summit featured two panel discussions exploring the intersection of heritage and innovation.

Panelists examined how Qatari values like loyalty and service have shaped the nation's progress and how balancing tradition with modern practices can help communities thrive.

Discussions also focused on empowering younger leaders, creating inclusive workplaces, and leveraging shared values to drive societal transformation.

The event also highlighted actionable outcomes, such as strategies for integrating heritage-inspired leadership principles into contemporary corporate practices and creating policies that prioritise inclusivity and well-being.

Dukhan Bank announces credit card campaign winners

Dukhan Bank has announced the winners of its 2024 Credit Card Spend Campaign, which concluded with the distribution of a total of 2mn 'DAwards' points.

The campaign rewarded customers for their card usage between September 1 and November 30, 2024, with a grand draw conducted on December 4 under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The campaign offered participants a chance to win by using their Dukhan Bank credit and prepaid cards, earning entries into the draw for every QR1,000 spent locally or internationally. Customers who met the minimum spending requirement of QR5,000 were eligible to participate, showcasing their trust and engagement with Dukhan Bank's products and services.

Aftab Mohamed Omar emerged as the grand prize winner, taking home 1mn DAwards points. Ten participants won 50,000 DAwards points each: Sheikh Faisal al-Thani, Ali al-Khelafi, Anas Abouqamer, Talal Albaker, Muhammad Piracha, Rana Tamouni, Mansour al-Hajri, AbdelAziz al-Mass, Fadi Elaawar, and Mohamed al-Ali.

Twenty other participants were awarded 25,000 DAwards points: Hamad Alsarami, Ali al-Tamimi, Saeed al-Marri, Maryam al-Kubaisi, Ali al-Marri, Thomas David, Yousef al-Jassim, Mahmoud Alnobny, Salah Abukheriba, Zahid Ali, Mohamad Tahir, Mohammed al-Emadi, Malek Shabane, Mohammed Albdour, Fadi Mouqat, Hamad al-Khayareen, Erico Santana, Khalid al-Shafi, Mohammed al-Marri, and Khalid al-Kuwari.

This completed the total winners' list to 31.

QF, University of Granada establish Radwa Ashour Award

Qatar Foundation (QF) and the University of Granada have launched the annual Radwa Ashour Award for Arabic Literature, honouring the legacy of iconic Egyptian novelist, writer, literary critic, and professor Radwa Ashour.

The award was launched on December 13 at Al-Madrassa Al Youssufia in Granada, Spain. The Radwa Ashour Award for Arabic Literature is open exclusively to writers who create in Arabic, emphasising QF's commitment to promoting the Arabic language and Arab-Islamic cultural heritage.

HE Sheikh Hind bint Hamad al-Thani, Vice-Chairperson and CEO of Qatar Foundation, said: "Throughout history's most challenging times, humanity has turned to literature – its enduring mirror. Great literature, therefore, transcends its artistic form to become essential – a



vessel of memory, resistance, and hope."

The Radwa Ashour Award for Arabic Literature, designed as a writing residency retreat, will be awarded annually to two exceptional Arabic-language writers. Writers are selected based on the literary merit of their work and the promise of their proposed writing projects. A distinguished panel of

The two recipients of the award will be based in Granada for an extended residency, offering uninterrupted time for writing, research, and creative development. They will also engage with local cultural and literary communities through lectures, workshops, and public readings, fostering cultural exchange and creative collaboration.

Jose Miguel Vilchez, Arabist and Professor of Art History at the University of Granada, added:

"This award aims to encourage literary creation in the Arabic language. It bears the name of a courageous woman deeply committed to university teaching, writing, and denouncing injustice and oppression: the Egyptian writer Radwa Ashour. She also drew inspiration from the history of our city, Granada, to craft one of the most impactful narratives in contemporary Arabic literature."

QRDI Council hosts training of Mumaken programme

Qatar Research, Development, and Innovation (QRDI) Council has concluded an IP Commercialisation Training Session.

The three-day event brought together Technology Transfer Professionals within Qatari R&D institutions to explore strategies for facilitating commercialisation of research outcomes from the lab to the market.

The course was organised through ASTP, a premier non-profit member's organisation committed to knowledge transfer



Attendees at the training programme.

among universities and industry and whose focus is to further im-

prove the quality of impact that public research has on the econ-

omy and society. Held under the QRDI Council's

Mumaken Programme, the training aimed to equip participants with practical tools and frameworks for discovering technology-market fit, building strategic partnerships, and commercialising research.

Speakers Sean Fielding and Jeff Skinner, who led the sessions, have decades of experience leading technology transfer offices at major universities in the UK and are deeply involved in academic knowledge transfer professional training across Europe, offering insights

into bridging the gap between research and real-world applications.

The agenda featured comprehensive sessions on crafting commercial strategies, identifying and engaging with potential industry partners, and establishing successful start-ups. Through discussions, interactive activities, and real-world case studies, participants gained hands-on experience and actionable insights to support effective collaboration between academic and industry.



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GULF TIMES

Processed foods linked to colorectal cancer via inflammation

Colorectal cancer, the third most common cancer type worldwide, is fuelled by ultra-processed foods and unhealthy oils, according to researchers at USF Health and Tampa General Hospital Cancer Institute who have uncovered a potential link to chronic inflammation that drives tumour growth. Recently funded by the National Institutes of Health with a five-year, \$3.1mn grant, the researchers have already made major advancements in the understanding of colorectal cancer. Published in *Gut*, a leading international journal in gastroenterology and hepatology, the project's first study examines how processed foods are likely hindering the body's natural healing processes.

"It is well known that patients with unhealthy diets have increased inflammation in their bodies," said Dr Timothy Yeatman, professor of surgery in the USF Health Morsani College of Medicine and associate centre director for Translational Research and Innovation at the TGH Cancer Institute. "We now see this inflammation in the colon tumours themselves, and cancer is like a chronic wound that won't heal - if your body is living off of daily ultra-processed foods, its ability to heal that wound decreases due to the inflammation and suppression of the immune system that ultimately allows the cancer to grow."

According to Yeatman, this study emphasises the urgent need to reevaluate the components of the diet, which typically consists of excessive consumption of added sugars, saturated fats, ultra-processed foods, chemicals and inflammatory seed oils. In previous studies, the USF Health Heart Institute found an imbalanced diet not only impacts colorectal cancer, but also plays a role in other diseases, including Alzheimer's, diabetes and cardiovascular conditions.

Researchers link ultra-processed foods and unhealthy oils to chronic inflammation that drives colorectal cancer growth, highlighting the need for diet-based treatments

foods that we eat and, if the molecules are coming from processed food products, they directly imbalances the immune system and drives chronic inflammation."

While the molecules are difficult to detect, Halade used a highly sensitive analytical technique to detect trace amounts of lipids in 162 tumour samples from patients at Tampa General Hospital. The tumours were frozen within 30 minutes of removal and transported to his lab via USF and TGH Cancer Institute's Biobank, in collaboration with USF Health Colorectal Surgery and the Gastrointestinal Oncology Programme at TGH Cancer Institute. Inside the tumours, the team observed an excess number of molecules that promote inflammation and a shortage of those that help resolve it and promote healing.

These findings pave the way for a new, natural approach, resolution medicine, which focuses on restoring balance in the patient's diet to treat colorectal cancer more effectively. Resolution medicine would focus on reversing inflammation using healthy, unprocessed foods rich with omega-3 fatty acids and derivatives of fish oil called 'specialised pro-resolving mediators,' to restore the body's healing mechanisms along with balanced sleep and exercise. "This has the potential to revolutionise cancer treatment, moving beyond drugs to harness natural healing processes," Yeatman said. "It's a vital step toward addressing chronic inflammation and preventing diseases before they start."

Early trials using specialised derivatives of fish oil have shown promise in addressing inflammation at its root cause. The trials are underway at TGH Cancer Institute and the team will continue studying resolution medicine and its impact on patient treatment and disease prevention. This research was done in collaboration with national and international partners at Moffitt Cancer Center, Buck Institute for Research on Aging in California, Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Merck Research Laboratories in Boston, Florida Digestive Health Specialists in Bradenton and Hokkaido University in Japan.

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Dr Khalid al-Sulaiti: A visionary champion of creativity, culture

By Rawda Al-Amri

As the dawn of a new year approaches, it is a moment to honour those who have left an indelible mark on the world of creativity and culture. While artists, writers, and innovators often receive the spotlight for their brilliance, we must also recognise the visionaries who stand behind them - leaders who empower, inspire, and provide platforms for creativity to thrive. Among these luminaries is Dr Khalid bin Ibrahim al-Sulaiti, General Manager of Katara Cultural Village, whose remarkable leadership has elevated art and culture in the Arab world.

Dr Khalid's leadership at Katara is a testament to his unwavering commitment to creativity. Under his guidance, Katara has flourished as a beacon of cultural excellence, blending tradition with innovation. By fostering a space where artists and creatives can share their talents, Dr Khalid has created a sanctuary for cultural dialogue and artistic expression. Katara is more than a cultural



Dr Sulaiti with artists and guests at a programme in Katara.

village; it is a living, breathing ecosystem for creativity. Dr Khalid's ability to connect with artists on a human level and his drive to provide them with the resources they need reflect a rare kind of leadership - one that prioritises empowerment and authenticity.

What truly distinguishes Dr Khalid is his humility and profound respect for the creative process. He understands that

art and culture are not merely displays of talent but reflections of humanity's shared dreams and aspirations. By celebrating the artists he supports, Dr Khalid has set an example of leadership that is rooted in compassion and vision.

Dr Khalid's work prompts us to ask: Are we doing enough to connect to those who uplift and inspire? His contributions remind us of the crucial role that leaders

play in shaping the cultural landscapes of our communities.

To Dr Khalid bin Ibrahim al-Sulaiti: Thank you for your dedication, for championing creativity, and for making Katara a global symbol of culture and innovation. Your efforts continue to inspire and resonate with countless individuals who strive to make their voices heard.

As we step into a new year, let us take inspiration from Dr Khalid's example. Let us strive to create environments that celebrate creativity, honour visionaries, and uplift those who bring light into our lives. For in supporting one another, we ensure that the beauty of human expression continues to flourish for generations to come.

● Rawda Al-Amri is a seasoned author and creative artist, known for her captivating novels and unique storytelling that intertwines cultural heritage with contemporary themes. With expertise in literature, cultural studies, and social sciences, she has published numerous books and articles that inspire readers worldwide. Her work reflects a deep connection to Arab traditions and a passion for empowering voices through her art and writing.

Why Trump's pro-corporate populism cannot last

The growing movement reflects deep bipartisan resentment toward corporate elites and may reshape political dynamics

By Eric Posner

Chicago

The outpouring of joy on social media after the murder of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson suggests that America's populist moment is evolving into something larger and more significant than just a backlash against the political establishment. If so, it is also becoming something Americans have seen before.

In the late nineteenth century, the People's Party, also known as the Populists, targeted big business as well as establishment politicians, blaming large enterprises for both destroying Americans' livelihoods and corrupting the government.

This change could be bad news for Donald Trump. The US president-elect is not the first Republican politician to purport to serve both commerce and the forgotten man; but after campaigning alongside billionaires and inviting them into his administration, he has stretched this claim to the breaking point.

The American Populists were mainly farmers in the South and Midwest whose fortunes plummeted as the country industrialised and as the cultural centre of gravity shifted to the cities. Both major parties neglected agrarian interests as they relitigated the Civil War and sought support from the rising commercial class (in the

case of the Republicans) and the expanding ethnic populations in the cities (in the case of the Democrats).

Farmers, pumelled by the "Great Deflation" caused by the government's insistence on paying off the war debt, thus took it upon themselves to mobilise, achieving political dominance in several states and greater influence in Congress.

The populists hated government elites in Washington, but they also hated the new businesses, particularly the railroads. The latter, they believed, discriminated against them in the market and corrupted the government through bribes and other forms of political influence. Still, while they considered the entire system to be rotten, they had no clear idea how to reform it.

Many Populist leaders hoped a Napoleon-like president would come to power and sweep away big business and big government alike. Since these two forces were linked by tentacles of corruption, only a leader with no roots in conventional politics could achieve this goal.

It is a familiar story. Trump won the presidency in 2016 by attacking the political establishments of both parties, as well as the "deep state" (federal bureaucracy). But, owing to necessity as much as expediency, he rarely attacked the billionaire class to which he belonged. While he blamed the political class for ignoring illegal immigration, globalising

trade, and meddling in foreign conflicts - what he sees as the roots of America's problems - he did not oppose big business. Instead, he confined himself to attacking business leaders who criticised him and his programs, along with the social-media platforms that he believed were censoring him and his followers.

Unlike in his earlier campaigns, Trump benefited from a kowtowing business establishment in 2024, and he has reciprocated by bringing billionaires into his inner circle. Elon Musk, now Trump's most prominent cheerleader and surrogate, contributed more than \$250mn to his campaign.

Meanwhile, others - including Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, billionaire investor Nelson Peltz, and Blackstone CEO Stephen Schwarzman - have made their peace with Trump or are trying to. The libertarian wing of Silicon Valley has joined in with great enthusiasm. It will profit mightily when Trump delivers on his promise to deregulate crypto.

But while billionaires' dollars and backing helped Trump win, so did the votes of his most loyal supporters, the vast majority of whom are not wealthy. Many are non-college-educated, lower-skilled workers and religious social conservatives who have grown increasingly hostile toward business. Trump tapped into this hostility by attacking Big Tech and railing against corporate America's attempts to appease the left with diversity programs and climate goals.

The question now is whether anti-corporate populism will grow in the United States as it did 140 years ago. The online celebration of Thompson's murder was not noticeably partisan. Across the board, Americans today have a low opinion of corporate elites, with only 16% telling Gallup that they have a "great deal" or "quite a lot of" confidence in big business. That is less than for nearly all other institutions respondents assessed, including labour unions, the military, organised religion, public schools, higher education, the presidency, and small businesses. Indeed, unions are benefiting from an increasingly anti-business climate, as are government trustbusters.

Europeans must be scratching their heads. America's Big Tech companies may be widely loathed at home, but they are envied on a continent that struggles to create its own innovative wealth creators. The truth, however, is that these companies' huge market capitalisations owe as much to their monopoly status as to innovation. They have long downplayed the significant social harms they do, and they constantly lobby policymakers to block regulation. It is little wonder that their stranglehold on American culture is now deeply resented by left and right alike.

While the 2024 election dashed the hope that America's populist turmoil would end with the Biden administration, it remains to be seen what shape the movement will take. The nineteenth-century Populists petered out as deflation eased and farmers' living standards finally improved toward the end of the century, and as party leaders realised that their best option was to fuse with the Democrats. But the populist impulse did not disappear. In the twentieth century, widespread hostility toward business found a home again in the Democratic Party, and the Republicans became the party hostile toward government.

The incoming Trump administration has vowed to round up illegal aliens and raise tariffs, but it will probably fail to reinvigorate the economy for the masses, who will watch the rich get richer on crypto and AI. If Trump doesn't turn on the business class and lay the blame at its feet, someone else will. Maybe then business elites will finally appear in the political crosshairs, not just in those of lone gunmen. Project Syndicate

● Eric Posner, a professor at the University of Chicago Law School, is the author of *How Antitrust Failed Workers*.



A flag of President-elect Donald Trump sits on the hood of a car near his Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Florida. (AFP)

'Definitely several hundred' killed as Cyclone Chido devastates Mayotte



French military unload medical and emergency equipment from the A440M military aircraft, aboard of which rescue teams were transported in an emergency response, bringing aid to Mayotte. (AFP)

AFP
Saint-Denis de la Reunion

Local authorities said yesterday that the likely death toll from Cyclone Chido's passage across Mayotte was "definitely several hundred" though the disruption means reaching an exact count will be difficult. Rescue workers and supplies are being rushed in by air and sea, but their efforts are likely to be hindered by damage to airports

and electricity distribution in a territory where even clean drinking water was already subject to chronic shortages.

A previous toll shared with AFP by a security source had confirmed only 14 deaths.

"I think there will definitely be several hundred, perhaps we will come close to a thousand or even several thousand" deaths, prefect Francois-Xavier Bieuvre said on broadcaster Mayotte la Premiere.

He added that it would be "very difficult to reach a final

count" given that most residents are Muslim, traditionally burying their dead within 24 hours.

The mayor of Mayotte's capital Mamoudzou, Ambdilwahedou Soumaila, had earlier told AFP that nine people were gravely wounded and fighting for their lives in hospital, while 246 more were seriously injured.

"The hospital is hit, the schools are hit. Houses are totally devastated," he said, adding that the hurricane "spared nothing".

Mayotte's 320,000 residents had been ordered into lockdown Saturday as Cyclone Chido bore down on the islands around 500km east of Mozambique with gusts of at least 226kph.

Electricity poles were hurled to the ground, trees uprooted and sheet-metal roofs and walls torn off improvised structures inhabited by at least one-third of the population.

Information from the locked-down population, in shock and largely cut off from water and electricity supplies, is slow to filter out, a source familiar with the recovery effort told AFP.

One local resident, Ibrahim, told AFP of "apocalyptic scenes" as he made his way through the main island, having to clear blocked roads for himself.

Interior Minister Retailleau



The "Karihani" inter-island barge stranded among debris in Mamoudzou after the Cyclone Chido hit France's Indian Ocean territory of Mayotte. (AFP)

will travel to Mayotte today, his office said, alongside 160 soldiers and firefighters to reinforce the 110 already deployed to the islands.

Medical personnel and equipment were being delivered from Sunday by air and sea, said the prefecture in La Reunion, another French Indian Ocean territory some 1,400km away on the other side of Madagascar.

A first aid plane landed in Mayotte at around 3:30pm local time with three tonnes of medical supplies, blood for transfusions and 17 medical staff, authorities in La Reunion said, with two military aircraft expected to follow.

A navy patrol ship was also to depart La Reunion with personnel and equipment including for electricity supplier EDF.

Pope Francis, visiting French Mediterranean island Corsica yesterday, urged people to pray for Mayotte's residents.

Just northwest of Mayotte, the Comoros islands, some of which had been on red alert since Fri-

day, were also hit, but suffered only minor damage.

Cyclone Chido later slammed into Mozambique, bringing gale-force winds and heavy rain when it made landfall early yesterday around 40km south of the northern city of Pemba, weather services said.

Buildings were damaged and power knocked out in some areas of Mozambique's northern coastal provinces of Nampula and Cabo Delgado early Saturday, authorities said.

But by the afternoon Chido was travelling over the inland province of Niassa and had weakened, said the president of the National Institute for Risk and Disaster Management, Luisa Meque.

Unicef said it was on the ground to help the people impacted by the storm, which had already caused some damage.

"Many homes, schools and health facilities have been partially or completely destroyed and we are working closely with the government to ensure conti-

nunity of essential basic services," it said in a statement.

Cyclone Chido is the latest in a string of storms worldwide to be fuelled by climate change, according to experts.

The "exceptional" cyclone was super-charged by particularly warm Indian Ocean waters, meteorologist Francois Gourand of France's Meteo France weather service told AFP.

The United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said on Friday it was similar in strength to cyclones Gombe in 2022 and Freddy in 2023, which killed more than 60 people and at least 86 in Mozambique respectively.

It warned that some 1.7mn people were in danger, and said the remnants of the cyclone could also dump "significant rainfall" on neighbouring Malawi through Monday, potentially triggering flash floods.

Zimbabwe and Zambia were also expected to see heavy rains, it added.

Lula discharged from hospital following emergency surgery

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva was discharged yesterday from a Sao Paulo hospital following emergency surgery last week to treat an intracranial haemorrhage.

"I am here in one piece...returning home calmly," the 79-year-old leftist leader said as he made a surprise appearance at a news conference by his medical team at Hospital Sirio-Libanese. Lula had successful surgery on Tuesday in which doctors drilled through his skull to relieve pressure that built up after a blow to the head in October, when he fell in a bathroom in his presidential residence.

On Thursday he underwent a follow-up operation to minimize the risk of further bleeding in the affected area of the protective intracranial membranes.

The president can resume activities but will need to take it easy for 15 days, cardiologist Roberto Kalil said at the news conference.

Lula will remain in Sao Paulo until Thursday, when he will undergo follow-up tests. Once cleared, he will be able to return to Brasilia and his normal routine.

"The only restriction is physical exercise," said Kalil. Another doctor, Ana Helena Germoglio, said Lula's recovery has "exceeded expectations."

Known for his frenetic work pace, Lula burst into the news conference Sunday without warning and approached the microphones, walking unassisted. He addressed reporters while wearing a fedora-style hat that covered up signs of his operations, accompanied by his wife Rosangela "Janja" da Silva.

Lula's medical emergency started when he complained last Monday of a headache while in Brasilia.

"I felt like my steps were slowing down, my eyes were red and I was very sleepy," he said.

An MRI scan found a haemorrhage between his brain and the dura mater membrane that protects it, prompting his swift transport to Hospital Sirio-Libanese - the country's top medical facility - for the surgery. "I confess I was scared by the volume of fluid growth in my head. I was worried by the urgency of the request" to go to the hospital, he



President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, accompanied by his wife Rosangela 'Janja' da Silva, waves while leaving the Sirio-Libanese Hospital after surgery in Sao Paulo yesterday. (Reuters)

said. "I never think I'm going to die, but I'm scared, so I need to follow the rules," Lula said, adding that he will not go to the beach for the end-of-year holidays, as many Brazilians do.

Now, he said, "I am calm. I feel good." After suffering his fall on October 19, Lula told an official from his Workers' Party that the accident had been "serious."

In the weeks following, the president skipped planned overseas trips. But from mid-November he resumed his active schedule, hosting a G20 summit in Rio and attending a Mercosur summit in Uruguay.

The latest medical emergency adds to a list of health problems Lula has suffered over the years, including treatment in 2011 for throat cancer, and a hip replacement operation last year.

South Korea opposition urges swift removal of impeached president

AFP
Seou

South Korea's opposition leader urged a top court yesterday to swiftly formalise the impeachment of President Yoon Suk-yeol and ease the "suffering of the people" after his short-lived martial law decree.

Lawmakers voted on Saturday to remove Yoon from office over his "insurrectionary" suspension of civilian rule, which lasted hours but plunged South Korea into some of its worst political turmoil in years.

Yoon has been suspended while South Korea's Constitutional Court deliberates the impeachment, with Prime Minister Han Duck-soo serving as interim leader.

The court has 180 days to rule on Yoon's future.

Opposition leader Lee Jae-myung on Sunday urged the judges to "swiftly" remove Yoon from office.

"This is the only way to minimise national turmoil and alleviate the suffering of the people," he said.

"To hold those responsible for this absurd situation accountable and to prevent its recurrence, it is essential to uncover the truth and demand accountability."

An investigation into Yoon's inner circle over last week's martial law declaration has also rumbled on.

Yesterday, police arrested both the current and former heads of the Defense Intelligence Command in connection to the insurrection allegations, Yonhap news agency reported.

Prosecutors said they were also seeking an arrest warrant for the head of the Army Special Warfare Command Kwak Jong-keun, according to Yonhap.

Kwak is accused of sending special forces troops to parliament during the martial law bid - sparking a dramatic confrontation between soldiers and parliamentary staff.

The investigators also said they had summoned Yoon for questioning over insurrection allegations.

"We instructed him to appear for questioning at 10am, but he refused to comply," the prosecution said in a press release.

"We will issue a second summons," they said without giving details.

And on Saturday, police arrested Yeo In-hyung, head of the Defense Counterintelligence Command, on charges including insurrection.

The South Korean government has meanwhile sought to project an air of business as usual.

Acting president Han yesterday held a call with US President Joe Biden, who underscored the strength of bilateral ties.

The United States is a key treaty

ally of Seoul's, and has around 28,000 troops stationed in South Korea.

The White House said in a readout that Biden has expressed "confidence that the Alliance will remain the linchpin for peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region during Acting President Han's tenure".

"President Biden expressed his appreciation for the resiliency of democracy and the rule of law in the Republic of Korea," the White House said.

Han has also ordered the military to "enhance vigilance" against North Korea, with which the South technically remains at war.

North Korea is yet to publicly comment on Yoon's impeachment.

Vast protests both for and against Yoon have rocked the South Korean capital since the December 3 martial law decree.

Demonstrators in both camps have vowed to keep up the pressure campaign as the Constitutional Court mulls Yoon's fate.

"I will certainly protest at the court to demand it reject the impeachment," Cho Hee-sun, a Yoon supporter, told AFP at a rally on Saturday before the parliamentary vote.

Seoul police estimated at least 200,000 people had gathered outside parliament in support of removing the president.

Assad's Baath party wiped off Mideast politics, say analysts

AFP
Cairo

The Baath party, once a powerful symbol of Arab nationalism, has become a fading relic of authoritarian rule in the Middle East after the fall of Syria's Bashar al-Assad, analysts told AFP yesterday.

The party has suspended its activities in Syria after Islamist-led rebel forces toppled Assad's government last week, 20 years after its rival twin branch in Iraq was banned, marking the final collapse of a movement that once held sweeping power in both countries.

With Assad gone, "the Baath in Syria... is bound to fully decline," said Nikolaos van Dam, an expert

on the party and author of a book about its history, *The Struggle for Power in Syria*.

Van Dam said he does not believe "they will ever have an opportunity for a comeback".

The Arab Socialist Baath Party, officially, was founded in Damascus on April 7, 1947, seeking to merge socialist ideals and Arab nationalism.

In its early years, the party recognised the important cultural role of religion for Muslims, who make up the majority in most Middle Eastern countries, while advocating a secular state that could unify the fragmented Arab world across sectarian divides.

But in both Syria and Iraq, whose populations are multi-ethnic and multi-sectarian, the Baath party

had become a vehicle for minority rule.

In Iraq, Sunni Muslims ruled over a Shiite majority, while Alawites - the Assad family - ruled over Syria's Sunni majority.

Sami Moubayed, a Damascus-based historian and writer, said that both the Iraqi and Syrian branches failed to live up to their slogan of "Unity, Freedom and Socialism".

"There was never unity, let alone freedom," he said.

"Their socialism amounted to disastrous nationalisations," added Moubayed, author of *The Makers of Modern Syria: The Rise and Fall of Syrian Democracy 1918-1958*.

The Baath had evolved into authoritarianism under Saddam Hussein in Iraq and Hafez al-As-



END OF AN ERA: Bashar al-Assad

sad, and later his son Bashar, in Syria.

"Arab nationalism, particularly secular Arab nationalism, has lost much of its appeal...and thereby also the role of the Baath Party as an Arab nationalist party," said van Dam.

"State nationalism has gradually become more important than pan-Arab nationalism".

In Syria, a military junta dominated by Alawites, Druze and Christian officers seized power in 1963, adopting Marxist-inspired policies.

The party's founders, Michel Aflaq, a Christian, and Saleh Bitar, a Sunni, were sidelined and then fled to Iraq.

Hafez al-Assad, an air force commander, emerged as the dominant figure in 1970, consolidating control over the party and leading Syria in a reign marked brutal repression.

In 2000, his son Bashar took power. In neighbouring Iraq, the Baath party solidified its grip in 1968 through a military coup led by

General Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr.

In 1970, Saddam Hussein assumed control, ruling with an iron fist until his overthrow by a US-led coalition in 2003.

"Both parties only led their countries to failure," said Moubayed.

"What victory can they claim?"

Under the Baath rule, Syria's military lost territory to Israel in a 1967 war and suffered painful blows in another conflict six years later.

The Iraqi Baath party failed against Iran in the 1980-1988 war, initiated an invasion of Kuwait in 1990, and collapsed under the US-led coalition intervention in 2003.

Despite their shared Baathist roots, the Syrian and Iraqi branches were bitter rivals.



Dignitaries at the foundation stone laying ceremony for an EU-standard electric bus assembly plant at Um Al Houli Free Zone yesterday.
PICTURES: Ram Chand



Minister lays foundation stone for e-bus plant

By Shafeeq Alingal
Staff Reporter

HE the Minister of Transport Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Thani laid the foundation stone yesterday for an EU-standard electric bus assembly plant at Um Al Houli Free Zone.

The plant is a collaboration between Mowasalat (Karwa), Chinese commercial vehicle manufacturer Yutong, and the Qatar Free Zones Authority (QFZ).

Marking the ceremony, an Enhanced Multilateral Framework Agreement was signed by HE the QFZ Chief Executive Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Faisal al-Thani, Karwa chief executive Ahmad Hassan al-Obaidly, and Yutong Middle East chief executive Shen Hui.

Spread over an area of nearly 53,000sq m, the project marks a pivotal step towards a greener, more sustainable future for the nation and the region, and aims to estab-

lish a production hub for EU-standard electric buses.

Once completed by the end of 2025, the plant will begin producing electric city buses, metro feeder buses and school buses, with an initial output capacity of 300 buses a year.

Over time, the facility will scale up to meet both local demand and the growing needs of international markets across the Mena (Middle East and North Africa) region and Europe.

The greenfield plant, equipped with state-of-the-art welding, painting, assembly and testing workshops will utilise cutting-edge electro-mobility technologies, ensuring efficient and sustainable production processes.

The plant is expected to be a pioneer project in delivering experience and industry localisation.

HE the Minister of Transport said that the founding an e-bus assembly plant is a major event in terms of supporting the efforts of the Ministry of Transport (MoT)

to provide eco-friendly transportation solutions with the best global operation systems, in step with the goals of the Third Qatar National Development Strategy (NDS3), which focuses on sustainable development and advanced technologies, leading to the full realisation of the Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV 2030).

The plant, HE Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah said, will contribute to achieving the MoT's strategy of public bus system electrification by 100% by 2030, ensuring less carbon emissions and better quality of life.

"As part of our commitment to developing sustainable transportation and our success in achieving 73% electrification in the public bus fleet, this initiative reflects our dedication to localising innovative technologies in Qatar," Karwa chairman Dr Engineer Saad bin Ahmed Ibrahim al-Mohammadi.

"Through the establishment of this new facility, we reaffirm our leadership in eco-friendly transportation, effectively con-

tributing to achieving a fully electric public transport sector by 2030, in alignment with Qatar's vision for a more sustainable future," he added.

"Today's groundbreaking for the electric bus assembly plant at Um Al Houli Free Zone, and signing of the enhanced multilateral framework agreement, mark a significant step in Qatar's ongoing efforts to foster industrial and transportation innovation and sustainable development," said HE Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad.

"We are not only advancing our economic diversification efforts but also positioning Qatar at the forefront of the global transition to environmentally friendly technologies," the QFZ chief executive said, adding: "This collaboration is a testament to our commitment to building a sustainable, future-ready economy in line with the objectives of QNV 2030, and the plans of electric vehicle transformation strategy."

"Our investment in this electric bus assembly plant signifies more than just

growth; it's a commitment to economic and environmental sustainability," said Karwa chief executive al-Obaidly. "Together with Yutong and the Qatar Free Zone Authority, we are advancing the future of public transportation with new mobility solutions."

Yutong International managing director Peng Xu said that Yutong is proud to partner with Qatar in this transformative project.

"The establishment of this facility symbolises our dedication to delivering world-class technology and localised solutions to support regional green mobility goals," he said.

The groundbreaking ceremony, which was attended by several ministers and senior state officials, was followed by a tour by ministers of transport, commerce and industry, environment and climate change and several officials from the QFZ, Karwa and Yutong to the e-bus display area, where they checked out some of the e-bus models planned to be produced.

Qatar Charity's 'How Long?' winter aid helps more than 5,200 in Yemen



The "How Long?" campaign launched by Qatar Charity (QC) to address the dangers of the 2024-25 winter season has seen about 750 food baskets distributed to the most vulnerable families and displaced persons in the Taiz governorate in Yemen, benefiting more than 5,200 people.

The assistance will help alleviate the suffering of those who have been enduring the ongoing crisis in Yemen for the past nine years.

Mariam Hassan Abdul Wahab, a widow and displaced mother of three daughters, including one with special needs, said: "The food basket came at a time when we needed it most. It has eased my

burdens, especially as I live under difficult conditions with my daughters."

Muqaddad Ghaleb Qahtan, another beneficiary, praised the initiative, saying: "We are deeply grateful to the donors in Qatar and Qatar Charity for this assistance. It arrived just as the winter set in."

Abdullah Mohammed Ghaleb, another recipient, said: "The ongoing crisis and severe economic conditions have made life unbearable. We thank Qatar Charity for their support and hope these initiatives continue, as they bring much-needed relief."

Umm al-Rahman Abdullah, a mother in need, said: "This aid has alleviated the daily struggles of

life, especially in the face of severe cold and the lack of basic necessities for my family."

With an estimated budget of QR72mn, the "How Long?" campaign aims to provide humanitarian assistance in 25 countries, including Qatar, focusing on areas impacted by crises and disasters, particularly Palestine, Syria, Sudan, and Yemen.

Donations can be made through the QC's website at the following link: <https://qch.qa/winter>, directly at QC branches and collection points across Qatar, calling the hotline 44290000 to request a mobile donation representative to assist donors at their convenience.

Amerigo Vespucci arriving tomorrow

Villaggio Italia open to the public daily

The Villaggio Italia, with all its exhibitions, will be open to the public every day from 10am-11pm (with the exception of December 17, when it will open to the public at 5pm after the inaugural ceremony, and December 22 when it will close at 12pm).

Every day the Italian Carabinieri band directed by Maestro Massimo Martinelli (at 11am - with the exception of December 17 when it will play at 12noon and 5pm) will perform.

The concert "Navigating under the stars" by Qatar Concert Choir & Friends will be held on December 17 at 7.30pm.

On December 18 at 7.30pm, the concert "Il Villaggio" by the baritone-tenor David Riccardo, together with the Once Upon a Time Orchestra, will perform some of the most famous Italian songs and music of all time.

On December 21 at 7pm, the artists of the renowned Fondazione Arena di Verona, will present the World Heritage Italian opera.

At the Villaggio Italia in Doha there will be an exclusive space dedicated to Jacopo Cardillo (Jago), a famous, young Italian sculptor.

Jago will exhibit the marble work *Family*. There will be a masterclass on Italian marble, curated by the ICE Agency (Italian Trade Agency), on December 19 at 3pm.

At the Villaggio Italia in Doha, three works created as part of the research project, developed by the Department of Master of Fine Arts (MFA) of VCUarts Qatar (Doha) in collaboration with Studio Nucleo of Turin, will also be exhibited.

The "Italia Geniale" exhibition dedicated to Italian design will also be presented in Doha, created by the Italian ministry of enterprise and Made in Italy and the ministry of defence in collaboration with ADI Design Museum.

At the Villaggio Italia there will be film screenings selected in collaboration with the Venice Interna-

tional Film Festival (La Biennale di Venezia).

On December 18 and 20 at 9pm the movie *Comandante* by E De Angelis will be screened; on December 19 and 21 at 9pm the movie *The Lion's Share* by Baptiste Etchegaray and Giuseppe Bucchi will be screened.

A programme of events promoted by the Italian ministry of agriculture, food sovereignty and forests will take place in a dedicated area, "Anima Italia", which will also host a corner of nature dedicated to typical Italian crops.

Daily from December 17-21 at 6pm there will be free masterclasses on olive oil by Italia Olivicola, the National Consortium of Olive Growers (free reservations on the website <https://tourvespucci.it/en>).

On December 19 at 4.30pm there will be a masterclass curated by Veronafiere dedicated to table olives, Sol d'Oro oils proposed in combination with three different types of bread.

On December 19 from 6.30pm to 8.30pm there will be an event in support of the candidacy of Italian cuisine as an intangible heritage of Unesco, curated by Italia Olivicola which will offer a selection of doughs and processing techniques curated by pizza chefs Michele Pascarella, Michele Circhirillo and Alfonso Saviello with a selection of oils paired with the dishes curated by Chef Emanuele Natalizio.

On December 19 and 21 at 6pm there is a show cooking curated by Chef Natalizio and sous chef Rocco Natalizio.

On December 17 at 5.45pm, the Italian press agency Ansa will organise a forum on bilateral relations between Qatar and Italy.

On December 21 at 11am, there will be a conference dedicated to sport and disability, featuring the adviser for international relations of the Italian ministry for disability Pier Luigi Zamporlini; McClaren's Andrea Stella; and some representatives of the Defence Paralympic Sports Group.

The *Amerigo Vespucci*, the historic sailing and training ship of the Italian navy, is arriving in Qatar for the first time in its 93-year history.

The vessel will be in Doha from December 17-22, the 30th stop on the Vespucci World Tour, which started from Italy on July 1, 2023.

During its stay in Doha, the *Amerigo Vespucci* will be flanked by the Villaggio Italia, the international exposition of "Made in Italy", which brings together the "nationals of Italian excellence".

The "Vespucci World Tour - Villaggio Italia" initiative combines the traditional training and naval diplomacy of the training ship with the promotion of Made in Italy excellence in the main ports covered by the campaign.

This is the sixth appointment with the Villaggio Italia, following those in Los Angeles, Tokyo, Darwin, Singapore and Mumbai, held in Qatar with the support of the Italian embassy in Doha, the Italian Trade Agency and local partners Qatar Tourism, Katara - the Cultural Village and Old Doha Port.

Italian Minister of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forests Francesco Lollobrigida, Italian Defence Ministry Undersecretary Matteo Perego di Cremona, Italian ambassador to Qatar Paolo Toschi, the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Italian Navy Admiral Giuseppe Berutti Bergotto, and Difesa Servizi chief executive Luca Andreoli, are expected at the Villaggio Italia in Doha.

Difesa Servizi is the in-house company of the Italian ministry of defence that creates and supports all phases of the initiative.

The arrival in Doha of the Vespucci World Tour and the Villaggio Italia is part of the bilateral relationship between Qatar and Italy that has strengthened intensely in recent years, thanks to constant institutional dialogue.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani visited Italy three times between 2016 and 2023.

In January 2020 Italian President Sergio Mattarella visited Doha, while in September last year Prime Minister Meloni was in Doha where she held a meeting with His Highness the Amir.



On the occasion of His Highness the Amir's State Visit to Italy on October 21 this year, President Mattarella himself announced the arrival in Doha of the *Vespucci*, in conjunction with the celebrations of Qatar National Day on December 18.

During the stopover in Doha, the *Amerigo Vespucci* and the Villaggio Italia will be open to the public free of charge, with prior booking on the website <https://tourvespucci.it/en/doha-17-22-december-2024>