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Ecuador deny Qatar winning start on World Cup debut
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Senegal still potent without Mane, Netherlands to miss Depay in opener
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‘Welcome and good luck to all’

FAWAD HUSSAIN
THE PENINSULA

Qatar kicked off the first-ever FIFA World Cup in the Middle East and Arab region with a spectacular opening ceremony sending out a message of global unity at the Al Bayt Stadium.

“From Qatar, from an Arab country, I welcome everyone to the World Cup 2022. We have worked hard, along with many people, to make it one of the most successful tournaments. We have exerted all efforts and invested for the good of all humanity,” Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani said in his speech at the opening ceremony.



تميم بن حمد
@TamimBinHamad

After continuous effort and hard work for 12 years, Qatar is proudly witnessing today the launch of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and welcomes guests from all over the world, wishing luck for all the participating teams and enjoyable times for the fans.

H H the Amir said: “Finally, we have reached the opening day, the day that you have been eagerly waiting for. Starting from this evening, and for a period of twenty-eight days, we will follow, and with us the whole world, God willing, the great football festival, in this spacious ambience for human and civilized communication.”

“People of different races, nationalities, faiths and orientations will gather here in Qatar, and around screens on all continents to share the same exciting moments. How beautiful it is for people to put aside what divides them in order to celebrate their diversity and what brings them together at the same time,” H H the Amir added.

The Amir said: “I wish all the participating teams a magnificent football performance, high sportsmanship, and a time full of joy, excitement and delight for you all. And let there be days that are inspiring with goodness and hope. Welcome and good luck to all.”

The opening ceremony was attended by Father Amir H H Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Personal Representative of H H the Amir H H Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad Al Thani, H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Khalifa Al Thani, H H Sheikh Mohammed bin Khalifa Al Thani, H E Sheikh Jassim bin Khalifa Al Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Interior H E Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdulaziz Al Thani, Speaker of the Shura Council H E Hassan bin Abdullah Al Ghanim, a number of Their Majesties, Excellencies, and Highnesses leaders of sisterly and friendly nations, head of delegations participating at the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, and Their Excellencies Sheikhs and Ministers.

The show lasted for 30 minutes with international and local actors, singers and dancers, including Hollywood star Morgan Freeman, K-pop sensation Jungkook of South Korean superband BTS and Qatari singer Fahad Al Kubaisi amusing 67,372 spectators. ➔P2

People of different races, nationalities, faiths and orientations will gather here in Qatar, and around screens on all continents to share the same exciting moments. How beautiful it is for people to put aside what divides them in order to celebrate their diversity and what brings them together at the same time.

I wish all the participating teams a magnificent football performance, high sportsmanship, and a time full of joy, excitement and delight for you all. And let there be days that are inspiring with goodness and hope. Welcome and good luck to all.

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All cheers at FIFA Fan Festival as World Cup opens

JOELYN BALUYUT
THE PENINSULA

While the FIFA Fan Festival was opened a day before the opening match of the World Cup yesterday, the atmosphere during the first day of the biggest sporting event was remarkably different – as the big screen showed the countdown to mark the tournament – the excitement unfolded with cheering, screaming and applauding.

Thousands of football fans were all glued to the screen as the opening ceremony of the World Cup began. They started cheering and clapping the moment they saw Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani on the wide screen arriving for the opening ceremony and inaugural game between Qatar and Ecuador.

The large audience was also enthralled with the performances which got them screaming and clapping. Some were also touched when Morgan Freeman and Ghanim Al Muftah were on stage. Overall, fans were on exuberance. When the match began, fans of each country cheered as much as they could to support their team, regardless they were off the pitch.

The FIFA Fan Festival located at Al Bidda Park, is an on-site entertainment experience for fans where food, beverages and fun-filled activities can be seen anywhere.

As early as 4pm, the opening of the festival, people flood the entrance area. It takes approximately 30 minutes to one hour for one to enter the venue as sea of people are coming in across everywhere – Corniche, West Bay Qatar Energy and Al Bidda metro stations.

Before the live screening match, fans were entertained with music which got them in the dancing mood. They were in high spirit as they jumped and sang with the tune.

DJ Khaled Mamdouh performed for over 30 minutes to thousands of fans playing pumping music, including the first official soundtrack of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, Hayya Hayya (Better Together); Official FIFA Fan Festival anthem, Tukoh Taka; Pepas; Karma; The Nights; African Beat and Despacito. ➔P3



Fans enjoying FIFA Fan Festival yesterday.


A view of World Cup celebrations at Katara.

Katara’s diverse activities attracting worldwide audience

THE PENINSULA – DOHA

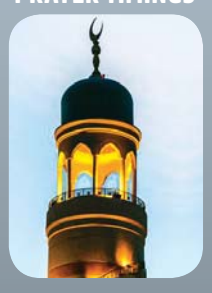
The festivities at Katara, accompanying the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, attracted the attention of the football fans who were keen to visit the Cultural Village, and watch its various activities and learn about Qatari culture, arts and heritage.

The 12th edition of the Katara Traditional Dhow Festival at the splendid Katara Beach promenade, which runs until December 18, witnessed a remarkable turnout with its various pavilions highlighting the ancient culture of marine heritage.

The grand and hugely popular festival which showcases Qatar’s pearl-diving legacy and the rich values of fishing and maritime history attracted audiences interested in the culture and heritage of various nationalities. It won their admiration for its richness and long history and a cultural pride of Qataris for several generations. ➔P9

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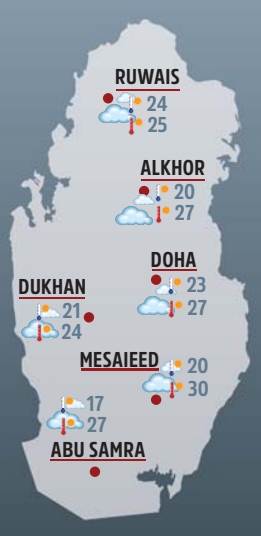
PRAYER TIMINGS



FAJR 4:33AM
SUNRISE 5:54AM
DHUHR 11:19AM
ASR 2:23PM
MAGHRIB 4:46PM
ISHA 6:16PM

WEATHER TODAY

23°C Minimum | 27°C Maximum



Moderate temperature daytime with slight dust becomes partly cloudy at times and mild by night

HIGH TIDE 1:12 - 21:00

LOW TIDE 9:00 - 21:00





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani delivering remarks at the opening of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 at Al Bayt Stadium in Al Khor yesterday. Father Amir H H Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani waving to the crowds at the World Cup opening. Amir, Father Amir, Saudi Crown Prince and PM HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, FIFA President H E Gianni Infantino, and other regional and Arab leaders at the opening.



Saudi Crown Prince attends World Cup opening ceremony

QNA — DOHA

Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Thani led the well-wishers to welcome Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud upon his arrival and the accompanying delegation in Doha to attend the opening ceremony of the World Cup.

Amir at World Cup opening: Welcome and good luck to all

FROM PAGE 1

A gesture when H H the Amir handed a jersey to H H the Father Amir to autograph it as a symbol of legacy was also applauded by spectators.

The Bedouin-tent inspired venue opened its doors and sent out a call for the entire world to come as billions of people watched the spectacular ceremony all across the globe.

It was a gathering for all mankind, an invitation to come together as one, bridging all differences with humanity, respect and inclusion. The concept of the ceremony was embodied in a unique idea of encompassing an idea of bridging distances.

The seven-act narration was guided by a strong visual concept, a musical project and world class talents, interlacing Qatari tradition with worldwide rhythms and national football chants, alternating between original scores and revised all-time favourites.

The concept of the ceremony was embodied in a unique, bespoke set design. The main elements were two suspended bridges of light, representing the encounter.

Programmed to change height throughout the show and symbolise the differences in perspective and background, a 5m by 5m double sided flying LED screen was the missing piece to connect the scenography, representing how all distances may be filled through dialogue and inclusion. The stunning ceremony culminated with a dazzling fireworks display that lit up the sky above the stadium, 44km (27 miles) north of Qatar's capital, Doha.

Deputy Amir receives UAE Prime Minister

QNA — DOHA

Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Thani led the well-wishers to welcome UAE's Vice-President and Prime Minister, and Ruler of Dubai H H Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, and his accompanying delegation upon their arrival in Doha yesterday to attend the World Cup opening ceremony.

H H Sheikh Mohammed and the accompanying delegation were also welcomed upon arrival by Minister of Sports and Youth H E Salah bin Ghanem Al Ali.

Turkish President attends opening ceremony

QNA — DOHA

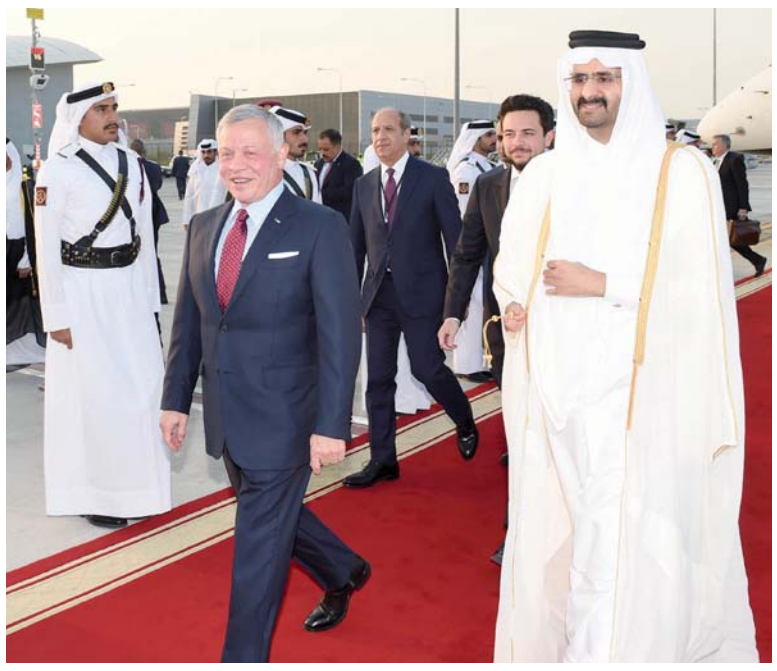
President of Turkiye H E Recep Tayyip Erdogan arrived in Doha yesterday to attend the opening ceremony of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

Upon his arrival at Hamad International Airport, His Excellency and the accompanying delegation were welcomed by Minister of State H E Sheikh Fahad bin Faisal Al Thani and Ambassador of Turkey H E Dr. Mustafa Goksu.

Djibouti President attends opening

QNA — DOHA

President of Djibouti H E Ismail Omar Guelleh arrived in Doha yesterday to attend the opening ceremony of the World Cup. His Excellency and the accompanying delegation were welcomed upon arrival at Hamad International Airport (HIA) by Minister of State H E Sheikh Fahad bin Faisal Al Thani.



Deputy Amir receives Jordan King

Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Thani led the well-wishers to welcome H M King Abdullah II bin Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan upon his arrival in Doha yesterday to attend the opening ceremony of the World Cup. H M the King of Jordan is accompanied by HRH Crown Prince Hussein bin Abdullah II, and a number of ministers.



Deputy Amir welcomes Kuwait Crown Prince

Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Thani led the well-wishers to welcome representative of H H the Amir of Kuwait H H Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah upon his arrival in Doha yesterday to attend the opening ceremony of the World Cup. H H the Crown Prince and his delegation were also welcomed by Minister of Sports and Youth H E Salah bin Ghanem Al Ali and Ambassador of Kuwait to Qatar H E Khaled Badr Al Mutairi.

Deputy Prime Minister: Qatar reaping results of years of planning, work

QNA — DOHA

Al Attiyah says Qatari people, with their full faith in God and full confidence in government, are seeing the results of the great efforts made in past years.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defense Affairs H E Dr. Khalid bin Mohammed Al Attiyah affirmed that the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 represents the harvest of more than 10 years of sound planning, effort and work.

In an exclusive statement to QNA, he said Qatar has worked during the past years to organise a unique edition of the World Cup, and today it reaps the efforts of more than 10 years of hard work, planning and facing challenges.

He added that the Qatari citizen, with his full faith in God and his full confidence in his government, was able to see the results of the great efforts and contributions made during the past years.

He also expressed his happiness and pride that the World Cup coincided with the celebration of the National Day of Qatar, adding that Qatar was able to combine two important events — its National Day (December 18) and the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

He said this has been achieved through diligent work and proper planning.

The Deputy PM thanked everyone who contributed to this global event. To conclude his statement, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defense Affairs welcomed everyone in Qatar to enjoy the World Cup and live a new and unique experience in this tournament.

Senegal President attends World Cup opening ceremony

President of Senegal H E Macky Sall arrived in Doha yesterday to attend the opening ceremony of the World Cup. His Excellency and the accompanying delegation were welcomed upon arrival at Hamad International Airport by Minister of State H E Sheikh Fahad bin Faisal Al Thani, and Ambassador of Senegal to Qatar H E Dr. Mohammed Habibo Diallo.

Saudi Crown Prince directs all govt depts to support Qatar's World Cup hosting efforts

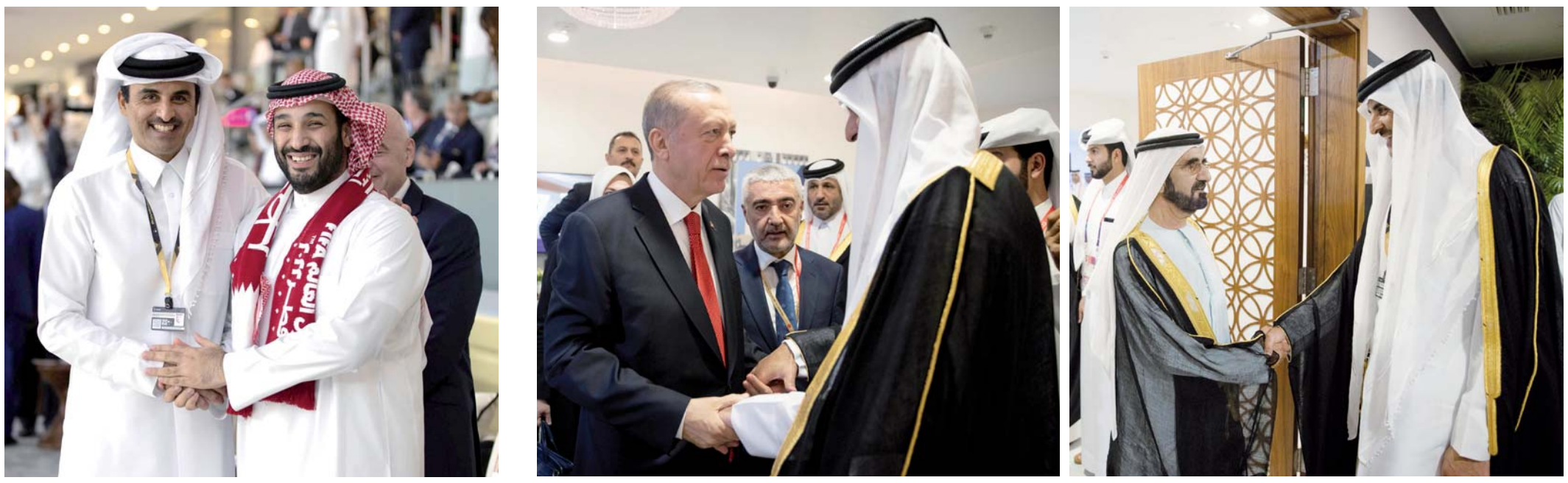
QNA — RIYADH

Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud has directed all the Saudi ministries and governmental institutions to provide any additional support or facilitations that their Qatari counterparts may need in support of Qatar's efforts in hosting the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

In a statement to Saudi Press Agency (SPA), Saudi Minister of Sports H E Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Faisal said that he will follow the implementation of Prince Mohammed bin Salman's directives.

HRH the Saudi Crown Prince also attended the World Cup opening ceremony along with several other leaders yesterday.

Amir holds reception for leaders participating in World Cup opening



Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani with (L-R) Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud; Turkish President H E Recep Tayyip Erdogan; and Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai H H Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum at a reception yesterday.

QNA — DOHA

Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani held a reception ceremony yesterday for Their Majesties, Excellencies, and Highnesses leaders of brotherly and friendly nations, and head of delegations participating in the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 opening ceremony at Al Bayt Stadium.

The reception ceremony was attended by Personal Representative of H H the Amir H H Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad Al Thani. It was also attended by HM King Abdullah II bin Hussein of Jordan, President of Algeria H E Abdelmadjid Tebboune, President of Egypt H E Abdel Fattah El Sisi, President of Palestine H E Mahmoud Abbas, President of Turkiye H E Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The ceremony was also attended by Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud; representative of H H the Amir of Kuwait Crown Prince H H Sheikh Mishal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah; Crown Prince of Jordan HRH Hussein bin Abdullah II; Vice-President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai H H Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum; Crown Prince of Dubai HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed Al Maktoum; Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports of Oman and Representative of HM the Sultan of Oman H H Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham bin Tarik Al Said; and Caretaker Prime Minister of Lebanon H E Najib Mikati.

The reception was also attended by President of Senegal H E Macky Sall; President of Rwanda H E Paul Kagame; President of Liberia H E George Weah; Vice-President of the Republic of Ecuador H E Alfredo Borrero; UN Secretary-General H E Antonio Guterres; President of the International Olympic Committee H E Thomas Bach; Aide to the President of the Russian Federation H E Igor Levitin; Vice-President of India H E Jagdeep Dhankhar; and Vice-President of Venezuela H E Delcy Eloina Rodriguez.

The ceremony was also attended by FIFA President H E Gianni Infantino.

H H the Amir discussed with Their Majesties, Their Excellencies, and Their Highnesses a number of topics pertaining to the World Cup. He welcomed them in Qatar, wishing them a good stay and the participating teams well in the competition.

Amir participates in FIFA Executive Summit

QNA — DOHA

Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani participated in the Executive Summit of FIFA yesterday. Held at Fairmont Doha Hotel, it was chaired by FIFA President H E Gianni Infantino.

At the beginning of the summit, a film recounting glimpses of the history of the FIFA World Cup tournaments was shown, after which Infantino delivered a speech where he welcomed the attendees and congratulated Qatar as the start of the World Cup.

The Amir delivered a speech in which he welcomed the attendance of FIFA officials, heads of national football federations and legends of the game, wishing them success in the work of the summit. After that, the Amir received a souvenir from the FIFA President.

The summit was attended by Personal Representative of H H the Amir H H Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad Al Thani, in addition to several senior officials in the country and national football federations.



Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani; Personal Representative of H H the Amir H H Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad Al Thani; and FIFA President H E Gianni Infantino at the FIFA Executive Summit.

Speaker: Qatar has honoured all its World Cup commitments

QNA — DOHA

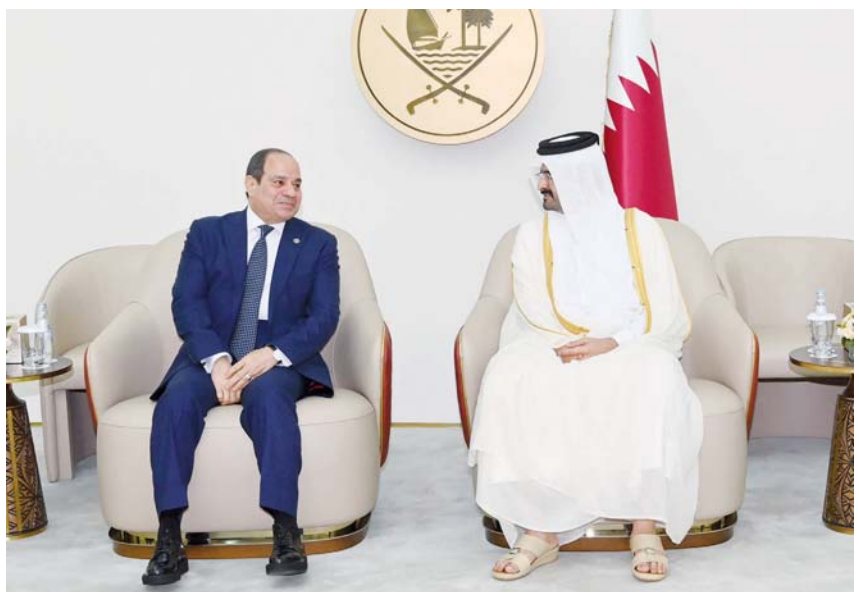
Speaker of the Shura Council H E Hassan bin Abdullah Al Ghanim stressed that thanks to the wise leadership's directives, the State of Qatar honoured all the commitments it made 12 years ago to host an exceptional World Cup edition, something that is coming true now in World Cup 2022.

His Excellency added that Qatar continues its achievements in successfully hosting major sporting events.

He said in remarks to QNA that the State of Qatar was reaping the rewards of 12 years of work, adding that it is clear to see the dream of Father Amir H H Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani come true during the rule of Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

His Excellency added that the country will continue with its achievements under the leadership of H H the Amir, proving to the world that its the region's beating heart and that its a destination that welcomes everyone.

The Shura Council Speaker stressed that the State of Qatar was and continues to be a hospitable country, adding that tolerance a key principle engrained in it by its religion, and Arab authenticity deep-rooted in its people.



Deputy Amir welcomes Egypt President

Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Thani led the well-wishers to welcome President of Egypt H E Abdel Fattah El Sisi and his accompanying delegation upon their arrival in Doha yesterday to attend the World Cup opening ceremony. The Egyptian President and the accompanying delegation were also welcomed by Minister of Sports and Youth H E Salah bin Ghanem Al Ali, along with Ambassador of Egypt to Qatar H E Amr Kamal El Din El Sherbiny.

Deputy Speaker: Opening ceremony reflected Qatar's exceptional skills

QNA — DOHA

Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council H E Dr. Hamda bint Hassan Al Sulaiti underlined that the opening ceremony of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 demonstrated clearly Qatar's exceptional organisational capabilities, and reflected the extent of Qatar's pride in its heritage and culture, and at the same time its openness to different world cultures.

In exclusive remarks to QNA, Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council extended her congratulations to Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Farther Amir H H Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the honourable government, and all the people and residents of Qatar on the occasion of the inauguration of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

Her Excellency said that today's exceptional and dazzling opening ceremony represents the start of the bigger dream that represents a source of pride for all the Qatari people. Qatar will continue to accomplish several successes under the leadership of H H the Amir and proves to the world that Qatar is great by its ambitions and achievements.

On this occasion, she praised the efforts exerted by all state institutions to make a success of this hosting, which received several international acclaims. She said that despite the slander campaigns against Qatar's hosting of the tournament, Qatar proved to the world its commitment to the promises made and gave a lesson in the adherence to values and principles, as well as confirming its place as a land of peace and love. In a similar statement to QNA, Secretary-General of the Shura Council H E Dr. Ahmed bin Nasser Al Fadala praised the dazzling and special opening ceremony of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. He said that football fans will witness more excellence as Qatar fulfils its promise to hold an exceptional World Cup.

All cheers at FIFA Fan Festival as World Cup opens

FROM PAGE 1

People were donned with flags, shawls, hats or jerseys of their country they are supporting – from Qatar, Ecuador, Iran, Tunisia, Korea, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, Ghana, Portugal, and Argentina, to name some.

On an open space, near the food and beverage section, a group of fans from Ghana started singing and dancing as they cheered on their team. Ghana team belongs to group H and their first game will be against Portugal on Thursday, November 24. You can see different groups supporting their country singing almost everywhere at the festival.

A special area at the festival is dedicated to differently abled people to watch the matches. Qatar has repeatedly stressed that this World Cup is for all, and is the most inclusive, people-focused edition of the tournament.

The FIFA Fan Festival will run all throughout the tournament, until December 18.

First Minister of Wales launches giant bucket hat installation in Fan Zone

FAZEENA SALEEM
THE PENINSULA

The bucket hat is a symbol of Welsh football, representing the team's incredible progress in the game and its fans' passion and spirit.

First Minister of Wales Mark Drakeford officially launched Wales' campaign to coincide with the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, by unveiling a giant bucket hat installation in Doha yesterday.

The launch of the installation kick started the Gŵyl Cymru Festival, a programme of more than 200 events across Cymru and the world as part of a 10-day celebration of creativity to support Wales during the team's campaign in Qatar.

The larger-than-life bucket hat is a brilliant attraction at the Welsh pavilion in the FIFA Fan Zone on the Corniche. "Back in 2016 our manager Chris Coleman challenged the squad and us as a nation to 'Dare to Dream' about what could happen at the European Championship," said Drakeford.

"No one thought we would get to the semi-final, but we did. That's what's great about football — anything can happen at the World Cup," he added.

The bucket hat is a symbol of Welsh football representing the team's incredible progress in the game and its fans' passion and spirit. For the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, the Football Association of Wales has partnered with Spirit of '58 — the brand responsible for the distinctive bucket hats — to celebrate this momentous occasion for Wales.

The Gŵyl Cymru Festival will project Wales' values and secure a legacy from Wale's first World Cup campaign in 64 years, highlighting art, culture and music.

International Women's Wales National Team player and coach, Jess Fishlock; former international Wales, Liverpool and Juventus player Ian Rush; and former sprint and hurdling athlete Colin Jackson who represented Great Britain and Wales were also present at the launch event. Football Association of Wales's CEO Noel Mooney; President Steve Williams; and Vice-President Will Lloyd Williams were also present at the event.

"It was really good to be at the launch of the bucket hat today; it's a little slice of Wales that will encourage people to investigate our nation. The support of our First Minister today was also fantastic as we aim to demonstrate the inclusive values of Wales," said Colin Jackson. A Wales Cultural Programme in Doha, which coincides with the Gwyl Cymru festival of culture taking place in Wales and around the world, features events at the UK Ambassador's Residence in Doha; Katara Cultural Village, and the UK Garden on the Corniche.



Bucket hat installation at the Welsh pavilion in the FIFA Fan Zone on Doha Corniche near the Museum of Islamic Art.

Sheikha Moza tours SDG Pavilion at Fan Festival



H H Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Education Above All Foundation and UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) advocate, met UN Secretary-General H E Antonio Guterres at the Sustainable Development Goals Pavilion in the Al Bidda FIFA Fan Festival yesterday. The meeting discussed topics of mutual interests including financing education, reaching the SDG goals, and protecting education in times of conflict. Sheikha Moza toured the site of the SDG Pavilion, including a tent designed by late architect Zaha Hadid and a sculpture garden which included various artworks related to the 17 SDG goals. The Pavilion will officially open today.



WHO, QF discuss collaboration on global health

H H Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation and Education Above All Foundation, met Director General of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus yesterday. During their meeting, they discussed nutrition of young people, mental health of displaced peoples and ongoing collaborations between the World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH) and the WHO.

Shura Council panel discusses amendments to real estate development regulations

QNA — DOHA

The Legal and Legislative Affairs Committee of the Shura Council held yesterday a meeting chaired by Chairman of the Committee H E Dr. Sultan bin Hassan Al Dosari.

The Committee discussed a draft law amending some provisions of Law No. 6 of 2014, regulating real estate development.

The meeting was attending by Director of Legislation Department at the General Secretariat of the Cabinet Abdulaziz Mubarak Al Buainain and Director of the Legal Affairs Department at the Ministry of Municipality Ahmed Yousef Al Emadi.

Sheikha Jowaher meets consorts of visiting leaders



Consort of H H the Amir H H Sheikha Jowaher bint Hamad bin Suhaim Al Thani met with consorts of Their Majesties, Highnesses and Excellencies leaders of brotherly and friendly countries at the opening ceremony of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 at Al Bayt Stadium yesterday. Her Highness exchanged views with consorts of Their Majesties, Highnesses and Excellencies on several topics, and welcomed them to Qatar, wishing them a good stay.

Australian Minister arrives

QNA — DOHA

Australian Minister for Sport H E Anika Wells arrived in Doha yesterday, on behalf of the Australian Prime Minister, to attend the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 opening ceremony.

The minister was welcomed at airport by Director of Department of Protocol at MoFA H E Ibrahim Yousif Abdullah Fakhro.

Qatar's excellence in hosting World Cup refutes all allegations: IPU President

QNA — DOHA

President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) H E Duarte Pacheco applauded the exceptional and distinguished hosting of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, affirming that this excellence in preparation and organisation refutes all allegations raised about this hosting.

In remarks to QNA on the sidelines of his attendance at Qatar 2022 opening ceremony yesterday, the IPU President said Qatar has made tremendous efforts over 12 years, and despite the fact that the organisation process was not easy, Qatar has established a wonderful and distinguished infrastructure in accordance with the highest specifications and standards. What Qatar has done in this regard is very distinctive, and completely different from the previous editions. It has prepared an integrated infrastructure for this global sporting event, and has provided modern transportation, ideal accommodation, a security and safety system, and others. Indeed, this refutes the rumours that were raised from time to time about its hosting of the World Cup, the IPU President said, stressing that Qatar has always hosted international events in a qualitative and exemplary manner.

On the opening ceremony, he said that it was completely different, adding that the ceremony "will be in our memories forever. A lots of music.. A lot of history.. A lot of new technology. Something completely different from the past. It will not be easy for the next organizer to compete with you." The IPU President praised the labour reforms implemented by Qatar to protect the rights of workers, noting that he had noticed Qatar's wonderful dealing with all residents on its land, including expatriate workers, which refutes the false information about violations of workers' rights. What is required is to continue these successes, and not pay attention to such false accusations.

Qatar has done everything in the best way, I don't understand some critics, because we didn't find these kind of criticism when we have other games. Do you believe that human rights and the workers rights were better defended there. I don't believe. So, try not be hypocritical, he added.

"Word to fans — Everyone will enjoy the country, the people, the food, the atmosphere and everyone will understand how friendly Qataris are," the IPU President stressed. Pacheco described the relations between Shura Council and IPU as "perfect", noting strong cooperation at all levels. "We organised here the 2019 assembly... Next march, we will come back, IPU with the Shura Council, to organise one meeting to see the strategy to help the least developed countries in the world. It will be a meeting organized by the United Nations, IPU and the Shura Council," he added.

KATARA HOSPITALITY

RFP Announcement

RFP No.	Subject	Fees QR.	Closing Date
KH/RFP/097-22/DMH	Upgrade of CCTV System to Comply with the Updated Local Authorities' Regulations / Requirements / Comments, complete with all associated Civil/MEP Works for Doha Movenpick Hotel	700.00	14/12/2022

CONDITIONS

- A payment of non-refundable document fees should be deposited to Katara Hospitality Bank Account No. 0013-038587-060 with Qatar National Bank.
- Bank receipt together with valid Company Commercial Registration, Computer Card, and Authorization Letter must be submitted via KH.onlinetender@katarahospitality.com only. Tender Documents will be sent electronically within 24 hours during working days from receipt of complete requirements.
- Proposal to be submitted in sealed envelopes as per the RFP Documents requirements in (HARD COPY) & (SOFT COPY on USB).
- The successful vendor is required to submit a performance bond issued by a bank operating in the State of Qatar equivalent to 10% of the contract sum and shall be valid for 90 days after the expiry of DLP.
- Offers should be valid for 120 days commencing from the closing date (as stated above).
- Katara Hospitality has the right to increase or decrease the scope of services by 20% with the same terms, conditions.
- Katara Hospitality is not bound to accept the lowest vendor or any other participant and is under no obligation to show reasons thereof.
- Proposal should be submitted not later than 12:00 noon of the closing date and must be deposit to Internal Audit's Office, located at Katara Hospitality Head Quarters and should be in sealed envelopes quoting the RFP Number and Subject.
- Offers arriving thereafter may not be considered.

REGISTER YOUR COMPANY ON OUR WEBSITE UNDER E-SOURCING TAB TO ACCESS
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LIQUIDATION

We announce that we are commencing the procedures of liquidation of European Truck Trading W.L.L, CR number 121052. Therefore, if anyone has any pending issues or payments with the above mentioned company can raise his concerns no later than 30 days from the date of this advertisement. After this date, the company will not be responsible about any pending issues or concerns raised.

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ettqatar@outlook.com

Mobile: 50931706

QATAR FUEL ADDITIVES COMPANY LIMITED

QAFAC

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

The Tender Committee of QAFAC invites qualified local suppliers to participate in the following Tender in accordance with QAFAC tendering procedures:

NO.	TENDER NO.	DESCRIPTION	COLLECTION FEE (Qrs)	TENDER BOND (Qrs)	BID CLOSING DATE
1.	QTC/111/22	Three (3) Years Contract for Provision of Catering Services at QAFAC Plant, Mesaieed	300/-	Qrs. 350,000/-	19th December 2022

Interested companies are invited to collect the above tender document as follows:

- **Collection Date :** From **Monday, 21st November, 2022** (QAFAC working days from Sunday to Thursday only)
- **Collection Time :** 07:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
- **Location :** The Gate, Bay Tower 2, 13th Floor, West Bay, QAFAC
- **Tender Fees :** As shown above, ***(Non- refundable)*** can be paid at QAFAC Doha Office
- **Validity :** Offers must be valid for 120 days from closing date.
- **Bid Bond :** Offers must include a Bid bond issued from a local bank and valid for 120 days from closing date.
- **Authorization :** Tenders will be issued to authorized company personnel with the following:
  1. Official authorization on Company Letter Head.
  2. Proper Identification.
  3. Copy of Company's Commercial Registration.



Speaker of Shura Council meets several parliamentary delegations

QNA — DOHA

Speaker of the Shura Council H E Hassan bin Abdullah Al Ghanim held a meeting yesterday with several speakers of parliamentary councils and parliamentary officials, who are currently visiting the country to attend the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 opening ceremony.

The meeting included Chairman of Shura Council of the sisterly Sultanate of Oman HE Sheikh Khalid bin Hilal Al-Mawali, Speaker of the National Council of the sisterly State of Palestine HE Rawhi Fattouh, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union HE Duarte Pacheco, Head of Parliamentary Group of the Presidential Third at the Council of the Nation (Upper House) of the sisterly Republic of Algeria HE Saed Arous, President of the France-Gulf States Friendship Group at the French Senate HE Olivier Cadic and Inter-Parliamentary Union Senior Adviser HE Mokhtar Omar.

At the onset of the meeting, HE Speaker of the Shura Council welcomed the country's guests, expressing his thanks for their participation in this global sporting event, which among its multiple objectives, seeks to foster rapprochement among peoples and deepen the bonds of fraternity and friendship.

For their part, speakers of parliamentary councils expressed their thanks to the State of Qatar- government and people- for the generous welcome, good reception and generosity, lauding the renaissance being witnessed by the State of Qatar.

They also impressed by the preparations and facilitations made on the ground to embrace the tournament, wishing the State of Qatar all success in hosting this event.

During the meeting, a range of topics related to the parliamentary action and ways to promote the parliamentary relations were discussed.



Speaker of the Shura Council H E Hassan bin Abdullah Al Ghanim with the visiting speakers of parliamentary councils and officials, yesterday.

Venezuelan Vice-President arrives in Qatar

Vice-President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela H E Delcy Rodriguez arrived in Doha yesterday to attend the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 opening ceremony. Her Excellency and the accompanying delegation were welcomed on arrival by Director of Department of Protocol at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs H E Ibrahim Yousif Abdullah Fakhro and Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the State of Qatar H E Carlos Jose Mata Figueroa.



India's Vice-President arrives in Doha

Vice-President of the Republic of India H E Jagdeep Dhankhar, arrived in Doha yesterday to attend the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 opening ceremony held yesterday. His Excellency and the accompanying delegation were welcomed upon arrival at Hamad International Airport by Minister of State H E Sheikh Fahad bin Faisal Al Thani and H E Ambassador of the Republic of India to the State of Qatar Dr. Deepak Mittal.



Al Thawadi: World Cup opening ceremony is football celebration with Arab flavour

QNA — DOHA

The first message we send to the world today is our ability to accomplish the impossible on the ground.. nothing is impossible for us.

Secretary-General of the Supreme Committee of Delivery and Legacy H E Hassan Al Thawadi underlined that the opening ceremony of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 was a football celebration of an Arab flavour on a global platform.

Al Thawadi congratulated the people of Qatar, the Arab world and the wise leadership, and believed that today represented an Arab football celebration attended by Arab fans and marked by an Arab flavour on a global platform.

"Today, we are all proud of the launch of the first World Cup in the Arab world. We witnessed the interaction of fans from all over the world, some of them wore Arab and Qatari clothes, which enriches the exchange of cultures. I believe that the great and dazzling success will be abroad through the exchange of cultures among the masses, and will be through highlighting Qatar and the Arab world in general in the most beautiful and splendid manner," he added.

"The first message we send to the world today is our ability to accomplish the impossible on the ground.. nothing is impossible for us. As for the second message, we address it to every skeptic, telling them that we have actions, not words. I believe that what the world saw today through the World Cup opening ceremony is the best proof and response to these skeptics," Al Thawadi stressed.

In conclusion, the Secretary-General of the Supreme Committee of Delivery and Legacy Hassan Al Thawadi extended thanks to all those working on the World Cup projects, wishing everyone success in the tournament.

Lebanese Acting Charge d'Affaires praises dazzling World Cup opening ceremony

QNA — DOHA

Acting Charge d'Affaires at the Embassy of the Lebanese Republic to Qatar H E Farah Berri praised the historical FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 opening ceremony, which was dazzling, legendary, and holding a humanitarian message on the unity between the east and the west.

In her statement yesterday, she stressed that the speech of Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani clearly emphasized the importance of football in bringing humanity together without discrimination, which is consistent with Qatar's political and diplomatic approach, that represents a bridge of dialogue between world nations and an honest mediator in solving crises.

She expressed all the Lebanese people's joy with this remarkable achievement, turning the dream of Farther Amir H H Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani — all Arabs' dream — into reality.

She said that the State of Qatar honoured its commitment to provide the world with a historically unprecedented World Cup edition.

She pointed out that for 28 days, Doha will be full of World Cup events and activities that promote rapprochement between world nations and interaction between different nationalities and races within the framework of the Alliance of Civilizations as humanity is a shared common among all.

She stressed that Qatar's success in this impressive opening ceremony and the wonderful organization of the events deserves all the appreciation and applause. She extended her congratulations to Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani and the State of Qatar - government and people - for this wonderful achievement that represents a source of pride for all Arabs.

Nasser Al Khater: Satisfied with World Cup preparations

QNA — DOHA

FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 CEO Nasser Al Khater expressed his pleasance that the World Cup opening ceremony came in the best way.

In his statement, Al Khater said that he has been waiting for this moment for a long time, hoping to satisfy the hopes of everyone. He extended his thanks to all the teams that worked hard to reach this moment and all officials who were behind this World Cup vision.

He added that he wishes all the best for all the World Cup teams, especially the Qatari national team, hoping the fans to have great time during their stay in Qatar and have the chance to get to know the country's cultures and traditions.

He expressed satisfaction with all the preparations made so far, hoping that the tournament would be a success and exceptional as promised.

Saudi House opens at Doha Corniche welcoming fans from across world during FIFA World Cup

THE PENINSULA — DOHA

A dedicated pavilion showcasing Saudi Arabia's rich culture and football history yesterday opened marking the start of the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

Organised by the Saudi Ministry of Sport and Saudi Arabian Football Federation (SAFF), Saudi House will celebrate the Kingdom's traditions, hospitality, and unwavering passion for the beautiful game.

Spanning the size of more than two football pitches (18,000sqm), it will welcome visitors from 12pm till 12am every day throughout the month of the FIFA World Cup in Qatar. Fans of all ages and backgrounds can enjoy unforgettable entertainment and activities, from live music featuring prominent local artists to a roster of street shows to unique immersive experiences.

The pavilion will play host to 21 different activities across 10 dedicated areas. 'The Green Pulse' takes fans through a journey of Saudi football's illustrious history, showcasing its most its most iconic moments, goals and heroes. Meanwhile, visitors from across the globe will get the chance to feast their cravings by experiencing traditional Saudi cuisine as part of the 'Cooking' area. The 'Cultural Zone' presents an opportunity for guests to experience Saudi Arabia's rich culture and diverse folklore from across five diverse regions.



A view of Saudi House.

Overlooking the Arabian Gulf and close to major attractions in Doha's West Bay, fans can also sulk in the atmosphere during FIFA World Cup's 64 matches, all of which will be live broadcast on a giant LED screen on the 'Falcon Stage'.

Commenting on the opening of Saudi House, Saudi Arabian Minister of Sport HRH Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Faisal said: "We are extremely pleased to welcome everyone to Saudi House over the course of this historic edition of the FIFA World Cup. We strongly believe in the power of football to bring people together from different backgrounds and ages, in addition to its power to promote diversity and inclusion. Saudi House presents a perfect opportunity for us to showcase our diverse culture, immense hospitality, traditions and football history to the world during the biggest show on earth."

"Thanks to our country's transformative Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia is more open to the world than ever, and we want to celebrate the first World Cup in the Middle East to the fullest and share our passion and story with fans from across all corners of the globe," he added.

Saudi fans are expected to be in full force throughout the tournament thanks to the country's close proximity to the host nation. As many as half a million Saudis and fans from the Middle East region are due to experience the 29-day tournament, with many attending to enjoy a FIFA World Cup for the very first time. Saudi House also presents a hub for fans to gather together and express their support for the Green Falcons.

مؤسسة قطر
Qatar Foundation

INVITATION TO TENDER

Tender Reference	Description	Tender Bond Value	Tender Fee	Bid Closing Date
QF/2022/PPMD-SS/31435	Provision of Certification Services on Accredited Management Systems for Qatar Foundation on Call-Off Basis for Three (3) Years	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	20 December 2022
QF/2022/PPMD-SL/31472	Supply & Installation of Complete Robotic Solution (Hardware and Software) for Qatar National Library	Not Applicable	QAR 500	22 December 2022
QF/2022/PPMD-SC/31475	Exhibition Booths for QNL at Doha Book Fair 2023	Not Applicable	QAR 500	14 December 2022

Qatar Foundation (QF) Procurement & Program Management Directorate is inviting companies to participate in the above listed public tenders.

Tender Fee : Interested bidders shall first deposit the respective non-refundable Tender Fee as mentioned above into the following Qatar Foundation bank account:

Account Name : QATAR FOUNDATION
Account Number : 0013-024171-001
Swift Code No : QNBAQAQA
IBAN : QA19 QNBA 0000 0000 0013 0241 7100 1
Bank Name : Qatar National Bank

Tender Fee Payment Dates : From 21 November 2022 until 27 November 2022 between 9:00 AM - 02:00 PM except Friday and Saturday. The tender fees should be paid to QF account before 27 November 2022, 02:00 PM. Tender documents will not be issued if fees are paid after the specified deadline.

Interested bidders shall request the tender document by providing clear copies of the following documents to Qatar Foundation's email qftenderfee@qf.org.qa via a single email.

1) Bidder's tender fee receipt clearly highlighting "QF Tender reference number" and "bidder's name".
2) Authorization letter on company's letterhead detailing the Commercial Registration number, full name, telephone, and email id of the company's focal point for all tender communications.

QF Tender Committee will verify all the above documents and issue the tender documents via email to all bidders who have fully complied with above requirements.

The commercial bid must be valid for 120 days from bid closing date.

The commercial bid must be accompanied by a bank guarantee (tender bond) issued by a local bank in Qatar and should be valid for 120 days from the bid closing date.

The successful tenderer will be required to submit a performance bond as prescribed in each of the above tender documents.

Qatar Foundation tendering qualifications, terms and conditions shall apply as stipulated in the tender document.



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6 (LG 65 INCH UHD 4K TV)
6 (LG 55 INCH UHD 4K TV)
6 (LG DISH WASHER 14)
6 (LG 500 LTR REFRIGERATOR)
6 (LG 8 KG FRONT LOAD WASHING MACHINE)
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6 (OSCAR ELECTRIC OVEN)

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عدد 6 (LG 65 INCH UHD 4K TV)
عدد 6 (LG 55 INCH UHD 4K TV)
عدد 6 (LG DISH WASHER 14)
عدد 6 (LG 500 LTR REFRIGERATOR)
عدد 6 (LG 8 KG FRONT LOAD WASHING MACHINE)
عدد 6 (OSCAR 60 X 60 CERAMIC COOKING RANGE)
عدد 6 (OSCAR ELECTRIC OVEN)

Umm Salal أم صلال
HAPPY BABY CENTER

Mesaieed مسيعيد
LG
RETAIL MART

Asian Town المدينة الآسيوية
SAUDIA DEPARTMENT STORE
KENZ DOHA HYPER MARKET

Al Sadd السد
EVENTS
ARTICLES

Muaither معيذر
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SAUDIA HYPER MARKET
SAUDIA MINI MART
NEW HAPPY BABY
KIDS TOWN
Maha Bazaar
Supermarket

Industrial Area المنطقة الصناعية
MAJLIS SHOOPING CENTER
RETAIL MART

Others مناطق أخرى
Home Centre
Bombay silk center
LG
محمد الشناوي جروب
ترندي أون لاين شوبينق
REGENCY SHOPPING COMPLEX

RETAIL MART

Al-Gharafa الغرافة
HAPPY BABY CENTER
MAJLIS SHOPPING CENETR

Al Wakrah الوكرة
FANTINO SHOES
HAPPY BABY CENTER
RETAIL MART
RETAIL MART
Dana Hypermarket

Souq Al Maamoura سوق المعمورة
RT PARCO

Doha Souq سوق الدوحة
LG

Souq Najada سوق النجادة
FANTINO/ULTIMA SHOES

Al Muntazah المنتزه
Brymax Trading Company

Msheireb مشيرب
Panda Hypermarkert
BOMBAY SILK CENTER

Najma نجمة
LG
MAJLIS SHOPPING CENETR

Al Aziziyah العزيزية
SAUDIA HYPER MARKET

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مركز السعيد التجاري
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Souq Faleh سوق فالح
محلات السعيد التجاري

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Solez
Huawei Show room
Xiaomi Show room

Al Souq السوق
عالم الازياء

Barwa Village قرية بروة
Centrepoint
Max
Brymax Trading Company
LG
RETAIL MART
Brymax Trading Company

Al-Markhiya المرخية
FANTINO SHOES
FANTINO/ULTIMA SHOES

Umm Ghuwailina أم غويلينة
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Al Rayyan الريان
Al Shaheen EST
محلات السعيد التجاري
Lifestyle
Max
FANTINO SHOES
FANTINO/ULTIMA SHOES
LG
SAUDIA HYPER MARKET

Mattar Qadem المطار القديم
Al Shaheen EST
معرض الجميل موزاييك جاليري ليفانتي كتشنز لتجارة المطابخ
Levante Kitchens
LG
KENZ MINI MART
NEW INDIAN SUPER MARKET
RT DOHA

Old Al Ghanim الغانم العتيق
مركز السعيد التجاري

Mansoura المنصورة
مركز السعيد التجاري

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Centrepoint
Max
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Steve Madden
Villeroy and Boch
Pablosky
Huawei Show room
Xiaomi Show room
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RT EZDAN

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Pan Emirates
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Levante
منزل السيراميك للتجارة
LG

Villaggio Mall مول فيلاجيو
Steve Madden

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Babyshop
Splash
Shoe Mart
Lifestyle
Max
Home Centre
Villeroy and Boch
LG
LG
RT DCC

Al Asmakh Mall الأصمخ مول
Centrepoint
Max
Home Centre

Dar Al Salam Mall دار السلام مول
Centrepoint
Max

Gulf Mall جلف مول
Centrepoint
Max
Home Centre

Al Khor Mall مول الخور
Splash
Lifestyle

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Homes R us

Hyatt Plaza حياة بلازا
Homes R us
مطعم ألا توركا

Mall of Qatar قطر مول
Homes R us

* تاريخ السحب: يوم الإثنين الموافق ٩ يناير ٢٠٢٣. المكان: مول حياة بلازا. الموعد: الساعة الحادية عشرة صباحاً.
* Raffle Draw Date: Monday, January 9, 2023. Location: Hyatt Plaza Mall. Time: 11 AM.

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Deputy PM meets Vice-President of European Commission

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani met yesterday with Vice-President of the European Commission for Promoting our European Way of Life H E Margaritis Schinas who is currently visiting the country to attend the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 opening ceremony. They discussed cooperation between Qatar and the European Union, especially in the area of fostering the partnership in security, social and cultural sectors and the latest preparations to host FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. The meeting addressed the efforts of Qatar in the field of overhauling the labour laws and the legislations enacted by Qatar to safeguard the rights of labourers. The Vice-President of the European Commission lauded the preparations made by the State of Qatar to make the major global football event a success.

M7 unveils a series of new exhibitions

THE PENINSULA — DOHA

Qatar's creative hub M7 has presented a series of new exhibitions and pop-ups which are on display during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 period.

Established under the leadership of H E Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the latest exhibitions Anassir, Home Grown, Mesra and MilanoxDoha showcased by M7 features several local artists and designers.

The epicentre for innovation and entrepreneurship in fashion, tech and design M7, aims to empower and support local designers, while inspiring the local community of all ages and backgrounds.

M7 now invites the public to discover Doha's emerging designers and visit its latest exhibitions, with free entry, throughout the duration of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, with some on display until the end of January 2023.



Oman's Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth arrives in Doha

Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth of the Sultanate of Oman H H Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham bin Tarik Al Said arrived in Doha yesterday to attend the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 opening ceremony which began later at Al Bayt Stadium. His Highness and the accompanying delegation were welcomed upon arrival at Hamad International Airport by President of Qatar Olympic Committee H E Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al Thani, Minister of State H E Sheikh Fahad bin Faisal Al Thani and Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Qatar H E Najib bin Yahya Al Balushi.

Doha is fantastic, people are friendly: Fans

SANAULLAH ATAULLAH
THE PENINSULA

Fans of FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 have described Qatar as a fantastic place.

Sharing their experiences with *The Peninsula* at FIFA Fan Festival at Al Bidda Park, the fans said that people in Qatar



Marcello Vasalli

are very friendly.

They said that international singers and artists made amazing performances at the Festival enabling fans from different nationalities and background to enjoy the moment. Fans also lauded arrangements made by local authorities to ensure the security and safety of people.

Marcello Vasalli, a fan from Sao Palo, Brazil, said: "I love FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. Doha and its people are very nice. I am happy to stay here."

He said that Qatari community is very nice and people in Qatar are very friendly. "I enjoyed the programmes held at the festival. A number of international artists made amazing performances," said Vasalli.

Omar Flores Aranda, a fan from Mexico, said that FIFA Fan Festival at Al Bidda Park was very good, safe and colourful. The festival is hosting singers and artists from all over the world enabling fans of different cultural and linguistic background to enjoy.

He said that the organisers made fantastic arrangements for fans.

"Some rules are in place for the security and safety of people which should be followed by fans."

Aranda who came from Mexico with a group of friends to enjoy the World Cup will stay for two weeks in Qatar. Amar Merhi, a fan from the US said: "I am very happy to be here in Qatar. All preparations and arrangements related to the World Cup including stadiums and events are very nice."

He said that Qatar has changed the perspective of those thinking negatively by hosting such an amazing event.

"Really FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 will be best World Cup ever. The activities at fan zone are amazing as it is hosting world famous singers and artists," said Merhi.

Khaowla Khelef, a fan from Tunisia, said the festival is offering colourful programmes for the enjoyment of fans. Speaking about security arrangements, she said that adequate measures are in place to ensure safety and security people specially families and children.



Amar Merhi

"Now after witnessing such huge preparations, we can say Qatar's World Cup will be best for sure," said Khelef.

Faras Sliti, another fan from Tunisia, said that the festival is offering amazing programmes by hosting singers from different nationalities. "Qatar made excellent preparations and arrangements for hosting the mega sporting event from all aspects. So far, I did not see any thing missing to make this World Cup a historical one," said Sliti.

NHRC deputy chairperson underlines need to raise awareness on climate change

QNA — KUWAIT

Deputy Chairman of the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) H E Dr. Mohammad Saif Al Kuwari underlined the importance of developing strategic plans to reduce gas emissions and combat climate change, in order to preserve the health and safety of individuals and communities as stated in the goals of sustainable development.

Dr. Al Kuwari added that the study prepared by Qatar's Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC) recommends raising awareness among the population to adapt to climate changes, and to protect themselves from the spread of diseases and epidemics by adopting modern means and methods of prevention.

This came during the participation of the State of Qatar in the 39th international conference held by the International Organization for Women Empowerment and Capacity Building "Tamkeen" in the State of Kuwait, in cooperation with the National Society for Child Protection and the Regional Network for Social Responsibility, under the umbrella of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

The earth temperatures, has increased by 1.2 degrees Celsius, very close to the 1.5 degrees limit adopted in the Paris Agreement, which has led to changing patterns of precipitation in unusual seasons, melting of ice in the two poles, drought and desertification, in addition to abnormal changes that caused natural disasters in many countries of the world, Said Dr. Al Kuwari.

The change in temperature can contribute to the spread of diseases through the growth of organisms that transmit pathogens by modifying the rates of their ability to infect, Dr. Al Kuwari said, adding that temperature changes can also prolong the duration of the disease transmission season, expand its geographical spread and create new strains of the microbes.

The conference aims to raise awareness of climate changes and their effects on the global system, to identify the factors causing climate change in the third millennium, to examine the repercussions of climate change on achieving sustainable development goals, and to highlight Arab government efforts in the field of combating the climate change impacts.

It also eyes urging the international community to assist developing countries with the necessary funding to face the repercussions of climate change; highlight the social, economic and environmental impacts of climate change and evaluate the role of international conferences in facing climate change. The topics on the conference agenda include the causes of climate change, international efforts in confronting climate change, and the experiences of Arab countries in facing the repercussions of climate change in addition to the role of civil society in raising awareness of the phenomenon.

Culture Minister meets First Minister of Wales

Minister of Culture H E Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad Al Thani met yesterday with First Minister of Wales in the United Kingdom H E Mark Drakeford, who is currently visiting Doha to attend the opening ceremony of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. During the meeting, aspects of joint cultural cooperation between the two countries were reviewed.





The Peninsula
Local focus, Global vision
Established in 1996

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EDITORIAL

Qatar 2022: The best edition

THE long wait for hosting world's biggest tournament is over now as the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 kicked off yesterday. The Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani announced at Al Bayt Stadium the opening of the tournament by saying "I welcome from Qatar, from an Arab country, everyone to the World Cup 2022".

In 2006, the Father Amir H H Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani had expressed his interest in hosting the FIFA World Cup. It was then when Qatar embarked on a mission to bring the FIFA World Cup for the first time to the Middle East and the Arab world and four years later the country succeeded in winning the right to host the 2022 edition, defeating bids from the USA, South Korea, Japan and Australia.

The organisers have said almost all of the 3 million tickets made available for the 64 matches have been sold as Qatar welcomes an estimated 1.5 million fans from across the globe.

The FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 presents an opportunity to convey an honourable image of the Qatari identity and culture as well as the true image of Arabs and Muslims away from distortion and stereotypes.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino has said that the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 will be the best edition in the history of the World Cup. He said that Qatar is determined to make it an exceptional tournament, which will make the world feel proud of football.

"It's the most compact World Cup with not much travelling involved. The conditions are ideal for teams and fans. It is the first time when fans coming from different countries can unite, that's what makes it unique. We have always said that Qatar will deliver the best-ever edition of the FIFA World Cup. And as you look around the country today, at the state-of-the-art stadiums, the training pitches, the metro, the wider infrastructure, everything is ready and everyone is welcome," Infantino said at a press conference.

He also spoke about the criticisms levelled against the FIFA and Qatar regarding many matters, saying these criticisms as unfair. Infantino said that many international institutions have recognised the labour rights standards in the Qatar similar to labour rights standards in Europe.

The tournament is a tremendous opportunity for the region to welcome and connect with billions of people from across the globe, showcasing its unique identity and culture and building new bridges of understanding. A key objective of the World Cup is that it serves as a catalyst for the achievement of Qatar's long-term development goals as laid out in the Qatar National Vision 2030 and the National Development Strategy 2018-2022.

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Qatar makes history as exceptional World Cup kicks off

QNA



General view during the opening ceremony of FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 at Al Bayt Stadium, Al Khor, yesterday.

The State of Qatar entered the history of football and international sports, with the start of the special edition of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 on yesterday, setting a new record for World Cup hosting, with this edition being the first for an Arab and Middle Eastern country to host this great global event.

The defining moment that Qataris yearn for is now the result of strenuous efforts made by all state institutions over the course of 12 years. Those 12 years saw a new modern country built on firm immortal roots in Arab and Islamic history embodying a legacy that esteems and cherishes ancestral customs and traditions whilst at the same time based on sustainability that will serve generations to come, and who will praise the achievements made on every aspect of life, including an event that will linger, having served as an accelerator to a vision set and implemented by officials full of patriotism and love for this country.

Qatar has now opened its arms to every football lover, welcoming all those who come to watch the World Cup. By so doing, Qatar sends a message of love and peace to all the world's peoples echoing the message that all guests will find all respect and appreciation and

The world stood on tiptoe during the moment of the official launch of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, at 6:00 pm yesterday at Al Bayt Stadium, bearing witness to the great symbolism of the chosen venue, the stadium's name (the house), and the messages that Qatar has sent to the world during the impressive ceremony that placed the country in the heart of the world.

live an exceptional historical experience in a region that has always wanted to present itself to the world. Qatar carried the torch of representing the Arab peoples with their traditions, customs, generosity, and kindness that puts the guest center of attention.

As fans flock to and national teams arrive in Qatar, it becomes evident that what International Federation of Football Associations (FIFA) President Gianni Infantino has reiterated at every opportunity is an irrefutable truth, stressing that the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 will be the absolute best and masses will have an exceptional experience. Infantino realized from the first moment that the preparations and achievements that began since the winning of the hosting bid, are capable of making this edition of the World Cup a source of pride for FIFA, Qatar, and all Arabs, given that Qatar has always emphasized the World Cup's Arab identity. Despite the discordant and hateful voices and the systematic criticism and slander that took place, faith in this edition and the reality that it will materialize on the ground was maintained, leaving the reality on the ground to speak for itself.

The world stood on tiptoe during the moment of the official launch of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, at 6:00 pm yesterday at Al Bayt Stadium, bearing witness to the great symbolism of the chosen venue, the stadium's name (the house), and the messages that Qatar sent to the world during an impressive ceremony that placed Qatar in the heart of the world. Billions of the Earth's population have watched the event on their TVs, while more than 60,000 attended the ceremony in the stadium, as well as hundreds of thousands, were followed it through giant screens all over Qatar, along with other screens in various Arab and foreign cities around the world.

Confidentiality surrounds all details of the ceremony, with FIFA officials affirming the distinction and uniqueness of what is to come. One such official is FIFA Secretary General Fatma Samoura who said that the ceremony is the most impressive in the history of the World Cup, and will be the most beautiful of all, noting that all eyes were directed towards Qatar, the country that will experience a month-long full of football events and festive celebrations, describing the World Cup as a unique opportunity for football fans around the world to come and watch the largest football event ever, especially in light of what the world went through in the past two years under because of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

The official opening of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 took palce, unfolding a unique edition of the tournament, one that is prepared on a totally different scale from its predecessors. One such unique characteristic is the fact that such a huge event is taking place on a small surface, whose sides do not exceed 75 kilometers, which means that fans will not have to travel long distances from one corner to another, nor have to make multiple accommodations and transport arrangements. Additionally, all preparations were well calculated and planned to the smallest detail, ensuring a safe and smooth flow of movement and events. Not only that, but the global vibe will be ever-present, given that all teams and matches will be nearby enabling fans to attend more than a match a day, unlike in previous tournaments, where fans only experience a single group of competitors due to distance, as in the USA 1994, South Africa 2010, Brazil 2014, and Russia 2018.

Players are the essence of the competition, and they were the first to recognize the uniqueness of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 edition, given that they will not have to lose time traveling, with everything being an hour away maximum, allowing them to rest and prepare for their next match.

The defining moment that Qataris yearn for is now the result of strenuous efforts made by all state institutions over the course of 12 years. Those 12 years saw a new modern country built on firm immortal roots in Arab and Islamic history embodying a legacy that esteems and cherishes ancestral customs and traditions.

technology. Furthermore, fans will be guaranteed to have a luxurious, comfortable, and pleasurable experience. Thus, with both players and fans take care of, it is up to footballers and teams to amaze and perfect the experience.

Yesterday was a significant day and all eyes were directed to Qatar national team in its first participation in World Cup competitions.

The interest in Al Adaam is not be as the host who will benefit from the exceptional support of its fans only, but also from a different bet represented in the question that observers will ask: will the organizational success achieved in the World Cup extend to the technical success of the Qatari team at the competitive level by securing a seat in the round of 16 and avoiding South Africa national team's experience, which remains the only host in the World Cup history that did not manage to qualify from the group stage.

For this particular matter, the officials of the Qatar national team developed a long-term preparation plan that continued for years through an essential building block represented by the youth generation that achieved success in age groups teams and to be the project of the team that will be prepared for the World Cup.

Qatar has now opened its arms to every football lover, welcoming all those who come to watch the World Cup. By so doing, Qatar sends a message of love and peace to all the world's peoples echoing the message that all guests will find all respect and appreciation and live an exceptional historical experience in a region that has always wanted to present itself to the world. Qatar carried the torch of representing the Arab peoples with their traditions, customs, generosity, and kindness that puts the guest center of attention.

Additionally, the tournament is held from late November until mid-December, which is when footballers are at the height of their performance, making this edition one of the strongest technically and competitively, according to international football experts.

Not to mention the particularity of this edition of the tournament because this is the first tournament for which a host country has built seven stadiums from scratch, with an eighth stadium Khalifa International rebuilt to be at the same standing as the rest. Therefore, footballers will compete in modern and special world-class stadiums, and fields that are designed using the latest

Hence, the new team went through several great events and it proved good faith when it was crowned as champions of the Asian continent in 2019, then it went on to appear in various arenas, including the 2019 Copa America and 2021 Gold Cup, then the European qualifiers in a legal capacity without counting the results, along with many other friendly matches.

It can be said that the Qatari national team is on high alert after that long journey, but the players and their Spanish Manager, Felix Sanchez, are aware that all the experience that the team has built up must appear in the first group competitions, despite the difficulty of the task because the other three teams in the group have a long history.

The kick-off against the Ecuador national team was of great importance because it constituted a "key" to pave the way to the second round. but Ecuador won and this opened horizons for the team. We hope the Qatar team will remain an active side in the racetrack towards reaching the second round winning the next two difficult confrontations against Senegal, champions of Africa, then the Netherlands, the world's runner-up three times.

The Manager, Felix Sanchez, emphasized that the Qatari national team is ready to compete in the World Cup after years of preparations to reach this historic moment, realizing that the task will not be easy at all, which requires its cadets to be at the top of the mental and physical presence to keep up the other teams in the group. Pointing out that each match will be dealt with separately, appreciating the advantage that the Qatari team will have when it finds support from the fans who will spare no effort to support the players and sharpen their efforts to score an honorable appearance.

Recently, most of the players have made statements that mix confidence and caution at the same time, as the stars of the Qatari national team realize that they are in front of a battlefield that has always been a dream for them since childhood, appreciating at the same time the size of the responsibility placed on them as the first generation to represent the Qatari team in the World Cup.

Beyond the Qatari national team, and as it's the case in every version of the World Cup, all observers, followers, and fans put speculation aside, especially after the launch of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 amid high hopes that the technical level would be as exceptional as the event, whether in the place of its residence or the date when it arrives when the players reach the peak of giving with the halfway point of the football season in the world, especially in the European leagues that knew historical programming for the World Cup.

Great names enter the competition as qualified teams to be crowned including a traditional candidate permanently with each tournament, as well as the Brazilian national team that sits on the throne of world football being the most crowned team in history, with five trophies and seeks the sixth. The same applies to the German national team which has four titles and the French national team, the title winners, of the last tournament of the World Cup (Russia 2018), as well as Argentina.

The European-South American conflict remains, especially after the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 is seen as an opportunity for the South American giants (Argentina and Brazil) to break Europe's dominance in the title since 2006 when Italy was crowned, and then Spain won the cup in South Africa 2010. While the German national team won the title in Brazil in 2014, and finally France won the cup in Russia in 2018, and therefore the last South American title dates back to the World Cup in South Korea and Japan in 2002, which is the first World Cup to be held in Asia.



Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker meets Qatar's envoy

Speaker of the National Assembly of Kuwait H E Ahmed Al Sadoun met with Ambassador of Qatar to Kuwait H E Ali bin Abdulla Al Mahmoud. The meeting dealt with the bilateral cooperation.

Giant screen at MIA showcases Qatar's best attractions

QNA — DOHA

Qatar Museums (QM) is showcasing the best of Qatar through a giant screen installed on the grounds of the Museum of Islamic Art.

The screen, called The Skyline, is located at one of Doha's busiest intersections and is Qatar's largest digital screen, providing a unique opportunity to promote events and activities taking place across the city.

Ahmad Musa Al Namla, CEO of Qatar Museums, said: "With so many events taking place alongside a major sporting event, FIFA world Cup Qatar 2022, we can now showcase to all residents and visitors the best of what Qatar has to offer through The Skyline screen."

QU President considers World Cup a turning point in Qatar's contemporary history

QNA — DOHA

President of Qatar University (QU) Dr. Hassan bin Rashid Al Derham, affirmed that the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 represents an important and watershed milestone in the contemporary history of the State of Qatar and the history of the entire region, stressing the importance of taking advantage of this global event to mobilise energies to continue creating success and excellence and moving forward towards the future.

He said in a statement to QNA that the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 will not be just a passing event, but will be an important milestone between two phases of our contemporary history at the level of the country and the entire Arab region, whether in terms of the legacy that it will leave for our future generations, or in terms of human, economic, environmental, knowledge and infrastructure development for the whole country.

He added that the fair contemplator understands how the State of Qatar has become



QU President Dr. Hassan bin Rashid Al Derham

today, and how it will be in the future, as this championship opened doors and horizons that would not have been opened without it and prompted us to take advantage of time in a way that no one has done in this way before, and it is an opportunity for us as well.

He praised the efforts made by all state institutions to prepare for this global football event, referring in this context to the role of Qatar University, which supported the efforts of all parties before the tournament, to make it as if it were one workshop, supporting each other, and providing all experiences and capabilities in preparation for this event.

The President of Qatar University pointed out that this global sporting event coincided with the country's celebrations of the National Day, on December 18, stressing that this requires to be one hand and one man's heart, in light of a systematic attack that continues from time to time, malicious propaganda statements are issued targeting Qatar and questioning its capabilities to make this event a success, disguised behind multiple different slogans and based on crude double standards.

QU President concluded that the best answer to these campaigns is to present a unique edition of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 that the world has not witnessed before in the history of the tournament, and Qatar will not be satisfied with anything but success and distinction, nor will it be stopped by malicious statements or invitations, but rather will increase its determination to move forward towards a bright future.

QM unveils Dadu Gardens, a signature feature of Children's Museum of Qatar

THE PENINSULA — DOHA

Qatar Museums yesterday unveiled Dadu Gardens, a signature feature of Dadu, Children's Museum of Qatar. Dadu Gardens, open to the public from November 21, is dedicated to delivering creative and educational activities to members of the community.

The Promise, a public art installation by renowned US-based artist KAWS, has been at Dadu Gardens to mark its official opening. Ministers in attendance at the Dadu Gardens unveiling included Minister of Public Health H E Dr. Hanan bint Muhammad Al Kuwari; Minister of Education and Higher Education H E Buthaina bint Ali Al Jabr Al Nuaimi and Minister of Social Development and Family, H E Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser Al Misnad.

Dr. Mohamed Al Sada, President of the Dadu Advisory Committee, said: "Today marks a momentous occasion as we unveil Dadu Gardens — an enriching space for children and families in Qatar to learn and thrive. Dadu Gardens is the first phase of the Dadu, Children's Museum of Qatar and a place where children can learn about sustainability, the green economy, healthy habits and the environment. We extend gratitude to the founding family members for their generous contributions. The donor model on which the Dadu, Children's Museum of Qatar is based, means that the private sector and members of the community are able to actively contribute to the future success of Qatar and its people."

Representatives of the Dadu Founding Family — donors of QR3.65m or more to the project — were in attendance during the opening ceremony of Dadu Gardens. The Dadu Founding Family members currently include Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Baladna, Baladiya, ConocoPhillips, DAAM, Eni, ExxonMobil, IntesaSanPaolo, Ooredoo, Shell and SLB.

Throughout the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, Dadu Gardens invites children and their families to participate in a series of activations centred on the theme of nature and environment, with Dadu, Children's Museum of Qatar, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, 321 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum and the National Museum of Qatar coming together to deliver vibrant cultural programming to engage and educate the local community and visitors to Qatar.

Dadu Gardens showcases Qatar Museums' commitment towards sustainability and is located on grounds that includes programming and event spaces, water features and diverse landscapes, an amphitheatre, playgrounds, and picnic areas. The community space comprises an outdoor kitchen, community garden and permaculture garden with different types of edible landscapes including an herb garden, vegetable crops and fruit trees.

As the first-of-its-kind publicly funded national entity in Qatar, the Dadu, Children's Museum of Qatar aims to make the local community feel empowered through its collective contributions towards enriching the cultural, environmental and social ecosystems in the country.

Katara's diverse activities attracting worldwide audience

FROM PAGE 1

The festival includes 50 pavilions, including exhibitions of marine heritage collectibles and others for crafts and handicrafts known as 43 handicrafts, and ship building workshops from nine countries: Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Iraq, Yemen, India, Turkey and Tanzania.

The pavilions at the festival display ancient crafts of sailors, craft of diving for pearls, the tawasha, the caliphate, and everything related to the manufacture of ships and boats, to fishing tools. In addition to displaying diving equipment, pearl trade, and all the needs of the Nawakhas and Yazwa on their trips and travels for fishing, diving and trade.

Also participating at the Katara Traditional Dhow Festival are a number of heritage museums, such as: "The Museum of the Late Jassim Al Mannai, the Abdul Aziz Al Buhashem Al Sayed Museum, and the Issa Al Mulla Museum."

Meanwhile, on the Ibn Al Reeb Cultural street, Katara Handicrafts Exhibition also attracted public interest in collecting souvenirs and handicrafts. The exhibition displays products by artisans from Qatar and the Arab countries. It also has



A view of World Cup celebrations at Katara.

handicrafts such as Sadu, hand embroidery, traditional clothes, leather works, art paintings, sand painting, as well as traditional paintings.

The Tunisian Cultural Days will also be continuing its activities until December 18.

As part of Katara's activities accompanying the World Cup, the Abdullah Bin Zaid Center of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs held an advocacy film with virtual reality cameras in a theatre opposite the Postage Stamp Museum. It shows the eras of pre-Islamic era, before the light of Islam, and mentions a part of the history of the Prophet's mission. The duration of the film is about seven minutes, and everyone can enjoy watching it.

Visitors also watched a special military show presented by the Military Parades Center and the Qatar Armed Forces Music Brigade on the waterfront of Katara.

The Katara Cultural Village also recorded the presence of a large audience that came to watch the opening ceremony and the opening match of FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 on two large screens - the first set up near the sports club, and the in front of the Sukkar Pasha restaurant.

Prof Dr. Khalid bin Ibrahim Al Sulaiti, Director-General of the Cultural Village Foundation, Katara, received on Saturday, H E Alfredo Porreiro Vega, Vice-President of the Republic of Ecuador, who accompanied him on a tour of Katara's activities accompanying the World Cup. The Vice-President of Ecuador praised the diversity of events and praised the Katara Traditional Dhow Festival and its various pavilions showcasing the Qatari and Gulf maritime heritage.

HBKU's QBRI tackles genome-related complexities in triple negative breast cancer

THE PENINSULA — DOHA

Qatar Biomedical Research Institute (QBRI), part of Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), recently published papers in two prestigious scientific journals identifying research findings on gene regulation in human cancers and a novel tumour classification method that may lead to tailored treatment for triple negative breast cancer.

One of the most astonishing findings of recent genomic research is that only 2% of the human genome encodes functional proteins, an essential component of the work done by living cells. The function of the remaining, vast majority of the genome — so-called "dark matter" or "junk DNA" — remains to be unravelled. This data is puzzling, given that approximately 75% of the genome can be active in one cell at any time.

"The emerging findings have revealed the transcription (or copying) of the vast majority of our DNA to RNA, without it being translated into functional proteins (called non-coding



Dr. Nehad Alajez

RNAs). However, having worked in the area of non-coding RNAs for more than 15 years, we now know more than ever about their regulatory role in different cell functions and their importance in driving the formation of tumours (tumourigenesis)," explained Dr. Nehad Alajez, Senior Scientist at QBRI's Translational Cancer and Immunity Center (TCIC).

In a paper published in the prestigious Seminars in Cancer Biology by Elsevier, Dr. Alajez and his team highlight the crucial role of long non-coding RNAs (lncRNAs) in regulating the genome through their interactions with RNA-binding proteins (RBPs). The paper covers various aspects of the interplay between lncRNAs and RBPs in the context of human cancers.

In breast cancer, a major problem accounting for the majority of cancer-related deaths in women, is the heterogeneous nature of the disease. While the classification of breast cancer into three types, HR-positive, HER2 positive, and triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC), has helped provide tailored treatment for patients in each subtype, tumour heterogeneity (variations of cancer cell types within the same tumour) and the differences in how patients respond to therapy remain a major clinical challenge.

Thinking differently is the key to success, according to Dr. Alajez, who brings strong expertise in transcriptome analysis, non-coding RNAs, and biomarker discovery to QBRI's TCIC in their current focus on translational oncology and precision medicine research.

Al Rekayat Fort documents Qatar's history and civilisation

QNA DOHA

Qatar's historical and archaeological monuments are a source of inspiration and pride to all those in Qatar, especially the younger generations, as the monuments carry the memory of those before us.

Al Rekayat Fort is located in Al Shamal city, 110km away from central Doha. The Fort is a crucial monument to Qatar and its people and worth visiting as one of the most distinct tourist destinations for visitors and fans of the World Cup.

According to historical sources, the history of the Fort dates back to the period between the 17th and 19th centuries. The unique cultural architectural style of Al Rekayat Fort, which means 'the well' in Arabic, paved the way for its historical integration into the local environment in Qatar, making it one of the oldest and most crucial desert forts in Qatar.

It is believed that the Fort was built to protect the water source of the area, as there is a freshwater well inside the fort. Moreover, remains of a village surround the area of the fort. It showcases three rectangular towers and a cylindrical one, and around the three sides (north, east, and west) of the central courtyard, there are several room. As for the fourth "southwest tower," it sits in the form of a three-quarter circle. The main entrance to the fort is located within the southern wall, with an abundance of rooms along the three northern, eastern and western walls. However, in the southwestern corner of the yard, there is a staircase that leads to the upper level of the southwestern tower.

Qatar Museums restored the



A view of Al Rekayat Fort.

historical fortress, making it one of three Qatari heritage sites that joined ISESCOs List of Heritage in the Islamic World during the ninth meeting of the Heritage Committee of ISESCO in June 2021. Other than Al Rekayat Fort, the list includes Barzan Towers and Al Khulaifi House.

The restoration of Al Rekayat Fort took about a year from October 2020 to September 2021. The restoration encompassed outdoor lighting, using clean environmentally friendly solar energy. The pedestrian paths are paved with pebbles to show a clear pattern of movement for visitors, as well as a safety precaution during rain. Additionally, the outdoor prayer hall and reception room (the Majlis) were restored.

In its restoration of Al Rekayat Fort, Qatar Museums adopted a special style that goes well with its original design and respect the previous restoration project from 1988, as it became an undeniable part of the fort's history. A mobile service building outside the Fort was constructed to meet the requirements of visitors. And the original cultural materials were used in the current restoration, but with a more modern approach.

The roof of the Fort was restored according to the local Qatari building style, using the same ways and supplies that were used in history such as "Dinjel, Basjil, and Manghrur".

The original plaster used in the past was conserved as much as possible and the damaged plaster was replaced with a newer plaster made of the same historical materials (plaster and mud). Furthermore, the floor work was done and doors that used the same previous design in terms of shape and materials were installed.

Türkiye hits militant hideouts in northern Iraq and Syria

ANADOLU — ANKARA

Türkiye "successfully" destroyed terrorists' hideouts during a new air operation in northern regions of Iraq and Syria, the nation's defence minister said yesterday.

"Terrorists' shelters, bunkers, caves, tunnels, and warehouses were successfully destroyed. We followed them closely. The so-called headquarters of the terrorist organisation were also hit and destroyed," Hulusi Akar said in his address to the operations centre from the capital Ankara.

His remarks came after Türkiye early yesterday carried out Operation Claw-Sword, a new cross-border offensive against the PKK/KCK/YPG terrorist group in northern Iraq and Syria. The Defence Ministry said the operation was carried out in line with the right of self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan ordered the start of the air operation on his return from G20 summit in Indonesia.

"Only terrorists and hideouts belonging to them were targeted... The claw of our Turkish Armed Forces was once again on the terrorists," Akar said. Türkiye will continue to call to account those who target the country's security, he vowed.

The operation follows last Sunday's terror attack on Istanbul's crowded Istiklal Avenue that killed at least six and left 81 injured. "Our aim is to ensure the security of our 85 million citizens and our borders, and to respond to any treacherous attack on our country," Akar stressed. In its more than 35-year terror campaign against Türkiye, the PKK — listed as a terrorist organisation by Türkiye, the US and the EU — has been responsible for the deaths of more than 40,000 people, including women, children and infants. The YPG is the terror group's Syrian offshoot.

Vice-President Fuat Oktay said Turkish Armed Forces called the terrorists to account.



Turkish Defence Minister Hulusi Akar (centre) oversees an air operation in northern regions of Iraq and Syria at the Turkish Air Force Operations Centre in Ankara yesterday. (AFP)

"We will continue to make traitors pay the price," Oktay said on Twitter.

Presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin said Türkiye has the full sovereign right to determine and eliminate any terrorist threat wherever it may come from. "Türkiye conducts its anti-terror operations in line with international law and will continue to do so with or without the support of its allies," Kalin said on Twitter.

Separately, Communication Director Fahrettin Altun reiterated that terrorists' targets were "successfully" destroyed at the operation.

"We will continue to defeat the efforts of terrorism and its sponsors to destabilize Türkiye, and to destroy terrorism at its source," Altun said on Twitter.

Meanwhile, the Turkish presidency shared photos of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan ordering the start of the air operation on his return from G20 summit in Indonesia.

COP27 summit strikes historic deal to fund climate damages

AFP — SHARM EL SHEIKH

A fraught UN climate summit wrapped up yesterday with a landmark deal on funding to help vulnerable countries cope with devastating impacts of global warming — but also anger over a failure to push further ambition on cutting emissions.

The two-week talks in Egypt's Red Sea resort of Sharm El Sheikh, which at times appeared to teeter on the brink of collapse, delivered a major breakthrough on a fund for climate "loss and damage".

Pakistani climate minister Sherry Rehman said COP27 "responded to the voices of the vulnerable, the damaged and the lost of the whole world".

"We have struggled for 30 years on this path, and today in Sharm El Sheikh this journey has achieved its first positive milestone," she told the summit.

Tired delegates applauded when the loss and damage fund was adopted as the sun came up Sunday following almost two extra days of negotiations that went round-the-clock.



Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shukri (centre) speaks during the closing session of the COP27 climate conference in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, yesterday. (AFP)

But jubilation over that achievement was countered by stern warnings.

UN chief Antonio Guterres said the UN climate talks had "taken an important step towards justice" with the loss and damage fund, but fell short in pushing for the urgent carbon-cutting needed to tackle global warming.

"Our planet is still in the emergency room," Guterres said. "We need to drastically reduce emissions now and this is an issue this COP did not address."

A final COP27 statement covering the broad array of the world's efforts to grapple with a warming planet held the line on the aspirational goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial levels.

It also included language on renewable energy for the first time, while reiterating previous calls to accelerate "efforts towards the phasedown of unabated coal power and phase-out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies".

But that failed to go much further than a similar decision from last year's COP26 meeting in Glasgow on key issues around cutting planet-heating pollution. European Commission Vice President Frans Timmermans said the EU was "disappointed", adding that more than 80 nations had backed a stronger emissions pledge. "What we have in front of us is not enough of a step forward for people and planet," he said. "It doesn't bring enough added efforts from major emitters to increase and accelerate their emission cuts," said Timmermans, who 24 hours earlier had threatened to walk out of the talks rather than getting a "bad result".

Britain's Alok Sharma, who chaired COP26 in Glasgow, said a passage on energy had been "weakened, in the final minutes". Germany Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said she was frustrated that the emissions cut and fossil fuel phase-out were "stonewalled by a number of large emitters and oil producers".

Criticised by some delegations for a lack of transparency during negotiations, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry, the COP27 chair, said any missteps were "certainly not intentional". "I believe I succeeded in avoiding that any of the parties were to backslide," he said. The deal on loss and damage gathered critical momentum during the talks.

Developing nations relentlessly pushed for the fund, finally succeeding in getting the backing of wealthy polluters long fearful of open-ended liability.

IN BRIEF

Bahrain elects more women in parliament vote

DUBAI: Bahrain has elected a record eight women and many first-time lawmakers to its 40-seat parliament, according to results announced yesterday of this week's polls held without opposition candidates.

The official Bahrain News Agency published the list of 34 candidates who won seats in the second round of parliamentary elections on Saturday, adding to six confirmed after a first round on November 12.

More than 330 candidates, including a record 73 women, ran for a seat on the council of representatives — the lower house of parliament that advises King Hamad, who has ruled since his father died in March 1999. Six women have served in the outgoing chamber.

Bahrain has about 350,000 registered voters out of a population of 1.4 million.

Turnout in the first round was 73 percent, authorities said, but no figures have been released for the second round.

The second round of voting coincided with the Manama Dialogue conference, which brought top diplomats from across the world to the capital from Friday until Sunday. — ***AFP***

12 dead as Egypt bus collides with truck: Ministry

CAIRO: Twelve people died yesterday when their bus collided with a truck near the resort city of Hurghada in eastern Egypt, the health ministry said. In a statement, it said "12 people died and 30 others were wounded and taken to nearby hospitals".

A court official told AFP that prosecutors had opened an inquiry into the accident on the road between Hurghada and Ras Gharib, along the Red Sea coast.

The crash happened just days after 20 people were killed when their minibus flipped and plunged into a canal. The country, with 104 million inhabitants, saw 7,000 deaths in traffic accidents last year. — ***AFP***

Equatorial Guinea votes with veteran ruler set for sixth term

AFP — MALABO

Equatorial Guinea went to the polls yesterday, with President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo all-but certain of winning a record sixth term in a country with next to no opposition.

Obiang, 80, has been in power for more than 43 years — the longest of any head of state alive today, monarchs excepted. Voting is obligatory in the small West African country.

"Voting is going well. Everything is normal," fridge repair man Norberto Ondo, 53, told AFP at a polling station in the Semu district of the capital, Malabo.

"I expect this election to bring us prosperity." "We have peace," Jose Serafin Obiang Sima, a nurse in his 30s, told AFP. He said Equatorial Guinea was the only country in the region "where young people prosper".

The re-election of Obiang, who seized power in a coup in 1979, seems virtually assured in one of the most authoritarian and closed states in the world. Running against him is Andres Esono Ondo — from the only tolerated opposition party, the Convergence for Social Democracy — and Buenaventura Monsuy Asumu of the Social Democratic Coalition Party, a historic ally of Obiang's ruling party. Asumu, an ex-minister is seen by the opposition as a "dummy candidate" without a chance.

Ondo has called the regime a "dictatorship" and predicted "massive fraud" during Sunday's elections for the presidency, the parliament and local councils.

"The government governs solely for the benefit of the Obiang family," he said recently.

The discovery of off-shore oil in the mid-nineties turned Equatorial Guinea into Africa's third richest country in terms of per-capita income.

But wealth is concentrated in just a few hands and four-fifths of the population of 1.4 million live below the poverty line according to the latest available World Bank figures.

In the run-up to the vote, Malabo was plastered with posters of Obiang and the PDGE, the only legal political movement until 1991. State media all but ignored the other candidates.

The capital was under tight security yesterday and streets were deserted except for near polling stations. The authorities banned sales of alcohol and the movement of all but officially accredited vehicles.



Voters queue at a polling station during Equatorial Guinea's presidential, legislative and municipal elections in Bisila, Malabo, yesterday. (AFP)

Obiang voted in central Malabo around midday. His vehicle was surrounded by heavily armed soldiers, Israeli bodyguards and a personal guard composed of suited members of his own clan. As in every election year, security forces have stepped up arrests. State media justified the crackdown as a bid to counter a "foiled plot" by the opposition to carry out attacks in Malabo and the economic capital, Bata.

In September, security forces stormed the home of one of Obiang's main opponents, Gabriel Nse Obiang Obono.

Four activists and a policeman died, according to the government. Dozens were injured and more than 150 were arrested, including Obono.

Leading rights activist Joaquin Elo Ayeto told AFP the incident "discredited" the electoral process.

"The ruling party needs an 'opposition' to hold sham elections," he said.

Results are not expected until Monday at the earliest.

Fraud allegations have plagued past polls. Obiang is regularly re-elected with more than 93 percent of the vote. In 2016, the PDGE won 99 of the 100 seats in the lower house of parliament and all 70 seats in the senate.

French-speaking bloc examines unrest in Africa

AFP — DJERBA, TUNISIA

Facing calls to do more to resolve global crises, the world's French-speaking leaders met in Tunisia yesterday to discuss growing instability and popular discontent in Francophone Africa.

But tensions crept into the International Organisation of Francophonie (IOF) conference itself when the Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Jean-Michel Sama Lukonde, refused to pose for a photo next to Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda.

The DRC accuses Rwanda of supporting M23 rebels who have seized swathes of territory in its eastern region, displacing tens of thousands of people and igniting regional tensions.

The head of the 88-member IOF bloc, Louise Mushikiwabo, said Saturday it should strive to be a "link that can be used to prevent tensions from degenerating into conflicts".

But Senegalese civil society figure Alioune Tine said the IOF has shown itself to be "totally powerless in the face of fraudulent elections, third mandates (of African leaders) and military coups" in Mali, Guinea, Chad and Burkina Faso.

On Sunday, delegates at the conference on the island of Djerba were to also attend workshops on the youth and women's entrepreneurship before an economic forum starts. Ahead of the summit, Mushikiwabo told AFP that "the defiance that we're seeing among young people in francophone Africa comes from political disillusionment" and frustrations over daily life.

The IOF, founded in 1970, aims to promote the French language, develop economic cooperation and help mediate international conflicts.

Many African leaders have expressed dismay at the West's rapid response to the war in Ukraine, in contrast to wars in their own countries.

Still, Macron said "a declaration of all the members" had stated "a very clear position on the war launched by Russia in Ukraine." Macron also said Saturday that the IOF should reclaim its diplomatic role, and Paris later announced that it would seek to take on the organisation's rotating presidency from 2024.

Senegal's President Macky Sall and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau have also been among leaders attending the two-day gathering which ends on Sunday.

This year's conference is a diplomatic boon for Tunisian President Kais Saied, whose government has faced international criticism since a sweeping power grab last year in the only democracy to have emerged from the Arab Spring uprisings.

Macron on Saturday alluded to concerns over the country's political future, saying that "fundamental freedoms were intrinsic" to Tunisia's "democratic achievements".

Kenyan President heads to DR Congo amid peace efforts

AFP — NAIROBI

Kenyan President William Ruto was heading to Kinshasa yesterday, his office said, amid efforts to try to bring peace to the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

His visit comes on the heels of a trip by Ruto's predecessor Uhuru Kenyatta, who is mediating in the DR Congo crisis on behalf of the regional East African Community bloc.

Ruto will hold talks with Congolese counterpart Felix Tshisekedi on various issues including the security situation in eastern DRC, his office said, before heading to South Korea later Monday.

Fighting has been raging in the east as the M23 rebel group makes territorial advances, sending tens of thousands of people fleeing from their homes.

Kenya is due to host peace talks in the coming days, and has also sent troops to the DRC as part of a joint EAC peacekeeping force.

Kenyatta said on Friday that Rwandan President Paul Kagame was ready to help in efforts to press the rebels to cease fire and withdraw from captured territory.

During a visit to the east last Thursday, Kenyatta described the situation as a "humanitarian catastrophe".

Muhyiddin gains backing after Malaysia election stalemate

REUTERS — KUALA LUMPUR

Longtime opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, whose Pakatan Harapan coalition won the most number of seats in Saturday's election with 82, is also racing to win support from other groups.

Malaysia's former premier Muhyiddin Yassin secured backing from two political blocs yesterday as he sought to form a new government after a general election produced a hung parliament, but he had yet to win the required majority.

Muhyiddin, of the Perikatan Nasional coalition, said he had won support from two regional blocs based in the island of Borneo. That would boost his alliance's seat tally from 73 to 101 — still short of the required 112 majority.

"I am confident I will obtain enough support from lawmakers that will enable me to be appointed by the king as Prime Minister," he said, without saying which other parties might back him.

Longtime opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, whose Pakatan Harapan coalition won the most number of seats in Saturday's election with 82, is also racing to win support from other groups.

The inconclusive election saw Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob's Barisan Nasional alliance suffer its worst electoral defeat ever, winning just 30 of the 178 seats it ran for.

It prolongs political uncertainty in the Southeast Asian nation, which has seen three prime ministers in as many years, at a time of slowing economic growth and rising inflation.

The instability reflects a transformation in a country that has been one of the most stable for decades in a region that has had its share of military coups, violent political upheavals, and insurgencies.

Gabungan Parti Sarawak, one of the Borneo regional blocs, said it was willing to work with Muhyiddin and the incumbent Barisan alliance to form a government.

Forming a government may require the involvement of Malaysia's king, whose largely ceremonial role includes the power to appoint as prime minister a lawmaker he believes will command a majority.

Yesterday, the palace instructed the parties to each present the name of a lawmaker it thinks has majority by 2pm (0600 GMT) today.

A record number of Malaysians voted on Saturday, and they rejected Ismail's multi-ethnic Barisan coalition, led by the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) which has long been the country's dominant political force.

A key winner in the election was the Islamist PAS party in Muhyiddin's Perikatan grouping, securing the largest number of seats of any single party.

"I think what we learned here is that the country is more divided," said Asrul Hadi Abdullah Sani, deputy managing director at political risk consultancy BowerGroupAsia.

Mahathir Mohamad, 97 and Malaysia's longest-serving premier, suffered his first election defeat in 53 years, losing his seat to the Perikatan alliance.

Muhyiddin became prime minister in 2020, but his administration collapsed last year, paving the way for Barisan's return to power with Ismail at the helm.

If Anwar should become premier, it would be a remarkable transformation for a politician who, in the space of 25 years, has gone from Mahathir's heir apparent to a prisoner convicted of sodomy and now a leading opposition figure. He denies the sodomy charges, saying they were politically motivated.



Malaysia's former prime minister Muhyiddin Yassin casting his ballot at a polling station during the general election in Muar, Malaysia's Johor state, on Saturday. (AFP)

With Philippines visit Harris seeks to reset relations

REUTERS — WASHINGTON

US Vice President Kamala Harris arrived in the Philippines yesterday for talks aimed at reviving ties with the former US colony, an Asian ally that is central to US efforts to counter China's increasingly assertive policies towards Taiwan.

Harris, who will meet President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, visits the region as the Biden administration seeks to shore up relations with allies worried about growing Chinese influence in Southeast Asia and possible conflict over Taiwan, the self-governing island China regards as its own.

The Philippines is an important part of this diplomatic push. Military access to the country, just 193km from Taiwan and adjacent to the South China Sea, would greatly complicate any attempt by China to invade Taiwan, according to military analysts.

In Marcos, son and namesake of the Philippines' onetime dictator, President Joe Biden and his national security aides see a strategic and strong ally for its top foreign policy challenge - competition with China - according to administration officials.

"It makes sense to invest high-level attention to restore deepened cooperation across the board with this youthful, populous, prospering, and strategically located ally," said Daniel Russel, the top US diplomat for East Asia under former President Barack Obama and now with the Asia Society.

Earlier, Harris said she had told China's President Xi Jinping, whom she met on Saturday at the APEC summit in Thailand, that Washington did not seek confrontation with China.

"We welcome competition but we do not see conflict, we do not seek confrontation," Harris told a news conference in Bangkok before leaving for Manila.

Rebuilding ties

Her visit will be the highest-level trip to the Philippines by an administration official and marks a sharp turnaround in relations.

Marcos' predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte, frustrated Washington with a strongman approach, perceived closeness to Beijing and a bellicose tone.

With Marcos in office, the Biden administration is attempting a reset.

Biden called Marcos the night after his victory was announced, largely avoiding thorny issues, to send a congratulatory message, according to a person familiar with the call.

Biden also dispatched Harris' husband, Doug Emhoff, to Marcos' June inauguration with a personal, signed letter where he said he looked forward to welcoming Marcos to the United States, according to a US official.

The leaders are expected to discuss both Taiwan and the South China Sea as well as share notes on Marcos' Thursday meeting with Xi and Biden's with the Chinese leader on Monday.

"The US is not taking us for granted," said Manila's ambassador to Washington, Jose Manuel Romualdez. "Marcos, of course, is responding to this in a manner that shows the US that we are your friends."

In Asia, the United States faces challenges in building a coalition to deter Chinese action against Taiwan. Many countries in the region are reluctant to antagonize their giant neighbor, which is not just a military power but also a key trading partner and source of investment.

While Washington is integrated with Japan's and South Korea's militaries and economies, it faces more skepticism of its China strategy among Southeast Asia's diverse voices.

In response, the Biden administration has taken a range of steps, including hosting ASEAN leaders at the White House for the first time ever in May, and asking Congress for $800m in 2023 spending in the region.

Biden himself has visited the region, with stops in Cambodia and Indonesia.

Harris will send a pointed symbolic message to China on Tuesday when she meets members of the Philippines' coast guard in a Palawan province island city at the edge of the South China Sea.

Beijing claims some territories in the waters off Palawan and much of that sea, which is believed to contain massive oil and gas deposits.



US Vice President Kamala Harris and her husband Doug Emhoff arrive at Ninoy Aquino International Airport, in Metro Manila, Philippines, yesterday. (REUTERS)

Third Japanese minister resigns in a month in blow to PM

REUTERS — TOKYO

Japan's internal affairs minister resigned yesterday in connection with a funding scandal, becoming the third cabinet member to leave in less than a month in a severe blow to Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's already shaky support.

Kishida's approval ratings have sunk after the July assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe revealed deep and longstanding ties between ruling Liberal Democratic Party politicians and the Unification Church, a group that critics say is a cult.

Internal affairs minister Minoru Terada tendered his resignation to Kishida after media reports the premier was preparing to sack him. Kishida's office could not be reached for comment on those reports.

Terada, under fire for several funding scandals, has acknowledged that one of his support groups had submitted funding documentation ostensibly signed by a dead person.

Kishida said he had accepted Terada's resignation in order to prioritise parliamentary debate, including discussions on a second extra budget for the fiscal year ending in March.

Asked about the fact that three ministers have resigned since October 24, Kishida said he would like to apologise.

"I feel a heavy responsibility," he told reporters, adding that he planned to formally name Terada's successor early today. He is likely to nominate Takeaki Matsumoto, a former foreign minister, NHK public television said.

Terada's departure could further weaken the embattled premier, whose support ratings have remained below 30% in several recent opinion polls, a level that may make it difficult for him to carry out his political agenda.

After leading the LDP to an election victory days after Abe was gunned down on the campaign trail, Kishida had been widely expected to enjoy a "golden three years" with no national elections required until 2025.

IN BRIEF

China ships more rice, sugar and plastic bags to North Korea

BEIJING: China's exports to North Korea surged in 46.3% October from a month earlier, with foodstuffs including rice and sugar among the main items, though it shipped less COVID-related items except for rubber gloves, Chinese customs data showed yesterday.

Totalling $132.43m in October, China's exports to North Korea were 2.5 times more than a year ago. Rice, polyethylene bags, sugar, textile material and tobacco were the main exports.

Exports of milled long rice to North Korea for the month totaled 16,450 tonnes, valued at $7.3m, while for sugar they stood at nearly 8,000 tonnes, worth $4.5m.

North Korea imported 1.47 million pairs of medical rubber gloves in October, compared with 400,000 pairs in September, the data showed, though imports of other COVID-19 protection merchandise, such as facial masks and thermometers, fell.

North Korea has not confirmed how many people have caught COVID-19, apparently because it lacks the means to conduct widespread testing. -*AFP*

Indonesia caps minimum wage increase at 10 percent for 2023

JAKARTA: Indonesia announced a minimum wage increase for 2023 that was smaller than labour unions had demanded, risking protests by workers. Minimum wages across Indonesia will rise by a maximum of 10 percent next year, the Ministry of Manpower said, as it set a new formula for computing the increase. Provinces will have until November 28 and cities until December 7 to decide minimum wage levels that will come into force on January 1.

"With the adjustment of the 2023 minimum wage formula, I hope that people's purchasing power and consumption will be maintained and can increase economic growth and will eventually create jobs," Minister Ida Fauziyah said in a Saturday briefing.

The increase falls short of the labor unions' demand for as high as 25 percent increase in minimum wages. Unions had urged the government to use a previous rule that would pave way for at least 13 percent increase, and also made a case for a 25 percent jump citing double-digit food, fuel and housing inflation. The Confederation of Indonesian Trade Unions had threatened a protest march by five million workers if its demand wasn't met. -*Bloomberg*



Football frenzy in India

Football fans carry large posters of footballers to a social club in Kolkata on Saturday, ahead of the start of the Qatar 2022 World Cup football tournament. (AFP)

China reports first COVID-19 death since May

AFP — BEIJING

China reported the death of an 87-year-old man in Beijing yesterday as its first fatality from COVID-19 in six months, with cases rising despite a stringent zero-Covid policy.

The last major economy still welded to a no-tolerance policy on the virus, China has enforced snap lockdowns, mass testing and quarantines even as the rest of the world adjusts to living with COVID-19.

Municipal officials announced yesterday the 87-year-old man had died in the capital. They also said 621 new local cases had been detected in Beijing. The National Health Commission also said it had recorded more than 24,000 local infections across the nation in the previous 24 hours.

While the tallies are low compared with most other countries, the latest announcements follow a recent uptick in cases in China after months of few infections being reported.

The announcements also come after Beijing declared its most significant easing of Coronavirus measures to date on November 11. Among the steps to ease the controls was a reduction of compulsory quarantine times for international arrivals.

Days later, multiple Chinese cities cancelled mass COVID-19 tests, raising hopes of an eventual reopening. But the limited relaxation has not marked a reversal of zero-COVID-19, which has left China internationally isolated, wreaked havoc on the economy, and sparked protests in a country where dissent is routinely crushed.

Ukraine nuclear plant shelled; UN warns: 'You're playing with fire!'

REUTERS — LONDON

More than a dozen blasts shook Europe's biggest nuclear power plant on Saturday evening and yesterday, the International Atomic Energy Agency said. Moscow and Kiev both blamed the other for the shelling of the facility.

Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, which is under Russian control, was rocked by shelling yesterday, drawing condemnation from the UN nuclear watchdog which said such attacks risked a major nuclear disaster.

More than a dozen blasts shook Europe's biggest nuclear power plant on Saturday evening and yesterday, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said. Moscow and Kiev both blamed the other for the shelling of the facility.

"The news from our team yesterday and this morning is extremely disturbing," said Rafael Grossi, head of the IAEA, whose team on the ground said there had been damage to some buildings, systems and equipment at the plant.

"Explosions occurred at the site of this major nuclear power plant, which is completely unacceptable. Whoever is behind this, it must stop immediately. As I have said many times before, you're playing with fire!" Repeated shelling of the plant in southern Ukraine, which Russia took control of shortly after its February invasion, has raised concern about the potential for a grave accident just 500 km (300 miles) from the site of the world's worst nuclear accident, the 1986 Chornobyl disaster.

The Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant provided about a fifth of Ukraine's electricity before Russia's Feb. 24 invasion, and has been forced to operate on back-up generators a number of times. It has six Soviet-designed VVER-1000 V-320 water-cooled and water-moderated reactors containing Uranium 235.

The reactors are shut down but there is a risk that nuclear fuel could overheat if the power that drives the cooling systems was cut. Shelling has repeatedly cut power lines.

Both Kiev and Moscow have accused each other of attacking the plant on several occasions during the conflict and risking a nuclear accident, and they again exchanged blame yesterday.

Russia's defence ministry said Ukraine fired shells at power lines supplying the plant, while TASS reported some of the site's storage facilities had been hit by Ukrainian shelling, quoting an official from Russian nuclear power operator Rosenergoatom.

"They shelled not only yesterday, but also today, they are shelling right now," said Renat Karchaa, an adviser to Rosenergoatom's CEO, adding that any artillery attack at the site posed a threat to nuclear safety. Karchaa said the shells had been fired near a dry nuclear waste storage facility and a building that houses fresh spent nuclear fuel, but that no radioactive emissions had currently been detected, according to TASS. Ukraine's nuclear energy firm Energoatom accused the Russian military of shelling the site and said there were at least 12 hits on plant infrastructure.

It said that Russia had targeted the infrastructure necessary to restart parts of the plant in an attempt to further limit Ukraine's power supply.



A view of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in Enerhodar (Energodar), Zaporizhzhia Oblast, amid the ongoing Russian military action in Ukraine. (AFP)

France's Macron accuses Russia of 'predatory' influence in Africa

REUTERS — PARIS

President Emmanuel Macron **(pictured)** accused Russia of feeding anti-French propaganda in Africa to serve "predatory" ambitions in troubled African nations, where France has suffered military setbacks and a wider loss of influence over recent years.

Speaking on the sidelines of a summit of French-speaking nations in Tunisia, Macron was asked to respond to critics who say France exploits historic economic and political ties in its former colonies to serve its own interests.

"This perception is fed by others, it's a political project," Macron told TV5 Monde in an interview. "I'm no fool, many influencers, sometimes speaking on your programmes, are paid by the Russians. We know them," he said.

"A number of powers, who want to spread their influence in Africa, are doing this to hurt France, hurt its language, sow doubts, but above all pursue certain interests," he added.

France, the former colonial power in most of Western and central Africa, has longstanding military ties across Francophone Africa and French troops were



stationed in Mali for a decade as part of a counter-terrorism operation.

Critics describe France's operation as a failure and blame it for destabilising the region further. It has also been jockeying for influence with Russia in recent years, with the deployment of private military contractor Wagner Group in several countries, including in the Central African Republic (CAR) and in Mali.

Paris had to withdraw troops in Mali after the African country's military took power in a 2020 coup amid a breakdown of relations. The military leaders subsequently invited Wagner to help with a decade long battle against Islamist militants and cut ties with France.

Russia has said Wagner neither represents the Russian state nor is paid by it. But the EU has imposed sanctions on Wagner, accusing it of carrying out clandestine operations on the Russian government's behalf.

Last year, a United Nations report said Russian military instructors and local troops in the Central African Republic had targeted civilians with excessive force, indiscriminate killings, occupation of schools and large-scale looting. The Kremlin has said it is a lie that Russian instructors had taken part in killings or robberies in the gold and diamond-rich country of 4.7 million people.

Sunak says 'more must be done' after COP27 deal

AFP — LONDON

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak yesterday welcomed the agreement reached at the COP27 climate summit in Egypt, but warned "more must be done".

"I welcome the progress made at COP27, but there can be no time for complacency. More must be done," the leader said in a statement issued on Twitter.

"Keeping the 1.5 degrees commitment alive is vital to the future of our planet," he added.

The UN climate summit agreed on the creation of a "loss and damage" fund to help vulnerable countries.

But it failed to push ahead on further cutting emissions in order to keep alive the aspirational goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial levels.

Sunak attended the summit, but only after U-turning having provoked anger by initially refusing to attend the global event.

EU 'disappointed' with UN climate deal on emissions

AFP — SHARM EL SHEIKH

The European Union expressed disappointment yesterday with a lack of ambition on reducing emissions in the climate deal agreed at the UN's COP27 summit in Egypt.

The 27-nation bloc and other developed countries had pushed for stronger commitments to bring down emissions in order to achieve the aspirational goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial levels.

"The European Union came here to get strong language agreed and we are disappointed we didn't achieve this," European Commission Vice President Frans Timmermans told the closing session of the summit in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh.

"What we have in front of us is not enough of a step forward for people and planet," he said.

"It doesn't bring enough added efforts from major emitters to increase and accelerate their emission cuts." The EU had threatened to walk away from the talks if it did not get better commitments on emissions, but it did not block the final statement following marathon talks that ended early Sunday.

Timmermans pointed to the EU's decision to back the creation of a "loss and damage" fund at COP27 to compensate vulnerable nations hit by climate impacts -- an issue the bloc had opposed in the past over concerns about potential liability.

"We're faced with a moral dilemma, because this deal is not enough on mitigation," said Timmermans.

IN BRIEF

UK Navy takes part in Pacific exercise for first time

LONDON: British patrol ship has taken part for the first time in "Exercise Keen Sword", the regular Pacific training operation carried out by the Japanese and US navies, the UK said Saturday.

HMS Sprey joined the ten-day military workout focussed on a combined response to armed attacks "aimed at testing the readiness of participating countries", the Royal Navy said in a press release.

The exercise involved 36,000 military personnel, 30 ships and 370 aircraft, drawn mainly from Japan and the United States but with Australia, Canada and the UK also joining in.

"For the crew of HMS Spey, the opportunity to take part in Exercise Keen Sword 23 has offered countless opportunities to further develop our ability to work together and continue our great working relationship with the Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force and the many other allies and partners participating in the exercise," said Lieutenant Commander Bridget Macnae, the ship's Executive Officer.

"Keen Sword" was first held in 1985 and this year's event is the 16th such exercise.

Spey is one of two Royal Navy patrol vessels deployed on a long-term mission to India-Asia-Pacific as part of the UK's increased focus on the region. -*AFP*

Climate activists occupy Gordon Ramsay restaurant in London

LONDON: Climate change activists occupied celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay's three-star Michelin restaurant in London on Saturday evening, demanding an overhaul of the UK's food system.

Fourteen members of "Animal Rebellion" entered Restaurant Gordon Ramsay in Chelsea, southwest London, at around 6:00 pm (1800 GMT) and sat at tables reserved for guests.

They held mocked-up menus detailing the environmental costs of dishes offered in the restaurant, and left when the establishment closed a few hours later.

"This luxury restaurant epitomises the inequality we face in the UK right now, as well as denial of the severity of the Climate Crisis," the group tweeted.

"We need a dramatic shift in the UK's food system, and we all need to take responsibility for that," it added.

A spokesperson for Restaurant Gordon Ramsay said: "Everyone is entitled to their opinions and beliefs. "However, to force your way into a restaurant, disturbing hard-working staff going about their jobs and ruining the evening of guests who have waited months for their reservations is incredibly inappropriate and deeply disrespectful." Activist Lucia Alexander called for a "transition to a plant-based food system". -*AFP*



Demonstration over entry fees

People hold a banner that reads "No to the entrance ticket. Venice is a city", while demonstrating against authorities' decision to introduce ticketing and entry fees for travellers planning to visit the historic lagoon city, in Venice, Italy. (Reuters)

UK minister does not recognise report govt wants Swiss-style ties with EU

REUTERS — LONDON

British health minister Steve Barclay said yesterday he does not recognise a report that the government wants to move towards a Swiss-style relationship with the European Union.

Under new prime minister Rishi Sunak, the government will look to pursue frictionless trade with the EU in a deal modelled on Switzerland's relationship with the bloc although this would not involve a return to freedom of movement, the *Sunday Times* said. "I don't recognise this story at all," Barclay told Sky News.

"I don't support that. I want to maximise the opportunities that Brexit offers." Switzerland has negotiated access to the European single market, but in return has to accept conditions including allowing freedom movement of workers from EU countries and payments into the bloc's budget.

Simon Clarke, a former minister, was among those to criticise any suggestion that Britain could pursue a Swiss-style deal."I very much hope and believe this isn't something under consideration," he said on Twitter.

"We settled the question of leaving the European Union, definitively, in 2019."

Britain is currently locked in talks with the EU over the Northern Ireland protocol, the part of the Brexit deal that mandated checks on some goods moving to Northern Ireland from the rest of the United Kingdom due to the province's open land border with EU member Ireland.

Migrant groups decry 'witch-hunt' as Greece tightens grip

AFP — ATHENS

When dozens of Syrian asylum seekers were stranded on the Greek-Turkish border in July, lawyer Evgenia Kouniaki never imagined taking on their case would lead to her quitting her NGO in protest at perceived government pressure.

But in a country determined to reduce migration from neighbouring Turkiye, rights groups are facing increasing hostility with some campaigners stepping away from the struggle.

Kouniaki told *AFP* there was once up to ten people in Evros region helping victims of controversial "pushback" tactics allegedly used by Greek border forces to return migrants to Turkey. Athens denies their use.

"Now we are fewer and fewer," she said complaining that she has received less legal work because of her involvement in the sensitive case of the Syrian migrants.

Some 50 humanitarian workers are currently facing prosecution in Greece, following a trend in Italy which has also criminalised the provision of aid to migrants.

"Greek authorities are engaging in a witch-hunt targeting refugees, but also their defenders," sixteen rights groups said last month.

The organisations, which included prominent NGOs Refugee Support Aegean, the Greek Council for Refugees and the Greek League for Human Rights, called on the country's authorities to stop "undermining and demonising" migrant support groups.

Despite in-depth investigations by media and NGOs, alongside abundant testimony from alleged victims, Greek authorities have consistently denied pushbacks.

Greek officials have meanwhile kept up verbal attacks on asylum support groups.

"As a Greek... I will not work with NGOs that undermine the national interest," deputy migration minister Sofia Voultepsi told state TV ERT in September.

At CPAC Mexico, right tries to build home as region tacks left

REUTERS — MEXICO CITY

The meeting follows a wave of leftist electoral victories in Brazil, Chile, Colombia and elsewhere that have cast doubt on the far right's strength in Latin America.

At an upscale Mexico City hotel on Friday, several hundred right-wing activists and international allies gathered to carve an identity for Mexico's fledgling conservative movement just as governments across Latin America swing left.

The US-based Conservative Political Action Conference, which has boosted far-right leaders like Donald Trump, Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro and Hungary's Victor Orban, is holding its first offshoot event in Mexico on November 18-19.

The meeting follows a wave of leftist electoral victories in Brazil, Chile, Colombia and elsewhere that have cast doubt on the far right's strength in Latin America while also rallying it against perceived adversaries in the media, pop culture, electoral agencies and big tech.

"This is a global movement right now, and the reality is we are under complete assault," said former Trump advisor Steve Bannon in a streamed address, claiming falsely that Brazil's President-elect Lula Inacio Lula da Silva stole the country's election from President Jair Bolsonaro.

Bolsonaro's son Eduardo was scheduled to speak later. Worries about the left's return in Brazil and elsewhere in the region were front and center, followed by anger about changing gender values.

Matt Schlapp, chairman of CPAC parent group American Conservative Union, said in opening remarks that his "biggest worry" was the "march of godless communism" from Latin America to the United States.

Trump, star of CPACs past, was not present, and no Trumps appeared on the speaker lineup. Just one attendee donned a red MAGA cap.

Speakers, who included conspiracy theorists, activists and media personalities from around the world, called for new leaders to fight the spread of "socialism," "globalism" and "woke" culture in Mexico and elsewhere in the region.

"The right, the true right, has been orphaned," said Eduardo Verastegui, a Mexican soap actor who helped organize the conference.

The far right does not play an influential role in Mexico, where left-leaning President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador enjoys one of the hemisphere's highest popularity ratings.

"A new right is needed, at least here in Mexico," said Andres Burgueno, 28, who travelled from Mexico's western Sinaloa state to attend the conference.

"Right now what we see is really center-right, or centrist." On November 13, opposition groups protested Lopez Obrador's proposed reform of Mexico's electoral institute in the largest demonstration against his policies since he took office in 2018. Several CPAC speakers signaled the reform as a key concern.



Raul Tortolero, Elsa Mendez, Juan Ivan Pena and Carlos Leal attend the Conservative Political Action Conference in a hotel in Mexico City, Mexico, on Saturday. (Reuters)

Trump snubs Twitter after Musk announces reactivation of account

REUTERS — WASHINGTON

Donald Trump on Saturday said he had no interest in returning to Twitter even as a slim majority voted in favour of reinstating the former US President, who was banned from the social media service for inciting violence, in a poll organized by new owner Elon Musk.

Slightly over 15 million Twitter users voted in the poll with 51.8% voting in favour of reinstatement.

"The people have spoken. Trump will be reinstated," Musk tweeted.

Trump's Twitter account, which had over 88 million followers before he was banned on Jan. 8, 2021, began accumulating followers and had nearly 100,000 followers by 10pm ET Saturday. Some users initially reported being unable to follow the reinstated account on Saturday evening.

Trump had appeared less than keen earlier in the day.

"I don't see any reason for it," the former president said via video when asked whether he planned to return to Twitter by a panel at the Republican Jewish Coalition's annual leadership meeting.

He said he would stick with his new platform Truth Social, the app developed by his Trump Media & Technology Group (TMTG) startup, which he said had better user engagement than Twitter and was doing "phenomenally well".

Twitter did not respond to a request for comment. Trump, who on Tuesday launched a bid to regain the White House in 2024, praised Musk and said he had always liked him. But Trump also said Twitter suffered from bots, fake accounts and that the problems it faced were "incredible".

Musk first said in May he planned to reverse the ban on Trump, and the timing of any return by Trump was closely watched - and feared - by many of Twitter's advertisers.

The billionaire has since sought to reassure users and advertisers that such a decision would be made with consideration by a content moderation council composed of people with "widely diverse viewpoints" and no account reinstatements would happen before the council convened.

He also said Twitter would not reinstate any banned users until there was a "clear process for doing so." But this week, Musk reinstated comedian Kathy Griffin, who had been banned for changing her profile name to "Elon Musk" which violated his new rule against impersonation without indicating it was a parody account. There has been no new information about process or the moderation council.

A no-show by Trump could reduce concerns among major advertisers, who are already rattled by Musk's drastic reshaping of Twitter.

He has halved the workforce and severely cut the company's trust and safety team, which is responsible for preventing the spread of misinformation and harmful content. These actions and Musk's tweeting have pushed major companies to halt advertising on the site as they monitor how the platform handles hate speech.

On Saturday, Bloomberg reported Twitter could fire more employees in its sales and partnership divisions, citing unnamed sources, just days after a mass resignation of engineers.

If Trump returned to Twitter, the move would raise questions about his commitment to Truth Social, which launched on Apple's App Store in February and Google's Play Store in October. Trump has some 4.57 million followers on Truth Social.

Truth Social has been Trump's main source of direct communication with his followers since he began posting on the app regularly in May. He has used Truth Social to promote his allies, criticize opponents and defend his reputation amid legal scrutiny from state, congressional and federal investigators.

His agreement with the company, however, opens the door for Trump to engage extensively on other platforms. Trump is obligated to give Truth Social a six-hour exclusive on any post - but is free to post "political messaging, political fundraising or get-out-the vote efforts" on any site, at any time, according to a May SEC filing.



In this file illustration, the suspended Twitter account of former US President Donald Trump is displayed on a mobile phone with Trump's Truth's page shown in the background in Washington. (AFP)

IN BRIEF

Hundreds of migrants found in clandestine camp in Mexico

MEXICO CITY: Hundreds of migrants were found in a clandestine camp in southern Mexico, authorities said on Friday, after US and Mexican authorities implemented new policies aimed at stemming the illegal flow of migrants into the United States.

Members of the National Guard found 368 migrants during a patrol in a municipality of Tecpatan, in a mountainous area in the southern state of Chiapas, close to the border with Guatemala.

Mexico's National Migration Institute (INM) said the group included 217 from Guatemala, 85 from Nicaragua, 45 from Ecuador, 11 from Honduras, seven from El Salvador and three from Cuba.

The migrants were transferred to official agencies to decide their legal status, the INM said in a statement. It did not say when the operation took place.

US authorities last month had announced a plan, agreed to with Mexico, to return migrants who enter the US illegally to Mexico. Earlier this week, however, a US judge ruled unlawful the pandemic-era order, known as Title 42, used to expel migrants to Mexico.

Guatemalan authorities said on Friday that 31,315 of their citizens were repatriated this year under Title 42.

Thousands of migrants have been found camping in poor conditions elsewhere in Mexico. In Oaxaca state, about 12,000 people, largely from Venezuela, were found sleeping on wooden crates, on sidewalks, and in residents' houses and backyards. -***Reuters***

Canada sanctions Haiti former President for financing gangs

PORT-AU-PRINCE: Canada has sanctioned former Haitian President Michel Martelly and two former prime ministers for their roles in financing gangs, Canada's ambassador to Haiti said on Twitter yesterday.

In September, Haitian gangs created a humanitarian crisis by blocking a fuel terminal for nearly six weeks, halting most economic activity and triggering UN discussion of a possible foreign strike force to open the terminal.

Canada, along with the United States and United Nations, have sanctioned political leaders who allegedly financed the gangs, which according to policy makers are backed by Haitian elites.

Radio-Canada journalist Louis Blouin on Twitter wrote that the sanctions targeted Martelly, as well as former Haitian Prime Ministers Laurent Lamothe and Jean Henry Ceant.

Sebastien Carriere, Canada's ambassador to Haiti, replied on Twitter with the words "I confirm." Lamothe described the announcement as "the Fakest of Fake news," noting he has publicly sought foreign intervention to fight gangs. "Canada cannot provide once piece of evidence, because there is none," he wrote in a text message to Reuters. "This is Absurd." Reuters was unable to contact Martelly or Ceant. Police took back control of the terminal this month and fuel has started to flow again, but gang kidnappings are on the rise and armed groups continue expanding control of territory. -***Reuters***

Ecuador indigenous community rejects mining on their land

QUITO: Ecuador's Shuar Arutam indigenous people said on Friday they will not allow mining on their territory, threatening a large copper mining operation in the Andean country, after a court ruled their rights to prior consultation were violated.

Ecuador's Constitutional Court in September ruled the environmental permit granted in 2011 for the major San Carlos Panantza copper project required a consultation with the Shuar Arutam community, but this was not carried out.

Indigenous community leaders gathered in Puyo argued that the court ruling annulled the environmental license held by ExplorCobres SA, a unit of China's CRCC-Tongguan Investment.

"Companies do not have to continue granting concessions on our lands, we will not accept more entries into our territories," said community president Josefina Tunki. "We will always be ready to defend our autonomous lands." Ecuador's conservative president, Guillermo Lasso, is betting on the mining sector to boost the economy, with exports projected at $3bn this year. However, court rulings and referendums favouring local communities have hampered the plans.

The September ruling ordered the government to carry out a consultation with the Shuar people within six months, and that the country's environment ministry make a public apology for granting the environmental permit.

Nathaly Yepez, an Amazon Watch lawyer representing the communities who have waged legal battles for years, said subsequent consultations "cannot be equivalent to correcting company mistakes." Ecuador's energy and environment ministries did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The company ExplorCobres could not be reached.

The government and indigenous leaders are now working on a draft community consultation law, as part of agreements reached after indigenous-led protests shook the country last June. -***Reuters***

Top US House Republican plans special China committee

REUTERS — WASHINGTON

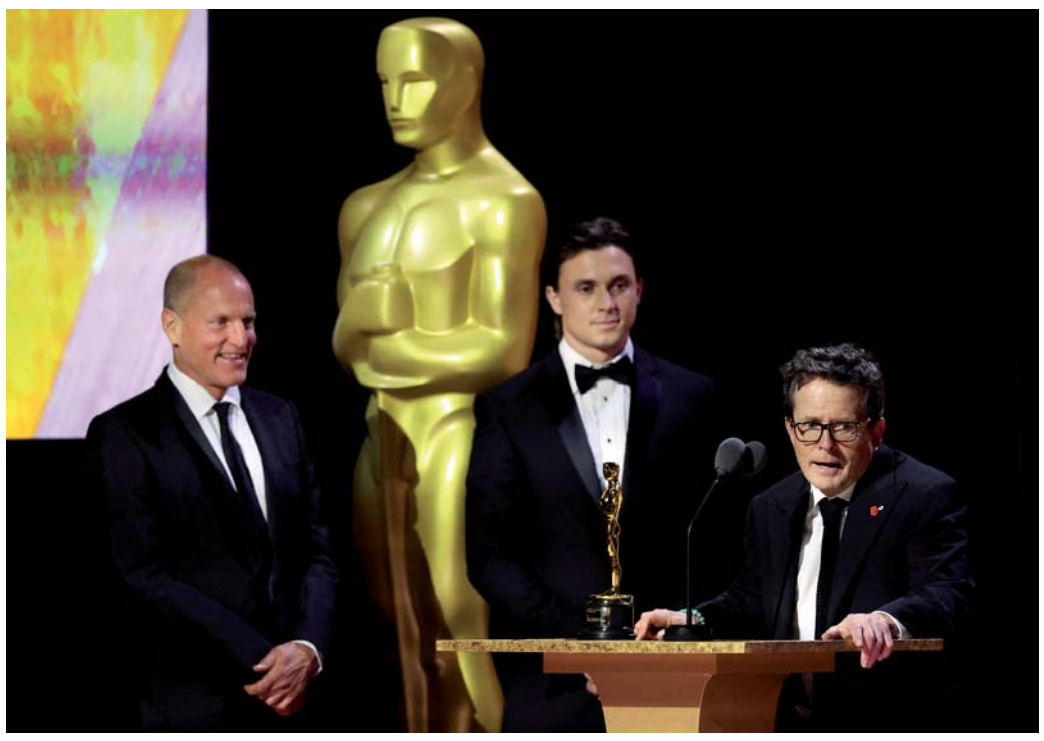
Kevin McCarthy, the Republican leader in the US House of Representatives, said yesterday he would form a select committee on China if he is elected speaker of the chamber, accusing the Biden administration of not standing up to Beijing.

"China is the No. 1 country when it comes to intellectual property theft," he told Fox News in an interview.

"We will put a stop to this and no longer allow the administration to sit back and let China do what they are doing to America." McCarthy also said he would keep his promise to oust a number of Democrats from key House committees, including Representative Adam Schiff, the chairman of the intelligence committee.

He said he would also remove Representative Eric Swalwell from the intelligence committee and Representative Ilhan Omar from the foreign affairs committee.

McCarthy is vying to become speaker after his party won a narrow House majority in the midterm elections this month.



Actor Michael J Fox receives Humanitarian Award

Actor Michael J Fox accepts the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award at the 13th Governors Awards in Los Angeles, California, US, on Saturday. (Reuters)

Colorado clubgoers stop shooter who killed five

REUTERS — COLORADO

"Heroic" clubgoers fought and stopped a gunman shortly after he opened fire inside a nightclub in Colorado Springs, killing at least five people and injuring 18 others, police said yesterday.

Police identified the suspect as Anderson Lee Aldrich, a 22-year-old man, who shot at patrons with a long rifle, a powerful weapon that can inflict devastating wounds. He was taken into police custody shortly after the shooting began and was being treated for injuries, according to officials.

Two firearms were found at the club, Colorado Springs Police Department Chief Adrian Vasquez said in a news conference yesterday. Colorado Governor Jared Polis commended the "brave individuals who blocked the gunman" in a statement released on Twitter in which he called the shooting "horrific, sickening, and devastating."

Coming soon, duelling probes in divided Washington

AFP — WASHINGTON

Republicans say they plan to use the power of being the controlling party in the House to launch a series of investigations, the first of them centring on the president's son Hunter.

While Joe Biden's administration has named a special counsel to oversee investigations of Donald Trump, Republicans due to take over the US House of Representatives have pledged their own flurry of probes of the president.

So from now until presidential and legislative voting in 2024, Americans could witness a long battle between two camps accusing each other of subverting the justice system for their own political ends.

Repeating a common Trump refrain, Republican Senator Ted Cruz of Texas, for instance, said Friday on Twitter that "Joe Biden has completely weaponised the Department of Justice to attack his political opponents." Cruz was reacting to Attorney General Merrick Garland naming a former war crimes prosecutor, Jack Smith, as special counsel to lead two probes of Trump that have been under way for months.

One is focused on the former president's efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 election and on the January 6, 2021 attack on the US Capitol by his supporters.

The other is an investigation into a cache of classified government documents seized in an FBI raid on Trump's Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida in August.

But as Trump and part of the right wing of his party denounce what they call a witch hunt, Democrats are gearing up to make the same criticism of the Republicans.

Republicans say they plan to use the power of being the controlling party in the House to launch a series of investigations, the first of them centring on the president's son Hunter.

They suspect him of engaging in shady business deals in Ukraine in China, capitalizing on his last name and his father's influence as vice president under Barack Obama from 2009 to 2017.

"There's no plans to subpoena Joe Biden. There are plans to subpoena Hunter Biden," Representative James Comer said Thursday on CNN, outlining his party's strategy.

This Kentucky lawmaker has emerged as a chief investigator of sorts for the Republicans after the November 8 midterm elections in which they won control of the House, albeit by a slim majority, but failed to take the Senate.

Comer is apparently in line to head the House Oversight Committee, the congressional panel that among things watches over the behaviour of the executive branch and, if need be, can investigate it.

But Comer made clear that not just Hunter Biden but his father will be investigated.

"This needs to be called the Biden investigation and not the Hunter Biden investigation," he said.

Origins of COVID-19

Comer also said the panel will probe the origins of the coronavirus pandemic and what role a laboratory in Wuhan, China may have had. The issue is a bone many Republicans have gnawed on for years.

Republicans have also said they plan to investigate the Biden administration's handling of incoming migration across the US border with Mexico.

While Democrats deny Hunter Biden did anything wrong, Comer gave assurances that the probe will not be a political circus.

"This isn't a dog-and-pony show. This isn't a committee where everybody's gonna scream and be outraged and try to make the witnesses look like fools," Comer said in an interview on November 8 with Politico.

One of the most outspoken lawmakers on the far right, the election denier Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, who has made remarks dismissed by critics as outlandish and racist, has said she wants a seat on the oversight committee.

Democrats are preparing a counteroffensive.

Politico reports that supporters of the party have created something called the Congressional Integrity Project, designed exclusively to respond to Republican congressional investigations.

The idea is to "investigate the investigators, expose their political motivations and the monied special interests supporting their work," the founder of the project, Kyle Herrig, a lawyer and activist, told Politico.

The main goal of the Republicans, Herrig said, is not to seek the truth but rather "to smear Joe Biden and do the political bidding of Trump."



US Attorney General Merrick Garland walks out to announce his appointment of Jack Smith as a special counsel for the investigations into the actions of former President Donald Trump, in the briefing room of the Justice Department in Washington, on Friday. (REUTERS)

Mexico's *Black Panther* star fights racism at home

AFP — MEXICO CITY

In Hollywood, he's the rising star of the sequel to *Black Panther*, the first major Black superhero movie. In his homeland Mexico, Tenoch Huerta is leading a fight against racism on the screen.

The 41-year-old aims to use his growing fame to break the tradition of Mexican actors of Indigenous origin being cast in the roles of thieves and villains.

Playing the character of Namor the Sub-Mariner in Marvel Studios' *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*, Huerta joins a small club of international Mexican stars such as Salma Hayek, Gael Garcia Bernal and Diego Luna.

The path to Hollywood was strewn with pitfalls for Huerta, who hails from a working-class suburb of Mexico City.

"Like thousands of dark-skinned people, I've been called names" such as "dirty Indian," he wrote in his new book *Orgullo Prieto* (Brown Pride).

"Mexico is a country that's racist and denies it," he added.

Huerta said it is a myth that Mexico today is a mixed-race country where skin color is unimportant.

"This is how we deny the cultural and linguistic diversity of all Indigenous nations, Afro-descendant communities, Asians," he wrote.

Huerta, who also played infamous drug trafficker Rafael Caro Quintero in the Netflix hit *Narcos: Mexico*, criticized the way of thinking "that places white, modern, Western, on a higher level."

Even before *Black Panther*, Huerta was the figurehead of "Poder Prieto" (Brown Power), a collective of actresses and actors who feel discriminated against because of their origin and their skin color.

"We're only given characters of delinquents, domestic workers, or the poor," said Christel Klitbo, 40, who is of Danish, African and Lebanese descent.

Aware of the powerful influence of the media, Huerta said he and the other group members see a "compelling need to change racist narratives and practices, which have been normalized, reproduced and perpetuated in the audiovisual industry." Huerta hopes that his appearance in *Black Panther* — which also stars Oscar winner Lupita Nyong'o, who was born in Mexico to Kenyan parents — will help their struggle.

"The perception changes if we have these dark-skinned actors, of clearly Indigenous descent, in positions of power and influence, who are kings and great warriors," he said.

While he is in favour of laws against racism, Huerta avoids commenting on the policies of Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's party, which has pledged to "restore the dignity" of Indigenous peoples.

At least one dead after Cuban migrant vessel capsizes off Florida coast

REUTERS — FLORIDA

The US Coast Guard yesterday said it has recovered the body of one person after a vessel carrying Cuban migrants capsized off Florida's Little Torch Key, adding it rescued nine people and was searching for five others.

Survivors told rescuers a total of 19 people were originally on the homemade vessel and that four people drowned immediately after it capsized, Coast Guard spokesperson Nicole Groll said.

Rough seas and winds of 30 miles per hour made an already dangerous voyage more perilous, she said.

"These vessels are too rustic, they're not going to survive this," Groll said, adding that some of the migrants were wearing life jackets, which helped ensure they could be rescued.

A severe economic downturn in Cuba has driven a massive spike in migration from the Caribbean island. Some migrants attempt to reach Florida on rickety vessels, though most fly to Central America or Mexico and reach the US border by land.

A record 220,000 Cubans were stopped at the US-Mexico border in fiscal year 2022, which ended on September 30, shattering previous records.

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