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Qatar to build knowledge-based economy: PM

QNA New York

Qatar participated yesterday in the "Summit of the Future," held on the sidelines of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 79) in New York.

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani led Qatar's delegation during the summit.

Delivering Qatar's statement before the summit, HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs said that Qatar, under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, launched in 2024 the third phase of its national development strategy within the framework of Qatar National Vision 2030, keen to build a diversified and sustainable knowledge-

based economy by benefiting from the applications of digital technology, science and innovation, and enhancing human development. He noted that it has achieved remarkable successes on the ground, reflecting the effectiveness of the state's strategic choices.

He also emphasised Qatar's commitment to international multilateral action. In this regard, he referred to His Highness the Amir's pledge of \$500mn to support the core resources of UN agencies for ten years, Qatar's announcement during the UN Climate Action Summit in 2019 to allocate \$100mn to support small island developing states and least developed countries in the Caribbean, Pacific, and Africa regions, and its hosting of the 5th UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5) in March 2023 and its pledge of \$60mn to implement development pro-



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani

grammes in those countries. HE Sheikh Mohammed added that Qatar has pledged this year, in partnership with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to al-

locate 20% of its Special Drawing Rights holdings, valued at \$1bn, to the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT) and IMF Resilience and Sustainability Trust

(RST), which will enable the fund to expand concessional lending to low-income countries and countries vulnerable to climate shocks. He pointed out that in June, Qatar also launched its Debt Relief for Education Initiative in co-operation with the World Bank.

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs said that Qatar is fully convinced that the 2030 agenda and achieving its sustainable development goals require more international and national efforts. Therefore, Qatar participated effectively in all stages of the negotiations on the final document of this summit and its annexes, as an extension of its support for the recommendations of the Secretary-General of the UN in his report on "Our Common Agenda," and its participation in leading the negotiations on the political declaration of the UN Sustainable Development Summit held in 2023. **To Page 4**

SpaceX to launch five uncrewed Starships to Mars in two years

SpaceX plans to launch about five uncrewed Starships to Mars in two years, Chief Executive Officer Elon Musk said yesterday. "If those all land safely, then crewed missions are possible in four years," he said, adding that in case of any challenges the crewed missions will be postponed another two years. "No matter what happens with landing success, SpaceX will increase the number of spaceships travelling to Mars exponentially with every transit opportunity," the SpaceX founder said.

Dissanayake elected Sri Lankan president

Sri Lankans elected Marxist-leaning Anura Kumara Dissanayake as new president yesterday, putting faith in his pledge to fight corruption and bolster a fragile economic recovery following the South Asian nation's worst financial crisis in decades. Dissanayake, 55, knocked out incumbent President Ranil Wickremesinghe and opposition leader Sajith Premadasa. **Page 8**



EAA, Silatech, Unicef to equip youth for sustainable initiatives

• The partnership will train and mobilise 565,670 young people in Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt

QNA Doha

Education Above All (EAA) Foundation, Silatech, and Unicef's Generation Unlimited (GenU) announced yesterday the signing of an agreement to train and mobilise 565,670 young people to access education, tackle climate change, and become community volunteers and entrepreneurs driving sustainable development efforts across Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt.

Announced against the backdrop of the Summit of the Future at UNGA, in response to urgent calls for a new consensus to tackle global challenges, the new three-year, \$33mn partnership with equal contributions from Unicef, EAA and Silatech, will support access to education and empower young volunteers and entrepre-



HE Sheikha Alya Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani, Bob Rae and Dr Georges Kallas attending the session.

neurs with the training, resources and mentorship they need to take climate action.

In this context, a high-level roundtable was convened to discuss ways to provide educational and employment opportunities

for youth in their communities through strategic and local partnerships to support the economies of their countries and empower youth with methods to protect the environment and address climate change. **To Page 4**

Al Jazeera slams order to close its West Bank office

QNA Doha

Al Jazeera Media Network vehemently denounced the Israeli occupation forces' raid on its Ramallah office in the occupied West Bank, and said that the network remains steadfast in its mission of reporting the truth with integrity.

In a statement issued yesterday, Al Jazeera held the Israeli occupation government responsible for the safety of its journalists, adding that these oppressive measures are clearly intended to prevent the world from witnessing the reality of the situation in the occupied territories and the ongoing war on Gaza.

It added that it will remain steadfast in its mission of reporting the truth with integrity despite these attempts to stifle its voice, continuing that the Israeli occupation's ongoing suppression of the free press is blatantly aimed at concealing its actions in the

Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank.

Al Jazeera rejected the unfounded allegations presented by the Israeli occupation authorities to justify these illegal raids.

Step follows the Israeli cabinet's decision in May 2024 to shut down Al Jazeera's operations within Israel

The Israeli occupation forces had raided Al Jazeera's office in Ramallah, ordered its closure for 45 days, seized all equipment and documents in the office, disallowed the office's employees to use their cars, and stopped the channel from broadcasting.

This action follows the decision by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet in May 2024 to shut down Al Jazeera's operations within Israel.

Israel, Hezbollah urged to avoid 'tragedy'

AFP Paris

World powers yesterday implored Israel and Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah to refrain from escalating their conflict as the Gaza war threatened to spill over across the Middle East.

Hezbollah and Israeli forces have traded regular cross-border fire since October 7.

But fears of an all-out regional conflagration soared this week as both sides intensified the fighting, with Israeli strikes killing dozens in Lebanon, including top Hezbollah commanders.

Hezbollah and Israel exchanged heavy fire yesterday, as the Lebanese resistance group sent rockets deep into northern Israeli territory after facing some of the most intense bombardment in almost a year of conflict. Hezbollah deputy chief Naim



A member of the Israeli security forces stands guard in Kiryat Bialik in the Haifa district of Israel, targeted by a strike by Hezbollah yesterday.

Qassem told mourners at the funeral of one of the group's commanders killed last week in Beirut: "We have entered a new phase, the title of which is the open-ended battle of reckoning."

Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said operations would continue until it was safe for evacuated people on his side of the border to return - also setting the stage for a long conflict as Iran-backed Hezbollah has

vowed to fight on until a ceasefire in the parallel Gaza war.

Israel's Chief of the General Staff Herzi Halevi said in a televised statement the military was well-prepared for the next stages of fighting, which were coming in the next few days, but did not say what this would entail.

UN chief Antonio Guterres told broadcaster CNN he feared "the possibility of transforming Lebanon (into) another Gaza".

The UN special co-ordinator for Lebanon, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, warned on X that the region was "on the brink of an imminent catastrophe" and that no military solution would make either side safe.

Guterres also said neither Israel nor Hamas were interested in achieving a ceasefire to end the brutal war in Gaza that has raged for almost a year.

"That is a tragedy, because this is a war that must stop," he added.

QM, China museum ink historic pact

Qatar Museums (QM) has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Museum of China, marking a significant milestone in international cultural collaboration.

The agreement was signed by National Museum of Qatar director Sheikh Abdulaziz al-Thani and National Museum of China director Gao Zheng.

The MoU underscores the commitment of both institutions to deepen the collaboration and exchange in the field of museums, promoting cultural understanding and strengthening ties between both institutions.

The MoU is under the Qatar-China Friendship Association, a legacy of the Qatar-China Year of Culture in 2016, further enriching the cultural exchange between the two nations.

In a press statement, Sheikh Abdulaziz said: "We are excited to embark on this partnership with the National Museum of China, which will not only strengthen the cultural ties between our countries but also create new opportunities for collaboration in museum innovation, research, and educational programmes. This is an important step toward creating a global understanding of our shared heritage."

The MoU between QM and National Museum of China establishes a framework for collaboration across key areas, including the exchange of museum experiences, joint exhibitions, academic research, and innovative educational programmes designed to



Sheikh Abdulaziz al-Thani and Gao Zheng at the signing ceremony.

enhance visitor engagement and cultural awareness.

The agreement will promote cultural understanding through shared efforts in archaeology, heritage preservation, and museology, with a focus on global best practices in the protection and documentation of collections. Additionally, it outlines plans for joint exhibitions and travelling showcases to broaden the reach of both institutions' rich histories and collections, as well as co-operative efforts in excavation, restoration, and conservation to preserve important heritage sites.

Zheng indicated that both entities have a lot of potential to co-operate. The agreement promises to deliver enriching cultural exchanges and elevate the museum experiences offered in both nations, benefiting researchers, experts, and museum visitors alike.

Interior minister attends launch of security programme



HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani attended yesterday the launch of the Security Command and Staff Programme offered by the Police Academy. The programme's first batch includes 15 leaders and officers from the Ministry of Interior, Lekhwiya, Amiri Guard and the State Security Bureau. The programme spans one year with a curriculum of 30 credit hours, covering specialised learning, research, and practical skills, enhanced by real-life exercises and educational visits both inside and outside the country to broaden the participants' knowledge and experience. At the end of the programme, the graduates will receive a Master's degree in Security Leadership accredited by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, along with a certificate of completion of the Security Command and Staff Course. (QNA)



Amir's participation in UNGA 'promotes a more peaceful world'

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's participation in the UN General Assembly (UNGA) meetings in September will facilitate talks that push for a more peaceful world, said US ambassador to Qatar Timmy Davis.

Speaking to Qatar News Agency (QNA), he hailed Doha's world-wide roles that go beyond mediation efforts to nurture human rights and provide humanitarian relief.

In addition to its years-long efforts to ensure Palestinians a humanitarian aid access, Qatar has responded to various humanitarian crises in the Horn of Africa, Venezuela, Syria, Ukraine and elsewhere, he said. He also highlighted the need to bolster Qatar-US partnership to mobilise support to alleviate humanitarian crises around the world.

Qatar has done a really great job in helping and mediating to resolve conflicts around the world, and everyone recognises Qatar's role in working for peace in the Gaza Strip, he added, expressing his optimism for the joint statement from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and US President Joe Biden, on the need to hammer out a ceasefire deal in the Gaza Strip and to release prisoners and detainees.

Qatar has been central in efforts to settle the crisis in the Gaza Strip since October 7 and



US ambassador to Qatar Timmy Davis speaks during the interview to QNA.

adopted prominent roles to end conflicts around the world including the Russian-Ukrainian crisis and the Horn of Africa, he added.

He added that the UNGA meetings would help world leaders to truncate weeks-long discussions and engage in direct talks that contribute to finding solutions to many world disputes.

The UNGA meetings primarily offer a unique opportunity for all parties to foster peace and determine the priorities and this inspires optimism and hope for achieving the coveted peace, he added.

This year's UNGA agenda will cover a wide range of topics including world-wide conflicts, primarily the war in the Gaza Strip and the Russian-Ukrainian crisis, human rights and women's suffering, especially in

Afghanistan, he added, underpinning the importance of collaborating with various partners, most notably Qatar, to achieve these specific priorities.

He added that the US-Qatar relations, spanning across trade, energy, arts, culture and security among other areas, which are paramount for Washington. These exemplary relations are constantly growing and reflect positively on both parties.

He added that being the US ambassador to Qatar makes him the luckiest ambassador in the world.

Davis added that he closely monitored the Qatar foreign policy baselines and how Qatar positions itself on the global stage through great efforts to contribute to resolving world conflicts, appreciating Qatar's endeavour to achieve peace in the region and the world as a whole. (QNA)

Doha Forum takes part in cybertech governance workshop

General Manager of Doha Forum, Maha al-Kuwari, participated in a workshop on cybertech governance as part of the Summit of Future Action Days in New York. Themed "Harnessing AI and other Cyber-technologies for a Safe, Just and Sustainable Future", the workshop comes within the framework of the UN Impact Coalition on AI and Cybertech Governance. Al-Kuwari focused during the workshop on the findings and recommendations of the Future of International Co-operation Report 2024 (FIC24), which was issued in co-operation with the Stimson Center, the Global Governance Innovation Network, and the Hamad Bin Khalifa University's Global Institute for Strategic Research. The report highlighted the importance of multi-stakeholder co-operation to address risks and opportunities of cybertech governance, which is highly important in implementing the Global Digital Compact, al-Kuwari said. (QNA)

Dujarric hails Qatar's role in multilateral diplomacy

Spokesperson for the Secretary-General of the UN Stephane Dujarric underlined that Qatar's efforts should serve as an example to other member states, noting that the State's hosting of the UN conferences is based on its major role as a key player in the multilateral world order.

Speaking to Qatar News Agency (QNA), Dujarric highlighted the great role currently being carried out by Qatar to reach a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, pointing to co-operation between the UN and Qatar at the diplomatic and humanitarian levels.

The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is deeply grateful to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani for his

efforts and co-operation with the UN, Dujarric added.

The UN Spokesperson said Qatar greatly supports the humanitarian work of the UN, whether financially or through innovative partnerships such as the one with Qatar Airways, which helped the organisation logistically. All areas of co-operation between the two parties are very important, he added, expressing his belief that the generosity shown by Qatar on several levels should be an example for other member states.

Regarding the discussions of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly, Dujarric noted that the focus of this year's General Assembly will be the 'Summit of the Future' which includes proposals submitted by the UN Secretary-



Spokesperson for the Secretary-General of the UN Stephane Dujarric during the interview with QNA.

General to define the structure of the UN and determine the method of work in the field of artificial intelligence.

"The number of the UN members was very small when it was founded almost 80 years ago. There were basically 50 countries,

Amir greets Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques

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 yesterday cables of congratulations to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud of the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the occasion of his country's National Day. (QNA)

Amir sends condolences to Iran's president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani and HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent cables of condolences to President of Iran Dr Masoud Pezeshkian on the victims of a coal mine explosion in the east of the country, wishing the injured a speedy recovery. (QNA)

Amir sends congratulations to Mali president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent yesterday cables of congratulations to interim President of Mali Colonel Assimi Goita on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent a similar cable of congratulations to Prime Minister of Mali Choguel Kokalla Maiga on the occasion. (QNA)

Labour minister meets Romania's envoy

HE the Minister of Labour Dr Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri met yesterday with Romania's ambassador to Qatar Nicusor Daniel Tanase. During the meeting, the two sides discussed enhancing bilateral relations in the labour field, and ways to support and develop them. (QNA)



Sheikha Alya says Amir's speech at UN to attract attention

HE the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations Sheikha Alya Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani emphasised that the speech of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani at the opening of the General Debate of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly, consistently delivers important messages and solutions to global crises, foremost among them being the Palestinian issue.

In an interview with Qatar News Agency (QNA), Her Excellency added that the world looks forward to the United Nations General Assembly meetings as the most important annual forum that brings together world leaders. She noted that His Highness the Amir's speech during the General Debate will attract attention given Qatar's influential role on the international stage and its active participation as a UN member under the leadership of His Highness. The Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations



explained that His Highness the Amir's speeches are distinguished by their clarity of vision, principled stances, and providing fair and sustainable solutions to various global challenges.

She added that as in previous years, His Highness' speech is expected to reaffirm the fundamental principles of Qatar's policy, which emphasises the preservation and building of international and regional peace, commitment to the

rule of law at all levels, the centrality of human rights and the rule of law, and the necessity of strengthening multilateral international co-operation. She pointed out that the speech will likely highlight Qatar's diligent efforts to translate these principles into action through facilitating peaceful dispute resolution, dialogue, mediation, providing humanitarian and development assistance, and advancing justice. (QNA)

Qatar attends joint Arab-Islamic ministerial panel meeting on Gaza

Qatar participated yesterday in the preparatory meeting of the Joint Arab-Islamic Ministerial Committee Preparatory Meeting on Developments in Gaza, on the sidelines of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 79) in New York.



HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi chaired Qatar's delegation at the meeting. In continuation of the efforts of previous meetings, the ministers discussed the developments in the Gaza Strip and the region, the efforts made to stop the Israeli aggression against the people of Gaza, and the dangerous escalation in the West Bank and Lebanon. The meeting also discussed the ongoing preparations for the ministerial meeting on the situation in Gaza and the implementation of the two-state solution as a way to achieve a just and comprehensive peace, which the committee will host alongside the European Union and Norway this week. (QNA)

adaptable to the 21st century," Dujarric said. On climate change, Dujarric explained that such issues would not be solved overnight. The General Assembly provides a platform for member states to meet to discuss these issues, he noted, expressing the hope that these discussions would result in commitments and recommendations from member states to address these challenges, especially climate change which has a real impact on life, people and crops.

Concerning illegal immigration, Dujarric noted that the problem is not immigration itself, but how to deal with it. He explained that the people in charge of migration policy are not member states, rather criminal gangs and human traffickers, due to the lack of agreement among

member states. He stressed the need for an agreement among the countries where people come from, the countries of origin, the countries of transit and the countries of destination. "Many countries need workers, doctors, nurses, engineers. We need to manage this flow of people," he said.

On the ongoing genocide on the Gaza Strip, Dujarric stressed the need for an immediate ceasefire, adding, "for this reason, as I said, we are grateful to the Qatari leadership. Qatar has always been great in terms of diplomacy, which enabled it to talk to different people and bring people together. We saw this in Afghanistan - in the meetings we had in Doha regarding Afghanistan - and the same with regard to Gaza." (QNA)

Mada Center launches 'Bu Hamad' virtual sign language interpreter



CEO of Mada Center Aljazi Nasser Aljabor stressed the importance of innovation and research in enabling the people with hearing disabilities to access web content and electronic services.

She noted that the launch of the virtual sign language interpreter 'Bu Hamad' reflects the ministry's commitment to providing innovative technological solutions aimed at enhancing digital inclusion and providing equal opportunities for all.

Aljabor said that this innovation is a significant step in facilitating digital access to government information and exemplifies Mada Center's role in leading research and technology initiatives to empower individuals with disabilities. She stressed the importance of carrying on with research and technology development to find innovative solutions that promote comprehensive digital integration. (QNA)

The Assistive Technology Center Qatar - Mada launched the virtual sign language interpreter 'Bu Hamad' on the Ministry of Social Development and Family (MSDF)'s website yesterday.

Coinciding with the beginning of the International Week of the Deaf, the launch was attended by HE the Minister of Social Development and Family Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad.

This initiative is part of the efforts of MSDF and Mada Center to enhance digital inclusion and ensure digital access rights for people with hearing disabilities, enabling them to access all digital content and services across various electronic platforms easily and independently. On the occasion, Acting

opment and Family Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad. This initiative is part of the efforts of MSDF and Mada Center to enhance digital inclusion and ensure digital access rights for people with hearing disabilities, enabling them to access all digital content and services across various electronic platforms easily and independently. On the occasion, Acting

CCQ unveils new logo to enhance national identity

The Community College of Qatar (CCQ) unveiled its new logo in a ceremony, yesterday.

The move aims at enhancing national identity and reflecting CCQ's ongoing commitment to renewal and growth, the two pillars of its recently launched 2023-2030 strategic plan, which aims to enhance its position as one of Qatar's leading higher education institutions, which builds a knowledge-based society and creativity-stimulating environment.

Designed by Qatari artist Fatima al-Sharshami, the logo design incorporated Arabic calligraphy as a combination of heritage and modernity, and employs the colours of the Qatari national flag as a symbol of pride and national be-



longing. It embodies CCQ's vision and national identity as the largest national university college in Qatar and highlights its unique role as part of the Qatari community.

CCQ President, Dr Khalid al-Horr said the new identity reflects the CCQ's unique nature and ability to adapt to the students' needs and the Qatari labour market requirements. As Qatar's largest national university college, the

CCQ has granted more than 7,000 academic degrees, including associate diplomas and bachelors degrees, to more than 5,300 male and female graduates, and qualified over 3,260 male and female students to pursue their university studies in prestigious educational institutions. It is not just a logo or a design, it is a reflection of the identity of the national community college, and its values of pride, uniqueness, flexibility, empowerment and co-operation, and its new 2023-2030 strategy based on renewal and development, he added.

He pointed out that thanks to collective efforts and creative thinking, the new identity will be a beacon of inspiration for students and faculty members to achieve more success and further enhance the CCQ's position as a leading educational institution. (QNA)



MoPH organises workshop on food establishment classification



The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) is working to gather the views of stakeholders regarding the Food Establishment Classification Programme intended to be implemented in the future.

The project aims to ensure the application of the highest level of food safety in Qatar in line with advanced international standards.

The classification mechanism for food establishments is fundamentally based on the electronic food safety system "Watheq" which was launched in 2022. The establishments will be classified according to their performance. The Food Safety Department at the Ministry of Public Health established six classification grades

based on a risk principle, linking the classification grade to the level of compliance with health regulations.

The Ministry of Public Health organised an introductory workshop on the Food Establishment Classification Programme, featuring representatives from the Ministry of Municipality and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, along with the Qatar Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

The workshop discussed implementing mechanisms to develop recommendations that consider the views and opinions of all stakeholders involved in food safety in Qatar.

Director of the Food Safety Department at the Ministry of Public

Health Wasan Abdulla al-Baker said in her opening speech, "Organising this workshop enhances collaboration with food safety stakeholders in Qatar. The workshop provided an opportunity for the Ministry of Public Health to bring together all concerned parties with the aim of developing food monitoring and enhancing food safety and public health by raising food establishments' compliance with health regulations."

Head of the Environmental Health Section at the Ministry of Public Health Mubarak Alnaemi also presented an introductory overview of the Food Establishment Classification Programme, including its phases and implementation methods. (QNA)

AlKhatir meets Bosnia and Herzegovina's foreign minister, Moldova deputy PM, ICRC president, UN High Commissioner for Refugees



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhatir met yesterday with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina Elmedin Konakovic, on the sidelines of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly in New York. The meeting discussed bilateral co-operation, and ways to support and develop ties, particularly in the political and economic fields. They also discussed the latest developments in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories, along with other topics of mutual interest. (QNA)



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhatir met yesterday with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Moldova Mihai Popsoi, on the sidelines of the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 79) in New York. During the meeting, they discussed relations between the two countries and ways to support and develop them. In addition, they discussed a host of topics of common interest. (QNA)



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhatir met yesterday with President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, on the sidelines of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 79) in New York. During the meeting, they discussed the strategic co-operation between Qatar and the ICRC. They also discussed the situation in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories, Sudan, Yemen, and the Rohingya crisis, in addition to a number of topics of common interest. President of the ICRC commended Qatar's role in the process of reuniting Ukrainian children with their families in Ukraine, as part of its ongoing mediation aimed at reuniting families separated by the Russian-Ukrainian crisis. (QNA)



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhatir met yesterday with HE the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, on the sidelines of the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 79) in New York. During the meeting, they discussed co-operation between Qatar and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and ways to enhance them. They also discussed regional developments, mainly in the Gaza Strip and occupied Palestinian territories, Lebanon, Syria, and Sudan. The two sides expressed their deep concern over the Israeli escalation in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories and Lebanon. The meeting discussed the previous co-operation between the two parties, as well as Qatar's support for the activities and programmes of the UNHCR, especially in Sudan and Ukraine, in addition to stressing the importance of concerted international efforts to provide aid to more than 120mn refugees and displaced persons who were forced to leave their homes due to wars, violence, and persecution. (QNA)

QNA director-general meets Italian envoy



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

QNA launches course on content management

Qatar News Agency (QNA) launched yesterday a training course intended for fostering digital media cadres' skills.

The five-day website content management and analysis course, at QNA headquarters in downtown Doha, brings together journalists from QNA and other state agencies and

offers a guide to planning and executing websites as media projects. Key among the training topics is preparing various forms of content forms such as reporting, multimedia journalism including podcasts, search engine optimisation (SEO) techniques, social media outreach and choosing perfect content images.

By the end of training, trainees will submit graduation projects on developing websites and designing home pages. In March 2023, QNA rolled out the QNA Training Halls, part of a media development vision aimed at producing qualified young Qatari cadres capable of keeping pace with the latest media transformations. (QNA)



Symposium discusses protection for medical service during armed conflicts

The National Committee for International Humanitarian Law at the Ministry of Justice organised yesterday, in co-operation with the Jordanian National Committee for International Humanitarian Law, a joint symposium on medical services in times of armed conflicts, during which they reviewed the importance of medical services in times of armed conflict.

The symposium addressed the explicit rules in international humanitarian law for the purpose of protecting access to health-care services in times of armed



conflicts, which oblige states and armed groups to respect and protect individuals working in medical missions.

At the opening of the symposium, Undersecretary of Ministry

of Justice and Chairperson of the National Committee for International Humanitarian Law, Sultan bin Abdullah

al-Suwaidi, welcomed Chairperson of the Jordanian National



Committee for International Humanitarian Law, retired Lt. General Mamoun al-Khasawneh, President of the Moroccan National Committee on International Humanitarian Law Dr Farida El

Khamlichi, and Head of International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Delegation in Qatar Basma Tabaja, in addition to the participants in the symposium.

He noted that organising this

joint symposium comes in implementation of the provisions of the memorandum of understanding signed between the National Committee for International Humanitarian Law and its partner, Jordanian counterpart, pointing out that international humanitarian law contains explicit rules for the purpose of protecting access to health-care services in times of armed conflicts, which oblige states and armed groups to respect and protect individuals engaged in medical missions, as well as in all circumstances to respect and protect medical units. (QNA)

MSDF, QF's Difi sign key pacts

As a major international conference in Doha exploring global trends affecting families worldwide draws closer, key agreements for the hosting of the event have been signed between the Ministry of Social Development and Family (MSDF) and Qatar Foundation (QF)'s Doha International Family Institute (Difi).

The 30th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family Conference on Family and Contemporary Megatrends will take place on October 30-31 at the Qatar National Convention Centre.

Organised by the Difi with the MSDF as a strategic partner, it will bring together experts, policymakers, and thought leaders from around the world.

Ahead of the conference, the MSDF and Difi signed a memorandum

of understanding (MoU) and a sponsorship agreement for the strategic partnership.

The agreements were signed by the MSDF's Assistant Undersecretary for Family Affairs Sheikha Sheikha bint Jassim al-Thani and Difi executive director Dr Sharifa Noman al-Emadi.

HE the Minister of Social Development and Family Mariam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad and QF Vice-Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer HE Sheikha Hind bint Hamad al-Thani were present at the signing ceremony.

A spokesperson for the MSDF said the co-operation is aimed at enhancing joint efforts and commitment to supporting the family as a basic pillar of society and promoting social development policies that focus on improving people's quality of life in Qatar.

"The aim is to raise awareness about the challenges facing families in the modern era, and highlight the importance of the family's role in sustainable development," the spokesman added. "It will include joint initiatives such as workshops and research studies that address family issues."

"Qatar has proven its deep commitment to providing innovative and comprehensive solutions to support families around the world, beginning with its organisation of the conference to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004, and then the 20th anniversary conference of the International Year of the Family in 2014," said Dr al-Emadi.

"This year's conference will

be an embodiment of this legacy, bringing together thought leaders and experts to exchange ideas and explore best practices that contribute to enhancing family well-being, and working to establish strategic partnerships that enhance the sustainability of family well-being and social development," she added. "We look forward to the conference having a positive impact on societies around the world."

More than 2,000 delegates – including policymakers, researchers, family practitioners, parents, and young people – will gather at the conference as it focuses on four major megatrends affecting families across the world: technological change, demographic change, migration and urbanisation, and climate change.



The conference, held every decade, has a crucial role in developing policies and programmes centred around supporting and empowering families on a global scale.

For its 30th anniversary of the International Year of the Family edition in Doha, the Permanent

Committee for Organising Conferences within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is an executive partner, with QatarDebate – founded by the QF – as youth partner, and the event supported by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Qatar Charity opens new branch for women

Qatar Charity (QC) has inaugurated a new branch for women in Al Wukair, as part of its ongoing efforts to provide accessible services to beneficiaries and donors across Qatar.

The QC now has a total of 33 branches across the country: 22 for men and 11 for women.

Ahmad Yousef Fakhroo, the chief executive's assistant for the resources development and communication sector at the QC, inaugurated the branch in the presence of several officials.

The branches designated for men and women operate from 8am-10pm.

In addition to branches, the QC has 91 collection points located in hospitals, centres, shopping malls, and markets.

Additionally, there are 2,382 fixed collection boxes, 255 "Tap to Donate" devices, and 247 home donation boxes.

Further, donations can be easily made through QC website (<https://www.qcharity.org/en/qa>) and app.

Donations can also be made by contacting 44290000 or through the "Home Collector" service, a statement added.



Itqan is first in Qatar for SSH accreditation

Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC)'s Itqan Clinical Simulation and Innovation Centre (Itqan) has become the first in Qatar to receive accreditation from the Society for Simulation in Healthcare (SSH).

Itqan, an education and training facility located on the Hamad Bin Khalifa Medical City (HBKMC) campus, is one of the world's largest and most technically advanced simulation facilities.

SSH accreditation is the gold standard in healthcare simulation, a statement said yesterday.

"It is a significant milestone for Itqan to receive full accreditation from the Society for Simulation in Healthcare, formally recognising the centre as a proven leader in healthcare simulation excellence," said acting Itqan executive director Dr Abdulla Yousef.

Itqan's SSH accreditation covers two specific areas of focus: Core and Teaching/Education.

"Itqan's purpose-built state-of-the-art facility provides controlled and supportive learning environments that imitate real-life patient care situations in patient suites, labour and delivery suites, operating theatres, intensive care units, and clinic setting," said Dr Abdullatif al-Khal, the deputy medical director and director of medical education at the HMC.

Site visitors came in April to observe daily practice and to meet all stakeholders to ensure the centre functions at a high level of quality.

"This accreditation is an important milestone for us, not just in terms of regional and international recognition but in how it strengthens our operational and strategic capabilities," said Itqan assistant executive director Amr Metwally.

In 2023, Itqan facilitated 1,450 activities for over 31,500 learners.

Thus far in 2024, Itqan has hosted 21,272 learners participating in many different training courses from the very basic to the highly technologically advanced ones, the statement added.

Al Meera, HBKU join beach clean-up



As part of its celebration of World Cleanup Day 2024, Al Meera Consumer Goods Company organised a campaign to clean up Simaisma Beach on September 21, in collaboration with Ministry of Municipality and Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU).

"As a leading national retailer, Al Meera is committed to fostering a culture of environmental volunteerism within the community," a statement said. "This campaign addresses the issue of beach litter and promotes a clean, pollution-free environment, in accordance with the sustainable development pillar of the Qatar National Vision 2030. We extend our gratitude to our partners and the volunteers."

UN House a unique model of strategic partnership between Qatar and UN

Qatar's hosting of the United Nations House confirms that Doha has become a hub for multilateral action regionally and internationally, and a reliable platform for dialogue and co-operation between active parties to confront global challenges.

Alongside its offices and specialised bodies affiliated with the international organisations, the UN House in Qatar represents a unique model of the strategic partnership that has reached advanced levels between Qatar and the UN.

The UN House is not merely a building in Qatar. It is a monument to unify the efforts of the agencies and institutions affiliated with the international organisation both in Qatar and abroad, bringing together development, humanitarian and diplomatic actors under one roof, and stands as a witness to the support provided by Qatar to bring about the aspired change in the lives of millions around the globe.

Inaugurated in March 2023, the UN House accommodates 12 offices of key agencies, including the International Labour Organisation, World Health Organi-

sation, UN International Children's Emergency Fund, UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and International Organisation for Migration.

Since its inauguration in Doha, the UN House has played a growing role in highlighting the international and regional status of the UN and Qatar, as a centre for initiatives and programmes that address development and peace issues, as well as a gateway for UN's humanitarian and diplomatic work.

UN Development Programme administrator Achim Steiner said in previous statements to the Qatar News Agency (QNA) that the UN House in Doha is "both a practical and a policy opportunity".

"Practical because it gives us the possibility of housing our staff and our experts in Doha in an optimal working environment, and it has allowed us to deepen the co-operation between different parts of the State of Qatar and institutions that are also operating out of Doha," he said. "So very practical, but also very promising in terms of future co-operation." – QNA

Prices 'rising due to cost of keeping livestock'

The rising cost of keeping and breeding sheep has discouraged a number of livestock owners from expanding their business in spite of the support and subsidies given by the entities concerned, local Arabic daily *Arrayyah* reported.

Some livestock owners said that the high retail prices of sheep at the local market are mainly due to the high cost of running the business.

Even though fodder and veterinary medicines are subsidised, they explained that they need to buy green fodder and other fattening fodders and vitamins at a very high cost in addition to certain drugs needed to keep the animals healthy.

Further, there are various monthly payments that the owner has to make such as water and electricity bills, workers' salaries and in some cases the cost of renting a barn at any of the central markets, which can be up to QR2,000 a month.

Other issues faced by the local owners include the reduced number of newborn sheep and restrictions on direct imports of sheep from the source, forcing livestock owners to buy from neighbouring countries at higher prices.

Saqr al-Tamimi said that the average cost of keeping 150 head of sheep amounts to QR10,000 a month, which is a big sum compared to the expected profit as most livestock owners would not make more than QR30,000 in sales a year.

Mubarak al-Dossari said that many Qatari livestock owners would not like to expand their production because of the cost.

He noted that the average price of a 30kg local breed sheep amounted to QR2,000, which is very high compared to the prices seen earlier.

He said that this could be mainly due to the dwindling supply compared to the increasing demand.

EAA, Silatech, Unicef to equip youth for sustainable initiatives

From Page 1

The session was chaired by HE the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the UN Sheikha Alya Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani, and featured participation from HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater, alongside numerous ministers, distinguished figures, representatives from the UN, youth advocates.

At the roundtable on the sidelines of the "Summit of the Future", Education Above All Foundation chief Fahad al-Sulaiti stated: "This partnership is a testament to the power of collaborative efforts in providing quality education for children and empowering youth to develop green skills in real life."

Silatech chief executive Hassan al-Mulla remarked: "This collaboration with Education Above All Foundation and Generation Unlimited marks a vital milestone for us all. At Silatech, we believe in the power of partnership to transform lives, and we remain committed to economically empowering young people across the Middle East and North Africa."

The Green Visions and Thriving Futures' programme reflects a growing recognition that the path to net-zero and climate resilience depends on whether today's young people gain the skills and knowledge to drive the green transition.

Unicef's Generation Unlimited chief executive Kevin Frey said: "This new partnership is about creating actionable strategies to prepare young people for the opportunities of tomorrow, opportunities that don't just sustain economies, but also our planet."

The new programme will support 370,000 youths across Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt in greening actions to protect biodiversity, manage waste and conserve water in local communities, with 60,000 participating in a climate action curriculum in preparatory schools.

Another objective of the programme is to support an additional cohort of 195,670 youth in Egypt to transition from learning to earning, through placement in jobs or self-employment in sectors such as information technology, healthcare, engineering, and agriculture.

'Qatar to build sustainable knowledge-based economy'

From Page 1

He pointed out that the world today is facing serious challenges that hinder its economic progress, threaten its social peace, and slow down efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

HE Sheikh Mohammed stressed the importance of enhancing global governance, including reforming international financing structures, alleviating the debt burden, and bridging the digital gap.

He emphasised the need to enhance efforts to achieve sustainable economic growth and social welfare based on protecting human rights and empowering women, in addition to enhancing climate action under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement.

HE the Prime Minister also stressed that development cannot be achieved without establishing the foundations of peace and stability, so Qatar continues its tireless efforts in mediation to prevent the outbreak of conflicts and resolve them through peaceful means and has achieved regional and international successes in co-operation with its regional and international allies.

He added that Qatar is currently engaged in various mediations, including mediation between Hamas and Israel, in partnership with Egypt and the US, to stop the disastrous war on the Gaza Strip.

HE the Prime Minister expressed Qatar's pride in hosting the Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD2), which will be the key global event in 2025 within the series of three summits recommended by "Our Common Agenda".

He voiced Qatar's aspiration to receive participants from all over the world in Doha, and to achieve tangible results that contribute to building a better world.

Jamavar Doha set to unveil winter menu



Jamavar Doha, the renowned Pan-Indian dining destination at Sheraton Grand Doha, is welcoming back its culinary director and executive chef Surender Mohan (pictured) of Jamavar London and the newly opened Jamavar Dubai, to unveil its winter menu on October 4.

With a career spanning nearly three decades, Chef Mohan is a distinguished figure in the culinary world, a statement said yesterday.

His cooking, deeply influenced by India's royal heritage, seamlessly blends traditional techniques with modern flavours.

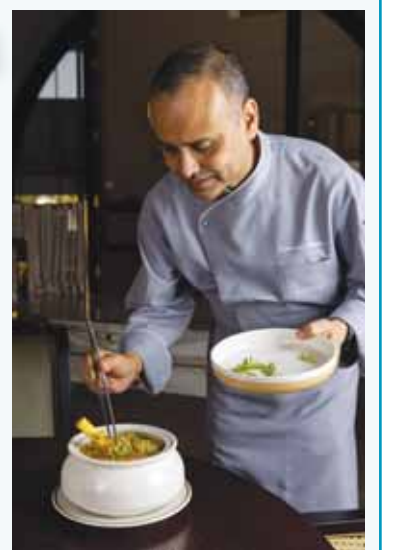
Under his leadership, Jamavar London reclaimed its Michelin star in 2022.

"During his Doha visit, Chef Surender will also present guests with the opportunity to enjoy an intricately crafted 3-course Chef's Tasting Menu, available exclusively from October 2-4," the statement said. "Inspired by India's signature culinary traditions, the bespoke

menu will feature an exquisite blend of new recipes alongside Jamavar's signature classics offering a choice of Bikaneri Paneer Tikka or Murg Malai Kebab for the starter, Kuttinad Sea Bass Curry or Asparagus and Palak Kofta for the main course, and the Assam Tea Chocolate Slice for dessert."

"Jamavar Doha's new winter dishes highlight Chef Mohan's passion for Indian cuisine through a selection of tantalising dishes," the statement added. "Diners can begin their feast with a selection of small plates such as the Lobster Idli Sambhar, a black pepper spiced lobster with rice lentil cakes and sambhar, and Dakshini Jheenga, prawns marinated with South Indian spices, alongside Tulsei Hammour Tikka and the creamy Murg Malai Kebab."

"For the mains, Leela's Lobster Neeruli, a Jamavar signature, offers a contemporary twist on a Nair family household favourite, while the Kuttinad Sea Bass Curry brings the rich



flavours of Kerala's coast to the table, the earthy Guccchi Lababdar, made with morel mushrooms," it continued. "The Kulfli Tasting, a variation of saffron and traditional malai kulfli, or the Poached Carrot Halwa, make for the perfect winter desserts."

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Kia Middle East and Africa Unveils the Kia Sportage L

A Bold New Leader in the Mid-Size SUV Segment, Offering Superior Space and Performance

A cornerstone of Kia's diverse lineup for the past 30 years

Featuring enhanced performance and advanced safety technologies for superior driving experience



Kia Middle East and Africa is thrilled to announce the regional launch of the Kia Sportage L, the long wheelbase is a dynamic addition to its renowned SUV lineup. Unveiled at an exclusive test drive event in Salalah, Oman, this September, the Sportage L is set to redefine the mid-size SUV market with its impressive enhancements and innovative features.

The Kia Sportage has established a strong global presence with over 7 million units sold across five generations. As a key player in Kia's lineup for 30 years, it has built a reputation for reliability, innovation, and value. The introduction of the Sportage L marks a pivotal moment, showcasing Kia's dedication to addressing diverse customer needs and adapting to evolving market trends.

The Sportage L boasts enhanced performance with two best-in-class high-

performance powertrains: a 1.5T engine delivering 197 hp and a 2.0T engine with 233 hp, both paired with an 8-speed automatic transmission for improved performance and fuel economy. Designed with a longer body and best-in-class wheelbase (+155 mm), the Sportage L offers superior interior space, ensuring greater comfort and practicality. The luggage compartment now offers an impressive capacity of up to 1,829 litres with the second-row seats folded, making it perfect for family adventures and everyday use.

SooHang Chang, President, Kia Middle East and Africa, commented, "The Sportage has heritage has long been a cornerstone of Kia's success, and while we continue to offer the model in select markets, the introduction of the Sportage L allows us to meet the growing demand for a larger vehicle with enhanced performance. This new model enables us to connect with an even broader audience



and elevate their driving experience."

Ahmed Soudodi, Vice President, Product & Marketing, Regional HQ, Middle East & Africa, Kia, added, "Our SUV lineup, including the Sorento, Sportage, Seltos, and Sonet, offers diverse options to cater to different customer needs and preferences. We are thrilled to introduce the Sportage L, which embodies Kia's commitment to innovation and quality."

The Sportage L features a robust suite of advanced technology and safety features. It comes equipped with a dual 12.3-inch panoramic screen, Smart Power Tailgate, 64-color mood lighting, and

a Surround View Monitor, providing drivers with a seamless and enjoyable experience. The state-of-the-art safety package includes Forward Collision-Avoidance Assist, Lane Keeping Assistance, and Smart Cruise Control, ensuring the highest level of safety for all passengers. Additionally, the new model offers improved interior space, making it more comfortable and practical for everyday use. With its enhanced performance and modern design, the Sportage L stands out as a top choice in the mid-size SUV segment.

The Kia Sportage L's exterior has been revamped with the X-Line styling package, highlighting a bold, rugged appearance. The new "Star Chain" grille—a sophisticated, large, blacked-out grille with a star-chain design—adds a dynamic edge, while the unique half-wrapped front bumper enhances the vehicle's aesthetics and reinforces its sturdy SUV character. Inside, the horizontal layout and floating central console offer a sense of spaciousness and additional storage.



Al Wakra Park set to open with new facilities

Al Wakra Park, spread across 46,601sq m, is being readied for opening with the Public Works Authority (Ashghal) completing 95% of the work, local Arabic daily *Arrayah* said.

The park has been refurbished, with the walkway repaired and installed fitness equipment for adults and new play areas for children.

There are prayer rooms, a barbecue area, toilets, a main square designated for events and an artificial lake.

The park has 70% green cover improving the climate, lowering temperatures, and reducing carbon emissions.

Ashghal, which constructed the new park on the site of the old park established in the late 1980s, preserved the plants and trees, especially the perennial trees.

The new park has a walking and cycling path. There are dozens of parking spaces including those designated for people with special needs. A large number of solar-powered lighting poles have been installed throughout the park in addition to several surveillance cameras that operate round-the-clock.

The scope of work at Al Wakra Park included a complete upgrade of the infrastructure, such as irrigation, electricity, sewage and rain-water drainage networks.



QCS visits child patients at Sidra Medicine



To enhance the psychological and emotional support for young cancer patients, a team from Qatar Cancer Society (QCS) visited the paediatric oncology ward at Sidra Medicine and distributed gifts and vouchers.

The visit, supported by Toys 4 Me - Qatar, was part of QCS's ongoing efforts to provide comprehensive support to those living with cancer, especially children, through various initiatives designed to improve their quality of life during treatment.

The children were presented with gifts including educational and recreational toys selected to encourage them to enjoy their time during treatment. The visit also featured entertainment activities.

QCS general manager Mona Ashkanani, said: "The aim was to bring joy to the children and ease their suffering by offering gifts that add a touch of happiness. Our ongoing collaboration with Sidra Medicine strengthens our ability to deliver such initiatives."



She expressed her gratitude and appreciation to Toys 4 Me - Qatar for their active role in supporting the humanitarian initiative, emphasising that such efforts reflect the values of solidarity and co-operation among all members of society in support of those most in need of care and attention. Toys 4 Me chairman and CEO Ashraf Abu Issa, said: "Our mission extends beyond providing quality toys; it's

about making a meaningful impact on our community. Partnering with the Qatar Cancer Society to bring joy to the children at Sidra Medicine has been a profound blessing. It's an honour to support these brave young kids and their families. We believe that our responsibility as a toy brand is to spread happiness and hope throughout Qatar, enriching the lives of children in every way we can."

Ajyal Film Club's special event held in Tangier

Doha Film Institute (DFI), in collaboration with Nuwah Foundation and Tanjaflam, which operates the renowned Cinema Alcazar, presented a special edition of Ajyal Film Club in Tangier from September 20-22.

The initiative marked a significant contribution to the Qatar - Morocco 2024 Year of Culture, reinforcing the longstanding cultural ties between the two nations.

Inspired by the Ajyal Film Festival, the Ajyal Film Club brings the spirit of youth-driven dia-

logue through cinema to new audiences.

The special edition in Tangier invited young Moroccan film enthusiasts, aged 13-17, to immerse themselves in three days of screenings, workshops, and masterclasses led by industry experts. Two Ajyal jurors from Qatar also hosted post-screening discussions to further enrich the experience.

In a press statement, DFI CEO Fatma Hassan Alremaihi said: "The Club has expanded the understanding of film among young people in Qatar, and we look forward to inspiring a simi-

lar love for meaningful cinema in Moroccan youth and encouraging them to pursue their creative aspirations and assume active roles within their communities by voicing their valuable ideas and opinions.

Nuwah Foundation CEO Sheikha Hala Alkhalifa said: "By fostering dialogue, creativity, and cultural exchange, we aim to empower the next generation of storytellers". Tanjaflam president Soad Rahmouni said the partnership serves to further strengthen the bond between the two kindred nations.



XPENG Global and Almana Group represented by Pioneer Motors, announce exclusive distribution partnership for Qatar

XPENG Global and Almana Group represented by Pioneer Motors, have officially signed an agreement designating Pioneer Motors as the exclusive distributor for the state of Qatar. The signing ceremony took place at the prestigious XPENG Global headquarters in China, symbolizing a significant milestone in the collaboration between the two esteemed companies.

Representing Almana Group at the signing ceremony were Mr. Saoud Omar Almana, Vice Chairman, and Mr. Bader Omar Almana, Managing Director. From XPENG, Dr. Brian Gu, Vice Chairman and President, and Alex Tang, General Manager of International Markets, XPENG, were present to solidify the partnership and celebrate the shared vision for a sustainable future.

During the ceremony, Mr. Saoud expressed Almana Group's pride in the strategic partnership with XPENG Global, emphasizing the alignment with Qatar Vision 2030's goals for Environmental



Development. He highlighted the importance of supporting sustainability initiatives and providing environmentally friendly electric vehicles equipped with the latest technology to contribute positively to the nation's progress.

Mr. Bader Omar Almana added "We are proud to add the XPENG brand which are the pioneers in high tech and Electric Vehicles industry globally and this is a testimony of our commitment to provide the Qatari Market the latest in automotive industry"

This partnership marks a significant step towards fulfilling the commitment to environmental stewardship and innovation, demonstrating both XPENG Global and Almana Group' dedication to shaping the future of mobility in Qatar.

ALMANA Group was founded in 1960 by Mr. Omar Al-Mana. From modest beginnings, it was armed with a strategic blueprint together with a robust ambition and the Group's evolution has been in tandem with that of Qatar. ALMANA Group harnessed the abundant opportunities provided by the country in its quest for progress.

In a short space of time, ALMANA Group emerged as one of the most prominent and leading conglomerates in Qatar. We are proud to represent some of the world's major international companies

XPENG is a leading Chinese Smart EV company that designs, develops, manufactures, and markets Smart EVs that appeal to the large and growing base of technology-savvy middle-class consumers. Its mission is to drive Smart EV transformation with technology, shaping the mobility experience of the future. In order to optimize its customers' mobility experience, XPENG develops in-house its full-stack advanced driver-assistance system technology and in-car intelligent operating system, as well as core vehicle systems including powertrain and the electrical/electronic architecture. XPENG is headquartered in Guangzhou, China, with main offices in Beijing, Shanghai, Silicon Valley, San Diego and Amsterdam. XPENG's Smart EVs are mainly manufactured at its plants in Zhaoqing and Guangzhou, Guangdong province.



Katara Hospitality celebrates Parisa restaurant's win



The workshop in session.

Studio18 hosts workshop on digital transformation

By Shafeeq Alingal
Staff Reporter

The Studio 18 at the Urban Planning Sector recently organised a workshop on digital transformation, presented by engineer Nasser AbuQamar in the presence of Assistant Under-secretary for Planning engineer Turki Fahd al-Turki along with department heads and consultants.

Opportunities and challenges of digital transformation in the government sector and the ways to implement the best practices were discussed.

The event also covered professional project and programme management while analysing examples, innovations and trends.

Held as part of the 'Knowledge Road Initiative' by Studio 18, the workshop pointed out that digital transformation changes the mechanism of operations of organisations while delivering value to its stakeholders.

"It's not just about adopting new technology; it's about re-thinking business processes, culture, and customer experiences to drive innovation, improve efficiency, and remain competitive in an increasingly digital world," engineer AbuQamar said.

The sessions also discussed the key aspects of digital transformation and its benefits to organisations.

"Digital transformation often requires a shift in mindset across an organisation, fostering a culture of innovation, agility, and continuous learning," he said.

The workshop shed light on the best practices across the world in urban planning that integrate digital transformation and technology while stressing the need to make use of digital tools to ensure



Engineer Turki Fahd al-Turki

sustainable development and optimise land use.

Engineer AbuQamar, who explained the aspects of project and programme management, said managing projects in a co-ordinated way results in benefits. He also explained the project management methodologies and the roadmap to implementing the effective programme and project management.

"Clear vision and objectives, stakeholder engagement, risk management, governance and transparency are the key success factors in project and programme management," he added.

The 'Knowledge Road Initiative' aims to connect communities and enable information sharing for the betterment of society. It promotes co-operation in the development sector and transmits good practices to the younger generations.

Katara Hospitality, a global hotel developer, owner, and operator based in Qatar, announced that Parisa, its distinguished Persian dining concept, has been honoured with the 'Brand Initiative of the Year - Qatar' at the TDM Travel Trade Excellence Awards 2024 - Middle East.

The accolade recognises the exceptional achievements of key players in the travel and hospitality industry across the region, celebrating excellence in service, culinary innovation, and the delivery of unique guest experiences, a statement said.

Since its inception, Parisa has established itself as a symbol of culinary excellence and cultural fusion, blending the rich heritage of Persian cuisine with contemporary influences and the warmth of Qatari hospitality.

The brand's journey began in 2012 with its first location at The Ritz-Carlton Sharq Village in Doha, Qatar. Since then, Parisa has expanded its presence with additional venues in Souq Waqif and Al Messila, a Luxury Collection Resort & Spa, as well as international locations in Bürgenstock, Switzerland, and Tangier, Morocco.

Each Parisa venue offers an immersive experience that goes beyond the conventional dining experience.

The interiors of Parisa restaurants are adorned with exquisite hand-painted Persian artworks, complemented by thousands of meticulously selected mirrors. These elements, combined with the flavours of authentic Persian cuisine, create a sensory journey that captivates guests and leaves an indelible mark.

The TDM Travel Trade Excellence Awards, now in their second year, are a testament to the remarkable contributions made by leaders in the travel and hospitality sectors across the Middle East. The awards are decided by an esteemed panel of judges, as well as votes from industry professionals and the public, highlighting the best in innovation, service, and guest experiences.

Each dish served at Parisa is a celebration of Persian culinary traditions, carefully crafted by award-winning chefs using the finest ingredients to deliver a menu that caters to even the most



The Katara Hospitality team at the awards event.



Parisa in Souq Waqif

discerning palates.

The brand's dedication to authenticity is reflected not only in its menu but also in its design philosophy.

Parisa's interiors are a harmonious blend of Persian and Qatari design elements, featuring Persian carpet patterns intertwined with Qatari geometric designs, creating a visually compelling aesthetic that pays homage to both cultures. This unique ap-

proach has earned Parisa a loyal following among guests who appreciate the authentic representation of both Persian and Qatari heritage.

The restaurant prioritises the use of eco-friendly materials and locally sourced ingredients to reduce its environmental footprint. By working closely with local artisans and designers, Parisa not only supports the local economy but also ensures that its venues

reflect the rich cultural tapestry of Qatar.

This award serves as an acknowledgment of Parisa's efforts to blend tradition with innovation while upholding sustainable practices. It also highlights the brand's dedication to collaborating with local creatives and stakeholders to create a dining experience that resonates with both residents and visitors, the statement added.

GRAFF presents an incomparable Love story in Paris

New bridal campaign tells the story of a love like no other; showcasing iconic diamonds at landmark locations in the City of Love

Stills from Graff's new bridal campaign celebrate an extraordinary love story akin to the magnificent depth, intensity and uniqueness of a Graff diamond.

LONDON, UK: Graff has unveiled a captivating new bridal campaign - a cinematic love story that pays homage to an incomparable romance, set in the most romantic city in the world: Paris. Demonstrating a devotion akin to the magnificent depth, intensity and uniqueness of a Graff diamond, the story unfolds over six spellbinding scenes, beginning with an impassioned proposal in the gardens of the legendary Ritz Paris and culminating in a joyful moment captured outside the Graff Paris boutique on Place Vendôme.

A peerless selection of diamond engagement rings - from classic solitaires to intricate, detailed designs - wedding bands and bridal jewellery is worn throughout each chapter of the campaign alongside unique high jewellery designs and creations from Graff's most coveted collections, including Butterfly, Tilda's Bow and Laurence Graff Signature.

Under the guardianship of the Graff family, designers and artisans craft bridal jewels with perfect proportion and balance while intensifying the fire and brilliance at the heart of the diamond. Francois Graff, Chief Executive Officer at Graff, commented: "From the first spark of inspiration to the final polished masterpiece, the journey of a Graff diamond is a testament to our unwavering commitment to love and beauty. As the years pass and stories unfold, we remain steadfast in our dedication to crafting the most exceptional tokens of love - creations that transcend time, the heirloom jewels of the future."

For over six decades, Graff has been



renowned for transforming the hidden wonders of the earth, weaving dreams into reality with each exquisite jewel it creates.

Every Graff engagement ring pays tribute to this exemplary expertise and carries within its name the legacy of the many stones that have passed through the House over the course of history: Icon, Promise, Paragon, Flame and Laurence Graff Signature.

Hero images from the campaign present an Icon ring featuring a 4 carat D Flawless round brilliant diamond hand selected by a member of the Graff family - worn alongside an elegant jewellery suite including contemporary climber earrings from Graff's Butterfly collection.

A further image showcases an extraordinary white diamond tiara set

with over 30 carats of round diamonds, beautifully complemented by a high jewellery necklace comprising pear shape and round diamonds totalling over 40 carats, paired with a 9ct pear shape Promise ring.

The groom wears Laurence Graff Signature - the first unisex collection from the House; it reflects the many facets of the wearer's personal love story and is inspired by the diamantaire founder of Graff and his legacy in cutting and polishing the world's most beautiful stones.

Throughout the campaign, the rare diamonds synonymous with Graff are presented as the perfect partner for every bridal occasion - leaving a lasting impression and touching hearts in a way that sets the House apart from all others.





India probes Netflix 'for visa violations, racial discrimination'

Reuters
New Delhi

India is investigating the business practices of US streaming giant Netflix's local operations, including allegations of visa violations and racial discrimination, according to a government e-mail

sent to a former executive.

The details of India's investigation were included in a July 20 e-mail, reviewed by Reuters, which was written by a home ministry official to Netflix's former director of business and legal affairs for India, Nandini Mehta, who left the company in 2020.

"This is regarding visa and tax

violations concerns regarding the business practices of Netflix in India," wrote Indian official Deepak Yadav from the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) of the home ministry in New Delhi.

"We have received certain details in this regard w.r.t (with respect to) the stated company's conduct, visa violation, illegal structures,

tax evasion and other malpractices including incidents of racial discrimination that company has been engaged in while conducting its business in India," he added.

In an e-mailed statement, Mehta said she is pursuing a lawsuit in US against Netflix for alleged wrongful termination as well as racial and gender discrimination - charges

the company denies. Mehta said she welcomed the Indian investigation and hopes the authorities make their findings public, but did not elaborate on the allegations made by the government. Yadav declined to comment, saying he was not authorised to speak to media. The FRRO and India's home ministry did not respond to Reuters

queries. A Netflix spokesperson said the company was "unaware of an investigation by the Indian government."

The Indian official's e-mail shows growing scrutiny of Netflix in India, where it has roughly 10mn users and which it considers a growth market where companies target affluent people in the nation of 1.4bn people.

Classes resume at Bangladesh university at heart of protests

AFP
Dhaka

Students returned to classes at Bangladesh's Dhaka University yesterday after a weeks-long shutdown sparked by a student-led uprising that toppled prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

Tens of thousands demonstrated on campus and in the surrounding Shahbagh neighbourhood as protests against job quotas morphed into a nationwide struggle to end Hasina's 15 years of iron-fisted rule.

As the protests swelled in July, authorities shuttered the campus as part of a crackdown on the demonstrations that killed hundreds.

Several of the top student protest leaders were enrolled at the university, some of whom were snatched by plainclothes police and held in custody for several days.

Lecture halls yesterday were full again, with students chatting in groups along tree-covered walkways and buying drinks and snacks at canteens.

"I feel so much better coming back to class after a long time," said Arpita Das, who studies political science.

"It was like a new students' reception as our teacher welcomed us in class with flowers."

Das said she was present during a pitched battle on campus in July, when protesters and students

backing Hasina's Awami League party fought each other with rocks, sticks and iron rods.

"We were used to the routine of going to classes, study and exams," she said.

"We were in so much uncertainty about whether we could resume class again and complete our studies," she added.

Classes had started again in all but four or five departments said assistant proctor Mohammad Mahbub Quaisar, who was appointed after previous administrators loyal to Hasina resigned.

"Students are attending in a joyous mood," he said.

Hasina's government was accused of widespread abuses, including the mass detention and extrajudicial killing of political rivals.

More than 600 people were killed in the weeks leading up to Hasina's ouster in early August, according to a preliminary United Nations report that said the toll was "likely an underestimate".

Since her departure for exile in neighbouring India, cabinet ministers and other senior members of Hasina's party have been arrested, and her government's appointees have been purged from courts and the central bank.

In the leafy streets of the Shahbagh neighbourhood, colourful new murals exhort the public to "destroy the iron doors of prison" and celebrate Bangladesh's "re-birth".



Sri Lanka's president-elect Anura Kumara Disanayaka (centre), gestures as he leaves the Election Commission office in Colombo yesterday, following his victory in the country's presidential election.

New Marxist president vows to 'rewrite Sri Lankan history'

AFP
Colombo

Sri Lanka's Marxist president-elect yesterday invited his compatriots to help him "rewrite" history in the cash-strapped island nation after winning a vote coloured by discontent over an unprecedented financial crisis.

Anura Kumara Disanayaka, the 55-year-old leader of the People's Liberation Front, was declared the winner of the weekend's poll with nearly 1.3mn more votes than his nearest rival.

The once-fringe leader, whose party won less than four percent of the vote in parlia-

mentary elections four years ago, saw a surge of support as the economic meltdown forced widespread hardships upon Sri Lankans.

"The dream we have nurtured for centuries is finally coming true," he said in a statement shortly after the announcement.

"This victory belongs to all of us," he added. "Millions of eyes filled with hope and expectation push us forward, and together, we stand ready to rewrite Sri Lankan history."

Outgoing President Ranil Wickremesinghe - who took office at the peak of the 2022 economic collapse and imposed tough austerity policies per the terms of an IMF bailout - was a distant third in the contest with 17% of the vote.

"History will judge my efforts, but I can confidently say that I did my best to stabilise

the country during one of its darkest periods," he said in a statement.

He congratulated Disanayaka on the win and said he was "confident" the politician would "steer Sri Lanka on a path of continued growth and stability."

Disanayaka will be sworn in today morning at the colonial-era President Secretariat in Colombo, election commission officials said. Economic issues dominated the eight-week campaign, with widespread public anger over the belt-tightening measures imposed by Wickremesinghe since the peak of the island nation's bruising financial crisis.

Disanayaka would "not tear up" the IMF deal but would seek to modify it, a party politburo member said.

Nine fishermen feared dead after trawler capsizes

Nine Indian fishermen are feared dead after their trawler capsized in the Bay of Bengal during a storm, an official said yesterday.

The trawler had left from the Sundarbans in West Bengal on Wednesday with 17 men on board, said Surajit Bag, assistant director of fishing in the state government. Eight were on the deck while nine others were asleep in the cabin below when the storm struck early Saturday near Bagher Char Island he said.

"The trawler was overwhelmed by high waves and it capsized" he said. Another trawler rescued the eight on deck after they were thrown overboard, he said.

"Despite an extensive search, the remaining nine fishermen who were asleep below the deck could not be found. We fear they are dead."

An Indian Coast Guard vessel had towed the trawler back to land, where the survivors were in a stable condition, Bag said.

Kashmir election campaign



Omar Abdullah (centre), the leader of Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC), poses for photos as he rides a boat in Dal Lake during an election campaign rally in Srinagar yesterday, ahead of the second phase of voting during assembly election.

India begins inquiry into EY employee's death

Reuters
New Delhi

India is investigating the work environment at Big Four accounting firm EY, the labour minister said, after the death of a 26-year-old associate worker was blamed on stress by her mother who demanded accountability.

Anna Sebastian Perayal died in July and was overworked with a "backbreaking" load as a new employee, which affected her "physically, emotionally, and mentally," her mother Anita Augustine wrote in a letter to EY's India chairman which went viral on social media.

Reuters could not independently access the letter or verify its contents.

"A thorough investigation into the allegations of an unsafe

and exploitative work environment is underway," Labour Minister Shobha Karandlaje posted on X.

EY said it placed "the highest importance on the well-being of all employees." "We are taking the family's correspondence with the utmost seriousness and humility," it said in a statement.

The accounting giant said it works with about 100,000 people at its member firms in India and that Perayal had worked at one such firm for four months.

The need for better efforts to shield employees in high-pressure jobs from faltering physical and mental health has been discussed widely also after the death of a junior banker at Bank of America in May, and with JPMorgan creating a new role to tackle concerns.

Starmmer rules out austerity as Labour conference opens

AFP
Liverpool

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer promised to protect public services and ruled out austerity measures as his Labour party's annual conference kicked off yesterday, its first in 15 years as a governing party.

The four-day gathering in Liverpool, northwest England, comes almost three months after Labour secured a runaway general election victory over the Conservatives.

Under pressure on several fronts, the party will have to find a balance between celebrating La-

bour's long-awaited victory, defending its record, and not letting up on reminders of "difficult decisions" to come.

After months of gloom about Britain's economy, Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner struck a more optimistic note in an opening speech yesterday, standing in front of a red background emblazoned with the slogan "change begins".

Rayner, who is also in charge of housing and communities, promised to "fix the foundations and put Britain back on the path to growth", while Foreign Secretary David Lammy made a rousing speech with chants of "Britain is back".

Ahead of the conference,

Starmer told the *Observer* newspaper that his government had in 11 weeks done "far more than the last government did probably in the last 11 years".

He cited ambitious homebuilding targets, the setting up of a publicly owned green energy investment body and the recruitment of police officers and teachers.

However, an Opinion poll for the *Observer* ahead of the conference showed that Starmer's approval rating had suffered a huge drop since July, with only 24% approving of the job he was doing.

Despite laying the groundwork for likely funding cuts and tax rises in the budget due at the end of

October, Starmer told the *Sunday Mirror* he would not go "down the road of austerity".

He repeated his warning that he will do the "tough things first", but also told the *Observer* he would "make sure that our public services are functioning properly", and would shield working people from tax rises.

Rayner meanwhile in her speech announced a "historic" overhaul of workers' rights that will be put to parliament next month, including a ban on zero-hour contracts and a minimum wage raise.

She also announced housing measures, weeks after a damning report on the deadly 2017 Gren-

fell tower blaze in London. They include bringing forward a plan to tackle unsafe cladding and ensuring affordable housing improvements.

Focusing on his mission to return Britain to the global stage in his speech, Lammy spoke about moves to "reset" London's relationship with Europe and repeated claims of the need to "stand up for international law".

He also vowed to take action against the threats to Western democracy.

The conference brings a much-needed morale boost after a week dominated by negative headlines for Starmer.

He was reported to have received more than £100,000 (\$132,000) in declared gifts and hospitality since December 2019 - the most of any MP.

While the gifts did not breach parliamentary rules, the row broke as his government was pushing Britons to accept short-term "pain for long-term good" to help fill the £22bn "black hole" in public finances that he says the Tories left behind.

Criticism by the media and opposition also followed an unpopular move by the government to means-test winter fuel payments that slashed benefits for 10mn pensioners.



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GULF TIMES

Study says Covid likely originated from Huanan market wildlife

The origin of the Sars-CoV-2 virus, which caused the Covid-19 outbreak that disrupted life across the world for nearly three years from January 2020, has been a topic of contention. While the Huanan seafood market in Wuhan, China, was in the centre of the storm during the initial months, later on an alternative suggestion emerged that the virus escaped from the Wuhan Institute of Virology, where staff were known to be studying bat coronaviruses, but not Sars-CoV-2.

However, a new study by an international team concludes 'beyond reasonable doubt' that it is more likely that the virus emerged from wild animals sold at the market and not from a lab escape. The researchers re-analysed data from 800 samples collected at the Huanan market by the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention beginning on January 1, 2020, and also studied viral genomes from the earliest Covid-19 cases. The Chinese government made the market data available in 2022, fully allowing scientists to conduct an in-depth study of the market-origin hypothesis. The results were published in the journal *Cell* last Thursday.

Team member Ed Holmes at the University of Sydney said Chinese investigators swabbed surfaces, freezers, drains and cages to test for the presence of Sars-CoV-2. "We analysed these data to determine which species were present and where they were found in the market, particularly in relation to where

Sars-CoV-2 was found," he said. An analysis of genetic samples taken from the Huanan seafood market has identified a shortlist of wild animals being sold there that were the most likely source of the virus that sparked the Covid-19 pandemic.

While bats are thought to have been the original carrier of the Sars-CoV-2 virus, it has been previously proposed that an intermediate wild species became infected and brought it to the market, where an outbreak in humans began. Stalls there sold

The genetic studies of the virus in the earliest Covid-19 cases revealed that few, if any, people were infected prior to the market outbreak

live animals as well as seafood. The team found evidence for a variety of wildlife being sold at the market that could have been an intermediate host for the virus, including common raccoon dogs, masked palm civets and hoary bamboo rats. Importantly, traces of these animals were found in exactly the same stalls as Sars-CoV-2, said Holmes. "This suggests - but does not prove - that the animals were infected. Hence, it is very likely that Sars-CoV-2 emerged in a live animal market. All the scientific data point one way - to Sars-CoV-2's natural zoonotic origin in the Huanan market, Wuhan," stated Holmes.

The genetic studies of the virus in the earliest Covid-19 cases revealed that few, if any, people were infected prior to the market outbreak, the team reported. However, it couldn't rule out the possibility that the virus was brought to the market by an infected person handling animals. Team member Zach Hensel at NOVA University Lisbon, Portugal, said the study highlights the preventable risks posed by the human-wildlife interface in Huanan market, and the need to mitigate these risks in similar locations.

"Even though humans were, of course, everywhere in Huanan market and live mammals were concentrated in a small number of stalls, human viruses, other than Sars2, were rare and several animal viruses were quite abundant," says Hensel. "This included one influenza virus with zoonotic spillover potential and an animal virus closely related to others that had caused devastating animal outbreaks." He was of the view that simple personal protective equipment recommended for such settings prior to the outbreak of Covid-19 could have prevented the entire pandemic.

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Qatar's five-decade legacy of global peace, development and humanitarian aid through UN

QNA
Doha

Since becoming a member of the United Nations in 1971, Qatar has played an active role in fulfilling the organisation's objectives of maintaining international peace and security and fostering development across the globe.

Over the past five decades, the relationship between Qatar and the UN has been characterised by co-operation and joint co-ordination, serving global humanity and addressing regional and international crises. Qatar has emerged as a prominent figure in the UN, working tirelessly to prevent conflicts, resolve crises, and contribute to peacebuilding efforts.

Qatar's efforts toward achieving these goals have been multi-faceted, involving hosting numerous conferences, workshops, and meetings dedicated to peace, security, development, democracy, human rights, and fostering a culture of peace. The capital, Doha, has become a hub for international dialogue, playing host to important discussions and initiatives aimed at finding solutions to some of the world's most pressing issues.

Qatar's commitment to international co-operation is also evident through its close partnerships with various United Nations agencies and specialised bodies. These include institutions such as the United Nations Economic and Social Council, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco), among others. Through these relationships, Qatar has continued to support global development initiatives and advance the UN's mission.

Since its independence in 1971, Qatar has prioritised international co-operation as a cornerstone of its foreign policy. Over the decades, the country has shown a deep commitment to supporting international bodies and agencies, both politically and financially. By contributing to peacebuilding efforts, development initiatives, and humanitarian assistance, Qatar has solidified its role as a responsible and active member of the global community. Its efforts are particularly focused on the least developed countries (LDCs), where Qatar works to assist in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and provides aid to those affected by natural disasters, conflicts, and other emergencies.

Qatar's approach to humanitarian assistance is distinguished by its focus on delivering aid through bilateral and multilateral channels, ensuring best practices and high levels of professionalism. Most of the aid is directed to low-income and least-developed countries, in addition to nations struck by natural disasters or conflicts.

Among the numerous countries that have benefited from Qatari aid are Indonesia, following the devastating 2004 tsunami, Pakistan, after the 2005 earthquake and subsequent floods, Haiti, and Somalia, among others. Qatar has also played a significant role in assisting displaced people and those affected by wars across the world, including its contributions to humanitarian relief in conflict zones.

Qatar's foreign policy places a strong emphasis on diplomacy and mediation as essential tools for conflict resolution. Over the years, Qatar has built a reputation as a credible and trusted mediator in various international conflicts, contributing to peace efforts through its participation in diplomatic negotiations. This approach has earned Qatar significant international recognition for its ability to bridge divides between opposing parties and foster agreements that satisfy all sides.

Qatar's efforts in this domain have been instrumental in resolving a range of conflicts, with its diplomatic interventions achieving tangible results on the ground through development projects and peacebuilding initiatives.

One of the most prominent examples of Qatar's successful mediation efforts was the signing of the Peace Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the United States and the Taliban in February 2020. This agreement marked a significant milestone



in the efforts to end decades of conflict in Afghanistan and restore peace in the region. Qatar's involvement in this peace process further highlighted its growing role as a mediator in international affairs and demonstrated its commitment to supporting global peace and security.

Qatar has also participated in UN peacekeeping missions in various regions, including Lebanon, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Eritrea, and other conflict-affected areas. Additionally, Qatar has played a crucial role in resolving crises in Sudan and Chad, as well as helping to mediate border disputes between Djibouti and Eritrea. These efforts have not only contributed to regional stability but have also positioned Qatar as a key player in international peace and security efforts.

In 2021, Qatar again demonstrated its humanitarian leadership by participating in the evacuation of thousands of Afghan and foreign nationals at risk following the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan. In addition to providing urgent humanitarian aid to those affected, Qatar also played a pivotal role in supporting the broader international efforts to confront the Covid-19 pandemic.

Qatar's contributions during the pandemic included the provision of much-needed support to countries in need, evacuation and transportation services for stranded individuals worldwide, and United Nations employees to mitigate the pandemic's effects. Qatar's aid and development assistance during this period focused on the health, education, water, and sanitation sectors, particularly in countries that had been devastated by natural disasters, such as floods and droughts.

Within the framework of its longstanding relationship with the United Nations, Qatar continues to provide extensive support to UN agencies to enable them to carry out their missions effectively.

In addition to its mandatory contributions to the UN's regular budget and peacekeeping operations, Qatar has consistently provided voluntary donations to numerous UN funds and programmes. Between 2000 and 2014, Qatar made substantial donations to over 41 UN-affiliated bodies, supporting the organisation's efforts to alleviate poverty, improve access to education, and respond to global disasters and crises.

Qatar's voluntary contributions are guided by a comprehensive national approach that aligns with the country's priorities and strategies for supporting international institutions. This approach focuses on mediation, promoting sustainable development plans, improving the conditions of children in developing countries, and enhancing humanitarian assistance in conflict and war zones. Qatar has contributed significantly to UN initiatives aimed at alleviating complex humanitarian emergencies, including those addressing issues such as entrenched poverty and food

insecurity. Among the prominent UN bodies that have benefited from Qatar's contributions are the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the UNDP, Unicef, and the United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Qatar has also taken significant steps to address global challenges through its own institutions. One such initiative is the establishment of the Silatech Foundation, which focuses on tackling youth unemployment worldwide by creating job opportunities for young people.

With a capital of \$100mn, the foundation has implemented numerous projects and initiatives, particularly in Yemen, Morocco, and Syria. Silatech's work has had a substantial impact in these countries, providing thousands of young people with opportunities for employment and helping to address the root causes of poverty and instability.

Qatar's efforts to support vulnerable groups in various societies, particularly children, have not gone unnoticed. In May 2020, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution introduced by Qatar to designate September 9 as the "International Day to Protect Education from Attack." The resolution was spearheaded by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of the Education Above All Foundation, and called for international support to hold accountable those responsible for attacks on education and children in conflict zones. This initiative reflects Qatar's broader commitment to protecting education as a fundamental human right and promoting accountability for violations of children's rights.

Beyond its role in peace and security, Qatar has hosted numerous international conferences and forums focused on global trade, development, and democracy in cooperation with the United Nations and other international organisations.

These events have included the 2001 WTO Fourth Ministerial Meeting, the 2005 Group of 77 and China Summit, the 2006 Sixth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, and the 2011 Fourth Global UN Alliance of Civilisations Forum. In 2020, Qatar played a leading role in hosting the Afghanistan Peace Negotiations, which ultimately led to the signing of the agreement to bring peace to Afghanistan.

Qatar is also a staunch advocate of the UN's Alliance of Civilisations initiative, which aims to counter extremist ideologies and promote intercultural dialogue. The initiative has become a crucial platform for fostering understanding between different cultures and religions, and Qatar has continued to provide financial and logistical support for its activities. Since hosting the Fourth Global UN Alliance of Civilisations Forum in 2011, Qatar has been at the forefront of efforts to combat extremism and promote a culture of peace and tolerance.

Qatar's humanitarian and

diplomatic efforts extend into the field of sports as well. Qatar is one of the key sponsors of the UN resolution on sport for development and peace, recognising the role of sports in promoting global unity and development. The country has hosted numerous international sporting events, including the FIFA World Cup in 2022, which garnered international acclaim for its organisation and success. Initiatives like "National Sports Day" and the "Doha Goals" platform have further enhanced Qatar's efforts to use sports as a tool for promoting global development and peace.

Qatar's dedication to advancing human rights is evident from its active membership in the United Nations Human Rights Council, where it served from 2007-2010, 2011-2013, and 2015-2017. During these periods, Qatar worked closely with other member states to address specific threats to human rights, particularly through its participation in the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking. Doha is also home to the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region, which plays a key role in raising awareness about human rights issues in the region.

In the context of combating terrorism, Qatar has been a proactive participant in international efforts. The country emphasises the need to address the underlying causes of terrorism, advocating for an approach that does not associate terrorism with any particular religion, culture, or civilisation.

As a founding member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), Qatar co-ordinates with 30 countries to develop initiatives that address emerging threats, including terrorist financing. Qatar is also an active member of the Terrorist Financing Targeting Center (TFTC), a coalition of GCC states and the United States aimed at combating terrorist financing.

In December 2018, Qatar signed an agreement with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) to establish a regional office in Doha, contributing \$75mn to support the office's global strategy. This partnership was further strengthened in 2019 with the first Qatar-UNOCT Strategic Dialogue, held at the UN headquarters. These initiatives underscore Qatar's commitment to combating terrorism on a global scale while promoting sustainable peace and security.

In conclusion, Qatar's contributions to international peace, security, and development through its partnerships with the United Nations and other global institutions reflect the country's commitment to fostering a more just and equitable world. By focusing on diplomacy, mediation, humanitarian aid, and sustainable development, Qatar has positioned itself as a key player in global efforts to address some of the most pressing challenges facing humanity today.



Dignitaries at the 94th National Day celebrations of Saudi Arabia, held in Doha yesterday.
PICTURES: Thajudheen

Saudi Arabia's 94th National Day celebrated in Doha

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Prince Mansour bin Khalid bin Farhan al-Saud, the ambassador of Saudi Arabia in Doha, celebrated the 94th National Day of Saudi Arabia yesterday.

Present on the occasion were HE Sheikh Khalid bin Hamad al-Thani, HE Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser al-Thani, HE the Speaker of the Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem, HE the Minister of State and President of Qatar National Library Dr Hamad bin Abdulaziz al-Kuwari, HE the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie, HE the Minister of Labour Ali bin Saeed bin Smaikh al-Marri, and HE the Minister of Municipality Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah al-Attiyah.

Also present were Qatari Businessmen

Association Chairman HE Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim al-Thani, HE the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) Secretary-General Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi, the Director of Protocol at the MoFA ambassador Ibrahim Fakhro, and ambassador Ali Ibrahim, dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Qatar.

Prince Mansour welcomed and thanked all the dignitaries and the guests for attending "our celebration tonight on the occasion of the 94th National Day of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia".

"It is a source of pride and honour for us to celebrate this precious occasion in the beloved State of Qatar, which is linked to its sister, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, by deep-rooted fraternal and friendly ties extending from our shared history, culture and authentic values," he said. "This honourable gathering of senior statesmen and officials who honour our celebration tonight and share our joy on our National Day is nothing but an affirmation of these

distinguished ties and relations that bind our two brotherly countries and peoples, and an affirmation and commitment to push the relations of the two brotherly countries forward towards broad horizons of close co-operation in various fields in accordance with the directives of the leaderships of the two countries, may God protect them."

The envoy lauded the reforms and achievements in Saudi Arabia under Vision 2030.

He said that the kingdom had improved in its standing on the United Nations e-Government Development Index and its sub-indicators, jumping 25 ranks in 2024 to be among the top 10 leading countries in the world.

Prince Mansour added that the kingdom achieved first place globally in sub-indicators such as employment growth, social cohesion, labour market growth, population growth, and cybersecurity.

The United Nations Tourism report,

he said, also showed that Saudi Arabia topped the G20 countries in the growth rate of international tourists.

"The Saudi-Qatari Co-ordination Council continues to play its important role, thanks to the generous patronage and directives of Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, Crown Prince, Prime Minister and Chairman of the Saudi side in the Council, and his brother His Highness the Amir of the State of Qatar and Chairman of the Qatari side Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, may God protect them, an important and positive role in strengthening relations between the two countries," Prince Mansour said.

"The bilateral relations between the kingdom and Qatar are witnessing a wide movement and great momentum through the intensive mutual visits between officials in the two brotherly countries," the ambassador continued. "The successful and fruitful visit recently made by Prince

Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Nayef, Minister of Interior, to the State of Qatar and his meeting with his brother HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, which culminated in the signing of two important agreements between the two ministries, is an affirmation of the depth of the ties between the two brotherly countries."

"We cannot miss congratulating our brothers in the State of Qatar on the wise and distinguished leadership of the current session of the Gulf Co-operation Council, which Qatar chairs, and the tangible efforts, care, generous hospitality and capabilities it provided during Doha's hosting of the Gulf ministerial and technical meetings, which contributed to achieving positive results that consolidated co-operation, co-ordination and cohesion between the Council's countries and peoples," he concluded.

Fire Station: Artist in Residence unveils two exhibitions

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

The Fire Station: Artist in Residence unveiled yesterday two exhibitions – "Art is About Art" and "Eternal Echoes: The Silent Cry of Gaza" – highlighting the role of art in cultural exchange and humanitarian reflection.

Curated in partnership with the Netherlands embassy in Doha and the Atelier Art Society, "Art is About Art" showcases works from international artists exploring the emotional and spiritual significance of art while "Eternal Echoes" by Al Jazeera Media Network journalist Hayat El-Yamani pays tribute to the children of Gaza through evocative sculptures.

The event was attended by HE the Minister of State and Qatar National Library president Dr Hamad Bin Abdulaziz al-Kawari, Dutch ambassador Ferdinand Lahnstein, Austrian ambassador Erika Bernhard, and Fire Station director Khalifa al-Obaidly, among other dignitaries and guests.

Housed at the Fire Station's Gallery 3 and 4, both exhibitions are open to the public and will be on view until November 2.

Speaking to *Gulf Times*, "Art is About Art" co-curator Dirk van Lierop, who was joined by his co-curator Alejandra Barillas, described the exhibition as unique and special, noting its setting at the Fire Station in Doha, one of Qatar's historic buildings.

He stressed how the exhibition serves as a bridge connecting three regions: the Gulf, Europe, and Latin America.

The "Art is About Art" exhibition showcases the works of five renowned international artists: Han Nooyen (Netherlands), Yousef



HE Dr Hamad bin Abdulaziz al-Kawari with Khalifa al-Obaidly at the unveiling of the two exhibitions yesterday at the Fire Station: Artists in Residence. PICTURES: Shaji Kayamkulam

Left: 'Art is About Art' curators Dirk van Lierop and Alejandra Barillas.

Ahmad (Qatar), Abdul Rahim Saleem (UAE), Jonathan Ardon (Guatemala), and Annemiek Roumen (Netherlands).

It underlines how authentic art connects cultures, reflects emotions, and represents society and offers visitors a fresh perspective on the world, encouraging inspiration and understanding.

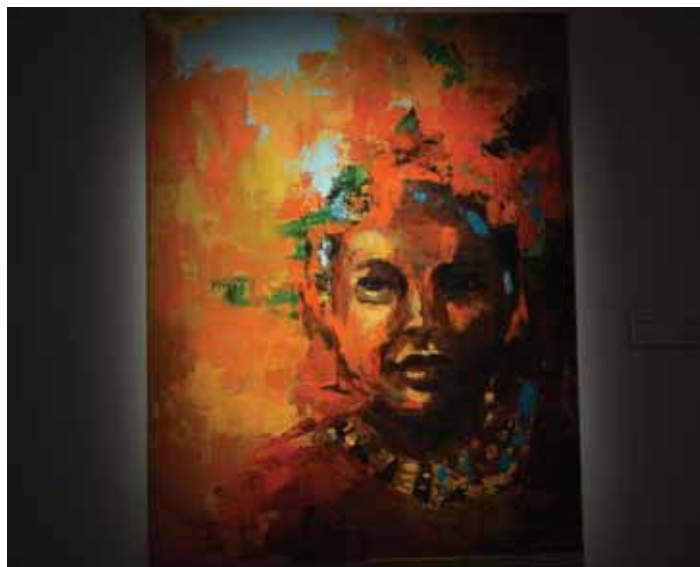
Van Lierop, a Dutch businessman specialising in art investments, and Barillas, a Latin-American businesswoman, gallery owner and former Miss Guatemala 2011, share a passion for art.

Together, they curate exhibitions in galleries, art fairs, museums, and private collections.

El-Yamani's "Eternal Echoes", curated by Saida al-Khulaifi and Fatima al-Zaini, features unique sculptures that portray balloons as once symbols of childhood innocence and now evoke the harsh realities of unimaginable struggle.

The artworks serve as a reminder to reflect on the suffering of Gaza's children, whose cries remain unheard amid the devastation.

"I'm trying to give one more voice to the children of Gaza, the more than 16,000 children being



'Art is About Art' showcases works from international artists exploring the emotional and spiritual significance of art.

killed until this moment ... I want to tell one clear message: this blood of our children will never vanish until the criminals who have done that, the Israeli occupation, held accountable for that and this war should end now," El-Yamani said.

About her work, she noted that the balloon represents fragility while the clay means the resilience from which humans were formed and it embodies the land being fought over and holds the promise of renewal and rebirth once again.



Hayat El-Yamani showcases her artworks.



Hayat El-Yamani's pieces: the balloon represents fragility while the clay means the resilience from which humans were formed.



Dutch ambassador Ferdinand Lahnstein at the opening of the two exhibitions.



VCUarts hosts QF partners to discuss AI in higher education



The library at Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar (VCUarts Qatar) – a Qatar Foundation (QF) partner university – recently organised a panel discussion on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the context of teaching and learning in higher education.

Titled "Generative AI in Teaching and Learning: An Education City-wide Faculty Panel Discussion", the panel comprised of faculty from QF partner universities.

The panellists were Rawan AlSaad from Weill Cornell Medicine – Qatar, Chadi Aoun from Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar, Jorg Matthias Determann and Jesse Payne from VCUarts Qatar, Sam Meekings and Spencer Striker from

Northwestern University in Qatar, James Cleon Olsen from Georgetown University in Qatar, and Mary T Queen from Texas A&M University at Qatar.

The discussions were moderated by the event organisers: the VCUarts Qatar library's Jacquelyn Ann Williams (head of Teaching, Learning, and Strategic Initiatives and associate professor) and Nicole Abiad (Writing Centre co-ordinator).

Opening the session, VCUarts Qatar dean Amir Berbic said: "The integration of AI in education is not merely a trend; it is a transformative force that has the potential to redefine how we teach, learn, and interact within our academic environments."

"Together, we can explore how to harness the potential of AI to enrich teaching and learning, and ultimately, to foster a more effective and equitable educational experience for all," he said.

Some of the topics discussed were the existence, or lack, of university policies regarding the use of generative AI within classrooms, student disclosures with regard to the use of AI in academic projects, the opportunities that AI creates in university teaching and learning, the impact of AI-related university policies on individual faculty's teaching, the relationship between AI, copyright and intellectual property (IP) rights, AI and data privacy and liability, and how data is used by AI tools, to name a few.