

redlogik

THE MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA STEVIE AWARDS WINNER

IMPORT | EXPORT | TRANSPORT | EQUIPMENT | WAREHOUSE | CUSTOMS CLEARANCE | WORKFORCE | INSURANCE

FOR BUSINESS INQUIRIES
+974 6685 9790

A Digital Logistics Company • ISO 9001:2015 ISO/IEC 27001:2013
www.redlogik.com



KPMG in Qatar
and MESAC
region revenue up
18.3% for
FY22

Business | 11

Unprecedented
prize money on
offer for winners
at H H The Amir
Sword Festival

Sport | 19



British International
Dental Centre



Aziziya
44606058

West Bay
44117744



DOUBLE LOCAL DATA

ON RECHARGE

Claim your Ooredoo personal offer through App

ooredoo

This promo is applicable on Hala customers only. Terms and conditions apply.



French ship's arrival marks start of Qatar's cruise season

JOELYN BALUYUT
THE PENINSULA

The 2022–2023 cruise season has started in the country with French cruise ship Le Bougainville docking at Doha Port yesterday.

Mwani Qatar made this announcement on its Twitter account, saying Le Bougainville's docking marks the beginning of Qatar's 2022–2023 cruise season.

The cruise ship — which is 131 metres long and 18 metres broad and has a capacity for 294 people, including staff members — is the first ship to dock in the said port.

Due to Qatar's hosting of the FIFA World Cup 2022, the start of the cruise season was pushed from its customary start in November. Three cruise ships from the MSC Cruises Group



- Doha Port has received 30 cruise ships since 2021–2022 season, fuelling Qatar's tourism industry.
- Since its establishment in 2015, the cruise sector has contributed to positioning Qatar as a sought-after maritime tourism destination.
- The number of ships and passengers docked at Qatar's shore has increased by more than six-fold in less than five seasons, according to Qatar Tourism.

— MSC World Europa, MSC Poesia, and MSC Opera — docked in Doha and served as floating hotels during the World Cup.

Le Bougainville is part of the cruise collection of PONANT voyages. The exploration

includes Dubai, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, Khasab in Oman, and Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates.

Since its comeback in the beginning of 2021–2022, the cruise industry has fuelled boom in Qatar's tourism

industry. At Doha Port, 30 cruise ships have docked during the said season. Belgium, Brazil, France, India, Italy, Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom are among the leading source countries of cruise ships arriving at Doha Port.

The cruise sector in the country was established in 2015, and has contributed to the country's positioning as a sought-after location for maritime tourism in the region. The expansion of the industry, according to Qatar Tourism, also helps Qatar's economy by increasing tourist spending and generating employment and business opportunities.

Overall, the cruise tourism in the country is reviving despite the challenges it faced over the last two years. It has met many milestones in its growth, including the number of ships and passengers docked at Qatar's shore increasing more than six folds in less than five seasons, according to Qatar Tourism. The country's seaports and shipping terminals are managed by Mwani Qatar. It owns and operates three commercial ports — Hamad Port,

Doha Port, and Al Ruwais Port.

Doha Port, which inaugurated its grand terminal this year, has dual terminals that can accommodate two berths and up to 12,000 people a day.

In addition to seamless immigration and customs, foreign exchange services, taxi and bus stands, a Duty-Free shop, a café, specially designed waiting areas for cruise passengers and staff, as well as other tourist information services, the more than 24,000 sqm. terminal offers travellers the same level of service and amenities as Hamad International Airport.

The Corniche, the Museum of Islamic Art, the National Museum of Qatar, Msheireb Downtown, and the famed traditional marketplace Souq Waqif are just a few of the city's most well-known tourist sites located close to Doha Port.

QNL sees record books checked out; children, women top readers in 2022

FAZEENA SALEEM
THE PENINSULA

Qatar National Library (QNL) has seen a record number of books checked out in 2022. It showed that reading habit is still strong among people, especially children and women, in the country.

Library patrons checked out 296,456 books in 2022. Of the total, 167,580 are from the children's collection.

"This year saw a return to normality for the library and with the building once again fully open to the public, our members flocked to borrow books," said the library in its latest newsletter.

The total number of books checked out this year has shown an increase of 113,313 compared to 183,143 books checked out in 2021.

This year 76,468 books were checked out from the main collection and 52,408 from the young adults' section.

Among children's books Big Nate: Genius Mode, Tremenda Vacanza a Villa Pitocca (the Italian version of the Geronimo Stilton story Welcome to Moldy Manor), and Captain Underpants and the Tyrannical Retaliation of the Turbo Toilet 2000 were among the top three books in English.

In Arabic, the most popular books were Kalimat w Sowar (Pictures and Words); Kesas Rawaha Anabi Sallalahu alaihi

● The most prolific reader checked out 201 books this year, followed by a woman who borrowed 184 books.

● In total, 296,456 books were checked out in 2022 – 167,580 from the children's collection.

Wasallam (Stories Told by the Prophet, Peace Be Upon Him); and Ahib Al Estahmam (I Like to Take a Shower).

In adults, women appear to read more than men, as 18,913 of book borrowers were women, compared to 15,316 men.

"But our most prolific reader was a man, with 201 books borrowed, compared to 184 for the top-placed woman," said the Library.

Among the adults, the top five English fiction books were Hopeless, by Colleen Hoover; All the Light We Cannot See, by Anthony Doerr; El Alquimista, the Spanish language version of Paulo Coelho's The Alchemist; the Hercule Poirot 'whodunnit' The A.B.C. Murders, by Agatha Christie; and The Song of Achilles, by Madeline Miller.

In the English non-fiction category, many readers preferred books on self-improvement. ➔P4

Minister visits schools as students return to classes



Minister of Education and Higher Education H E Buthaina bint Ali Al Jabr Al Nuaimi visiting a classroom at a government school in Al Shahaniya yesterday.

THE PENINSULA — DOHA

Minister of Education and Higher Education H E Buthaina bint Ali Al Jabr Al Nuaimi visited Al Shahaniya Model School for Boys and Al Shahaniya Preparatory Secondary School for Boys, as students returned to schools yesterday for second semester of the academic year 2022–2023.

The Minister was briefed on the educational environment of the two schools, and stressed the importance of supporting students in all academic, educational and social aspects, and continuing to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Vegetable sales surge at seasonal markets

SANAULLAH ATAULLAH
THE PENINSULA

With peak season, local farms have started providing vegetables in large quantities to seasonal vegetable markets at very competitive prices, recording remarkable surge in the sale of vegetables.

The markets, called 'Yard for Local Agricultural Produce' sold 370 tonnes of vegetables last week, according to statistics released by the Ministry of Municipality yesterday.

The vegetable markets also traded about 60 tonnes of fruits, 116 kg locally-produced honey, 373 kg dates and 200 boxes of mushrooms during the period. The five seasonal vegetable

370 tonnes of local vegetables were sold at the seasonal markets set up in Al Mazrouah, Al Khor Al Zakhira, Al Wakrah, Al Shamal, and Al Sheehaniya last week.

markets run by the Agricultural Affairs Department of the Ministry of Municipality are located in Al Mazrouah, Al Khor Al Zakhira, Al Wakrah, Al Shamal and Al Sheehaniya.

All five markets opened for 2022–23 season on November 3, operating from 7am to 2pm. Al Mazrouah, Al Khor Al Zakhira, and Al Wakrah markets work seven days a week, while Al Shamal and Al Sheehaniya markets open on weekends from Thursday to

Saturday. As the harvesting season reaches its peak time, about 40 types of vegetables are available at the markets.

A representative of a farm participating in Al Mazrouah market told *The Peninsula* yesterday that he offered 18 types of vegetables from his farm alone in the market.

"The agriculture season of 2022–23 has reached its peak in Qatar as we have started harvesting all types of vegetables for marketing," said Mohamad

Iqbal, a vendor at Al Mazrouah market.

He said that the most of the vegetable produce has started coming from the farms because of the season such as tomato, cucumber, cabbage, broccoli, eggplant, capsicum, pumpkin, zucchini, carrot and many leafy vegetables like spinach, coriander, and lettuce among others.

Speaking about the prices, Iqbal said that the prices of vegetable came down with higher supply because of the season. "Following the daily price bulletin, yesterday I sold a box of 7kg tomatoes for QR15 and a box of 6kg cucumbers for QR10 to QR15 as per the quality of the products," said Iqbal. ➔P3

'1,000 Opportunities' initiative by MoCI attracts over 700 local investors

IRFAN BUKHARI
THE PENINSULA

The '1,000 Opportunities' initiative by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) — which aims to create more opportunities for local investors — has been successful as 713 applicants have applied so far to benefit from the service.

This service gives local investors opportunities to invest in major foreign and local companies operating in Qatar.

The initiative launched by the Ministry earlier this year had received 346 applications by August 2022, while 367 more

applicants expressed their interest in the service in the last four months, according to data on the Ministry's website.

The 1,000 Opportunities opens new horizons for the private sector and enhances partnership between the public and private sector in Qatar. Some of the companies part of initiative include Match Hospitality, McDonald's, CCC Contracting, Lulu Hypermarket, Americana, Alshaya Group, Power International and General Electric.

QC Chairman Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim Al Thani said earlier at an event that the '1,000

The initiative enables people to invest in major foreign and local companies operating in Qatar.



Opportunities' initiative offers small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) the opportunity to develop their products and services and become more competitive in the Qatari market.

He said that enhancing the level of competitiveness will be advantageous to stakeholders in the private sector, allowing

them to play a larger role in Qatar's economic activity. He had called upon Qatari investors and businessmen to get acquainted with this vital initiative by visiting the Single Window website to learn about the available opportunities which include all economic sectors.

The initiative would contribute to the localization of supply chains and increase the dependence of local products.

The national initiative also contributes to raising the dependence on local products, especially in light of the State's strong interest in developing the industry sector, reducing dependence on imports, and increasing the efficiency and quality of the national products, which have become more competitive than imported products in terms of price and quality.

Highlighting the public and private partnership, an official said earlier there was no doubt

that the '1000 Opportunities' initiative was of special importance in enhancing the genuine partnership between the public and the private sector, as well as activating the State's business sectors, especially the SMEs to develop their products and services and become more competitive in the Qatari market.

This initiative contributes to providing an attractive environment by localising supply chains, increasing the efficiency of service providers, as well as encouraging, localising, and transferring knowledge to the national product.

Mol wraps up ‘Unified Gulf Inmates Week’ activities

QNA — DOHA

The Ministry of Interior concluded yesterday the four-day Unified Gulf Inmates Week which included numerous activities with the engagement of several supporting entities in the State of Qatar.

Within the framework of these events, Penal and Correctional Institutions Department (PCID) held an exhibition within the institution to highlight the various works carried out by inmates that ranged from artistic paintings to wood crafts and antiques with the participation of several concerned ministries, institutions and entities in Qatar, in addition to a number of the ministry's departments.

The events also included cultural, recreational and sporting programmes, including

The events included cultural, recreational and sporting programmes, including a lecture on the ways to discover the people with special needs and dealing with them.

a lecture on the ways to discover the people with special needs and dealing with them, along with other programmes that primarily focused on narcotics and their devastating impacts, a panel discussion on the importance of aftercare role, organizing a plethora of sports activities, individual and group games, as well as dedicating a family day to visitation and distribution of gifts and toys to the

sons and daughters of the male and female inmates.

On this occasion, the PCID inmates affairs officer Brigadier Mohamed Abdulla Al Ahmad said that the Gulf Inmates Week was intended to highlight the functions discharged by the department to rehabilitate the inmates and raise their awareness, underlining that the role of the penal institutions is not solely confined to organizing training and educational courses for the inmates during the correction and rehabilitation period, but to follow-up on the inmates after their discharge, and their integration into the business market to support them socially to be good and producer individuals.

He lauded the efforts undertaken by the Ministry of Interior represented by the penal and correctional institutions, adding that PCID exerts appreciative



Officials during the Unified Gulf Inmates Week.

efforts to upgrade the inmates' capabilities and qualify them to have an effective role in the community.

For his part, the Head of the Care and Reform Section at PCID Captain Bakhit Abdullah Al Baridi said that during the Gulf Inmates Weeks PCID was keen to highlight the works carried out by the inmates during the process of their rehabilitation and correction within the institution, and organising a variety of programmes to create good competitions among the inmates and pay tribute to the excelled inmates.

The Head of the Youth Centres Department at the Ministry of Sports and Youth Mubarak Al Dosari underscored the keenness of the Ministry of Sports and Youth to participate in the Gulf Inmates Week, pointing out that the ministry's role represented in organizing training courses would reflect positively on inmates, enhance their moral aspect, improve their future career and their return once again to life with greater morality.

ANNHRI stresses need to support Palestinians against oppression

QNA — CAIRO

Secretary General of the Doha-based Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions (ANNHRI) H E Sultan bin Hassan Al Jamali has stressed on the need to advocate for human rights issues in general, and the cause of the Palestinian Arab people in particular, and work to support them in order to lift the injustice and racial persecution practiced on them by the Israeli occupation.

He said that it is also needed to oppose colonial ideas and racial discrimination, through which immorality rules the world, enslaving peoples by new and innovative methods and tools.

This came in a speech he delivered during the “Mohamed Fayek III” foundational training course on the human rights system, and the establishment of national human rights

institutions and their roles, organised by ANNHRI in the Egyptian capital, Cairo, lasting for 3 days.

The training course introduced new members in national institutions in the international human rights system, to the basic principles and concepts of human rights, their origins and developments, as well as to international human rights law, in addition to contractual and non-contractual human rights mechanisms, and other related topics.

Al Jamali stressed ANNHRI's message of protecting human dignity, which was the message and concern of Mohamed Fayek, whose name the course bears, during his human rights career.

In his speech, he said this supreme message is the reason behind all of the networks efforts to combat violations, and promote and protect rights, noting that no form of

enslavement can be accepted, and that ANNHRI will spare no effort in defending human dignity and enhancing the self-worth and pride of individuals.

Al Jamali said that it was imperative to organize and frame the Arab Network's adoption of the cause of the Palestinian people, praising the Arab populations' position on the issue of their brethren in Palestine, their stance against the Israeli occupation, in addition to the global popular support for the Palestinian cause, evident during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

H E Al Jamali stressed that international popular support for the Palestinian cause indicates that the world is on the right path, and that people who do not despair of claiming what is theirs, will find someone to support them.

Vice-President of the Egyptian National Council for

H E Sultan bin Hassan Al Jamali said that it is also needed to oppose colonial ideas and racial discrimination, through which immorality rules the world, enslaving peoples by new and innovative methods and tools.

Human Rights (NCHR) H E Ambassador Mahmoud Karem said that the decision to organise an annual session bearing the name of Minister Mohamed Fayek is an appreciation for his efforts in the service of human rights.

Secretary General of Egyptian NCHR Ambassador H

E Fahmy Fayed affirmed that this course serves as a starting point for newly appointed staff working in Arab national institutions and civil society organizations, to advance the process of spreading the culture of human rights, and protecting and respecting human dignity in Arab countries and the world as a whole.

Mohamed Fayek said that ANNHRI has been able to perform its work efficiently without being affected by the fluctuation of political relations between some Arab countries at given moments, stemming from the understanding that political differences quickly disappear, with Arabs return to each other. Fayek also called for ANNHRI's experience to be set as a model for Arab relations, which must continue without being interrupted by fluctuations in political relations.

Qatar voices concern over banning Afghan women from working in NGOs

DOHA: Qatar has expressed its deep concern over the Afghan caretaker government's decision to ban Afghan women from working in local and foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs) until further notice, under the pretext that some female employees do not adhere to the Islamic dress code set by the government for women.

In a statement issued yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stressed the need to respect women's right to work, given that the freedom to choose and accept work is a human right recognized by international covenants and committed to by all countries of the world. Also, the State of Qatar called on the caretaker government to review its decision to enable women to work in the various jobs available to them in the organisations in a way that helps the distribution and flow of humanitarian aid to the Afghan people.

The ministry underlined the State of Qatar's position supporting all spectra of Afghan people to obtain all their rights, including the right to work. **-QNA**



THE VIEW HOSPITAL

In Affiliation With Cedars Sinai





Emergency Medicine



ICU



General Surgery



Cardiology



Neurology



Obstetrics & Gynecology



Endocrinology



Urology



Orthopedic Surgery



Internal Medicine



Ophthalmology



Otolaryngology



Pediatrics



Anesthesiology



Gastroenterology



Medical Imaging



Pulmonology



Laboratory Medicine/ Anatomical & Clinical Pathology

THE VIEW HOSPITAL IN AFFILIATION WITH Cedars-Sinai

WORLD CLASS MEDICAL CARE

RESERVATIONS AND INQUIRIES, CALL

4144 2999

www.theviewhospital.com

World Cup final match ticket a ‘valuable’ collectible

JOELYN BALUYUT
THE PENINSULA

There are collectors and then there are investors – hoping that their purchased objects will increase in value overtime. FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 memorabilia is no stranger to that, but one particular item stood above the rest – the finals match ticket.

During the course of World Cup, it’s common to see people on huge placards asking if they can have an attending fan’s physical match ticket “for collection/souvenir” purposes. When *The Peninsula* asked several of them about the rationale, they said that it was because of the worth it will have in 15 to 30 years.

For an instance, eBay, an e-commerce company is selling a 1986 World Cup full ticket Argentina v England (PSA 1.5) for a whopping \$15,000; 2018 World Cup finals ticket, France v Croatia costs \$1,000; and this

year’s finals ticket, Argentina v France, costs from \$500 to \$642.

The prices rise as the year progresses. PSA is the largest and most respected third-party authentication and grading company in the world for tickets and memorabilia.

Shree Shafi, who attended the finals and had a physical ticket match, said: “This is the best souvenir I got from the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.” He then placed it in a ticket holder, which he will keep at his home in Nepal.

“This is very special for me because I’ve been following the World Cup for years and with Qatar hosting it and watching live in-person is spectacular. I’m thinking of selling it in a few years.”

Radwa Garcia from Spain said having an actual match ticket is like physically holding a part of a memory. “When everything becomes digital and all can be seen through the



screen, it still feels good to see the real thing – not from a phone or computer. Holding the match ticket and feeling the paper is like a photograph for me, it brings memories of the stadium when I entered it, and cheered on La Albiceleste.”

The sports collectible industry is predicted to increase at a pace of 9.7 percent compound annual growth rate (CAGR), or rate of return,

between 2022 and 2031, according to a 2021 data from Nasdaq, an American stock exchange.

Meanwhile, a 2003 study titled “Collecting celebrity: The meanings and process of collecting sports memorabilia,” revealed that “collecting sports memorabilia has changed dramatically since baseball cards first appeared more than a century ago. What began as a

The sports collectible industry is predicted to increase at a pace of 9.7 percent compound annual growth rate, or rate of return, between 2022 and 2031, according to a 2021 data from Nasdaq.

marketing gimmick and later became a hobby for millions has now evolved into a potential investment strategy.”

Instead, sports memorabilia collectors have become investors who want to “buy and sell on the Internet without taking physical possession” of specially printed cards.”

This year’s World Cup saw nearly three million tickets sold, and with FIFA announcing in November that fans can get a personalised souvenir tickets which will be rolled out mid-January next year, time will tell people who will be selling their actual match tickets online.

Only those who bought the original tickets for the event may

purchase souvenir tickets.

The price per souvenir ticket is QR10 and all tickets containing within a single application number will be printed. The total price is calculated as QR10 multiplied by the number of tickets with the same application number, it explained.

Beginning at the end of February or the start of March 2023, souvenir tickets will be sent via regular mail to the address listed on the FIFA ticketing account. Souvenir tickets should arrive by the end of March or the start of April 2023 as the projected shipping period is around a month. The pricing of the souvenir tickets includes shipping charges.

NHRC calls for OIC national legislation aligned with family protection issues

QNA – JEDDAH

The National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) has called on national human rights institutions in the OIC countries to consider family protection issues as part of their duties to make national legislation cope with international human rights standards, including family affairs legislation, and to propose draft laws that ensure the realization of this objective.

This came in a working paper presented by Director of the Legal Affairs Department of the National Human Rights Committee Nasser Marzouk Sultan Al Marri, during the meetings of the 20th Regular Session of the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which was held at the IPHRC Headquarters, Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

This session was held under the title ‘Right to Family Life: Islamic and Human Rights Perspectives to Counter Challenges to the Institution of Marriage’.

The NHRC called on national human rights institutions to mobilize and back civil society organizations and educated elites, in a bid to create an effective public opinion that exercises

pressures to amend policies and legislation in favour of the family and boosting its unity and cohesion.

It also underlined the need for national human rights institutions to conduct content analysis studies of the complaints they receive pertaining to family affairs and the institution of marriage, to find out its causes and propose appropriate solutions.

The working paper recommended studying the possibility of establishing a “family human rights observatory”, to conduct a national and independent monitoring family-related conditions and problems, at top of which are domestic violence issues, the marriage institution disintegration, and other issues, in addition to monitoring and issuing public statements on violations.

It also stressed the need for the protection of family members, including women, children, people with disabilities and the elderly, to occupy an appropriate place within the strategic plans and priorities of national human rights institutions. The NHRC urged national human rights institutions to have a special interest and a distinguished role in the Arab and Islamic countries that

are suffering armed conflicts and displacement and asylum crises with the aim of protecting the refugee family from the surrounding threats that constitute a gross violation of their human rights and dignity.

Al Marri reviewed the NHRC’s accomplishments, since its inception, thanks to its roles to promote and protect human rights and the right to family life from a human rights and Islamic perspective, in addition to monitoring the challenges facing the marriage institution.

The working paper included the national legal basis for family protection, and its inclusion in the constitution and national legislation, and in international and regional human rights conventions to which the State of Qatar is a signatory.

Al Marri hailed the efforts of many agencies seeking to ensure family cohesion and protect its members in the State of Qatar, such as the Department of Family Affairs at the Ministry of Social Development and Family, the National Committee for the Affairs of Woman, Children, the Elderly and People with Disabilities, and the Protection and Social Rehabilitation Center (AMAN), among others.



Corniche Street fully opens to traffic

The Corniche Street, which was closed to traffic from November 1, 2022, for FIFA World Cup activations, is now fully open to traffic. After closure for 55 days, the road from Ras Abu Aboud intersection to Sheraton was opened, yesterday. The road was opened partially in one direction from the Sheraton intersection to Ras Abu Aboud intersection on December 19, 2022. PIC ABDUL BASIT / THE PENINSULA

Vegetable sales surge at seasonal markets

FROM PAGE 1

He added that he sold yesterday about 300 boxes of different types of vegetables.

The markets provide marketing platform for local farmers enabling them to sell their products to consumers directly without any

middlemen.

Prices of vegetables at the markets are lower compared to the daily bulletin prices because the famers receive free marketing services.

The agricultural produce displayed at the market is under strict monitoring to meet

the standards and required health conditions like the produce should be free from pesticide residues and of high quality. The vegetable samples are being taken to the laboratory of the Ministry of Public Health to ensure the quality of the produce.

QMIC’s systems, technologies played a key role in supporting Qatar 2022

THE PENINSULA – DOHA

Qatar Mobility Innovations Centre (QMIC), a leading national innovations centre focusing on using R&D to enable sustainable, smart, and safe living, has successfully worked with key local and international stakeholders to deploy a number of its home-made smart solutions and services to support realising a successful and enjoyable World Cup event.

In support of the World Cup, QMIC worked closely with organisers and multiple stakeholders to deploy and operationally support several intelligent platforms and applications.

This includes Intelligent Journey Planner for trip planning and navigation from

and to multiple vital locations in Doha during the tournament. In particular, more than 300,000 requests were made to this customised platform from November to December; Digital Parking System where it a great deal of insights into parking utilisation and real-time occupancy levels on match days and throughout the tournament; Smart Intersection Monitoring, which provided a comprehensive solution to road operators which helps in monitoring intersections and highways efficiently, complementing existing CCTV infrastructure.

Wain Mobile Platform was used by over 135,000 users during the event wherein it enabled an enjoyable fan experience in terms of optimised

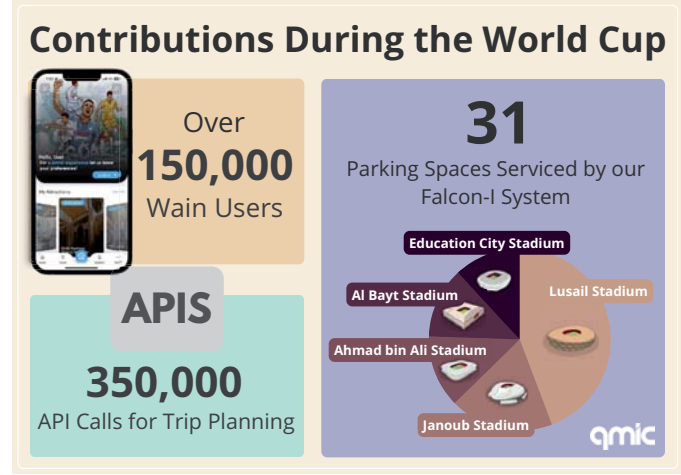
navigation, accessing real-time parking availability, providing information about, points of interest, the delivery of customised push notifications based on the user interests, and the ability to update road closures and openings in Wain in near real-time.

Traffic Dashboards and Analytics, utilising QMIC’s own intelligent mobility analytics platform (Masrak) and its extensive data collection network which collects tens of millions of data records a day, daily reports of traffic movements, trends, behaviours, and heat-maps were generated. These reports were shared with key partners and stakeholders to assess the performance and the resiliency of the Qatar Road network throughout the

tournament and take any necessary actions.

Dr. Adnan Abu Dayya, QMIC CEO & Executive Director said: “After many years of planning, R&D, and the development of scalable digital platforms and applications, we are extremely happy with our ability to deploy and operate many of these platforms in support of the World Cup. The knowledge created and local technology systems developed as part of this process are visible examples of the sustainable legacy created by the World Cup.”

“I want to sincerely thank my colleagues at QMIC who worked tirelessly before and during the tournament to ensure 100 percent availability and reliability of our digital platforms and applications. A



big thank you is also extended to local and international organisers and other stakeholders who relied on us to support their operational needs. We would also like to extend our appreciation to the tens of thousands of Wain users who benefited from the application and helped us introduce more services and content to support their needs.”

QMIC’s experience and

contributions to this global momentous tournament is an important indicator of the role that locally developed technologies can play in supporting mega events given the chance. It will continue to work closely with strategic partners and national stakeholders to ensure and enable the success of future mega events and projects in Qatar and the region.

Ooredoo drives sustainability journey with latest CSR initiative

THE PENINSULA – DOHA

Ooredoo has announced it supported The Education Above All (EAA) Foundation’s #Scoring4TheGoals campaign to promote and encourage sustainable living in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030.

Promoting the idea that sustainability is not just the responsibility of large entities and organisations, #Scoring4TheGoals was designed to leverage FIFA World Cup momentum in order to create a movement that

will encourage alternative ways to contribute to sustainability through collaborative support of the UNSDGs. Through a series of three events, Education Above All hoped to engage a variety of stakeholders and representatives from the community.

Moza Khalid Al Muhannadi, Director CSR, Sponsorship and Media at Ooredoo, said: “As we continually grow and innovate as an organisation, Ooredoo will never lose sight of our responsibilities to the communities we serve, and to the planet as a whole. By partnering with the

outstanding EAA in their #Scoring4TheGoals campaign, we are proud to be driving discussion on the issues surrounding our use of precious natural resources and habitats with the aim of ensuring a better future for us all.”

#Scoring4TheGoals was intended to raise awareness of, and highlight the importance of, several of the UNSDGs: #7, Affordable and Clean Energy; #8, Decent Work and Economic Growth; #9, Industry Innovation and Infrastructure; #11, Sustainable Cities; and #12, Responsible Consumption and

Production.

The first event – ‘Sailing 4 The Goals’ kicked off on November 24 at Katara Cultural Village, with dignitaries and environmental advocates on board. Following speeches culminating in an invitation to join the #ActNow pledge, there was a short coastal cruise on the striking Katara dhows.

‘Cycle to Recycle’ was the second event, held on December 6. It was a cycle ride through downtown Msheireb, a prime example of a sustainable city, in collaboration with UN Habitat,

Msheireb and Doha Cyclists, of whom Ooredoo is a sponsor.

The third event, the closing ceremony of the Sustainable Development Goals Pavilion at the FIFA Fan Festival at Al Bidda Park, took place on December 17. The ceremony consisted of three elements: ‘Walk to Zero’, highlighting goals of zero hunger, education for all and full immunisation; a high-level panel discussion, featuring global leaders and influencers, entitled ‘All Together #Scoring4TheGoals’; and the #Scoring4TheGoals 2030 Children and Youth Sports

Challenge. A video by Education Above All was also showcased.

Al Muhannadi concluded: “Collectively, we have a responsibility to ensure a sustainable future for generations to come, and this invaluable campaign has highlighted just what can be achieved towards the goal to create this sustainable future when we are all playing on the same team. We extend our thanks to Education Above All, to the other entities with whom we collaborated to make this campaign a success, and to all who joined in.”



Speaker of Paraguay parliament meets Qatari Charge d’Affaires

Speaker of parliament and President of Congress of the Republic of Paraguay H E Oscar Salomon met with Charge d’Affaires at the Embassy of the State of Qatar in Paraguay H E Saeed bin Hamad Al Marri. The meeting discussed cooperation between the two countries in various fields.

Jumbo Electronics offers JBL Tune 570BT headphones

THE PENINSULA – DOHA

If enjoying music in pure bass – no strings attached – is your thing, then JBL tune 570 is headphones to go for. Tune 570 BT comes with a bigger 32mm driver unit.

The driver unit is the component that produces sound in the device. Bigger drivers are more powerful and can produce better bass. The device sits tightly in place, creating an acoustic seal which reduces background noise and prevents your music from leaking out.

Easy to use, these headphones provide up to 40 hours of pure pleasure and an extra 2 hours of battery with just 5 minutes of power with the USB-C charging cable. For long-lasting fun, now you can listen wirelessly hassle free for long hours and quick 5-minute recharge gives you 2 additional hours of music. Enjoy fun unlimited.

The Multi-point connections feature allows you to effortlessly switch from one Bluetooth device to another. You can simply switch from a video on your tablet to a call on your mobile phone, so that you'll never miss a call.

An on-ear headphone designed to go all day long demands comfort. The lightweight materials and soft ear cushions with a padded headband make the headphones comfortable to wear for extended periods. Tune 570 Comfortable full-size form with earcups that fully enclose your ears.

This model is loved for its increased sound isolation and the fact that it won't leak sound



to your neighbors. It offers potential for maximum bass and loudness levels. Moreover, the foldable design makes it convenient for you to carry your headphones anywhere and anytime you want music.

And what's more, Siri or Hey Google is just a button away: activate the voice assistant of your device by pushing the multi-function button.

“JBL headphones are evolving with every new model that we introduce into the market. Every new model is markedly better, both acoustically and in terms of form factor over the previous model. This shows the focus with which the products are being conceived and manufactured. Indeed, we are very happy to offer this latest model to the market,” said CV Rappai, Director & CEO of Video Home & Electronic Centre.

JBL Tune 570 BT is available at all Jumbo electronics showrooms across Qatar, Jumbo Souq.com and all leading hypermarkets in Qatar and is covered by a well-established and professional service network of Video Home's authorized service centers ensuring peace of mind for its buyers.

German Ambassador praises success of FIFA World Cup

QNA – DOHA

Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the State of Qatar H E Dr. Claudius Fischbach praised the great success of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and the amazing organization of the tournament.

In a message to Speaker of the Shura Council H E Hassan bin Abdullah Al Ghanim, the Ambassador said the tournament, the first of its kind in the Arab world, set new standards at different levels.

He also praised the strength and depth of the joint relations between his country and the State of Qatar, stressing that Germany supports a policy

He praised the strength and depth of the joint relations between his country and Qatar.

based on dialogue and understanding which is pursued by the State of Qatar for the benefit of the country, the region and the international cooperation, describing this policy as impressive. He also stressed that his country will continue to stand by Qatar to achieve this great mission.

The Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Qatar noted the exchange of

high-level visits between the two countries this year, saying the visits have never reached such a high level and such close rapprochement in the common history of the two countries. This underscores the strength and depth of the joint relations and proves the solid nature of these ties, he said.

He stressed that the economic dynamism in the joint trade exchange between Qatar and Germany has continued without interruption, noting that there are many other opportunities to develop this dynamism, and that this is specifically related to the newly concluded partnership in the field of energy.

QLM insurance available for all services at Sidra Medicine

THE PENINSULA – DOHA

Sidra Medicine, a QF entity, has signed a new agreement with its insurance partner QLM Life and Medical Insurance Company.

The agreement will provide QLM's client base of citizens and residents in Qatar direct billing access to all of Sidra Medicine's private medical services and clinics. QLM has expanded access to Sidra Medicine for both its privilege and prestige clients.

Dr. Iyabo Tinubu-Karch, the CEO of Sidra Medicine said: “I am pleased to onboard QLM as Sidra Medicine's latest insurance partner. By enabling meaningful health care coverage with such partners, we continue to be true to our vision of providing access to high-quality care to our patients as well as supporting positive health outcomes.”

Fahad Mohamed Al Suwaidi, CEO of QLM Life and Medical Insurance Company, stated: “I am delighted to announce that QLM has



Officials at Sidra Medicine and QLM Life and Medical Insurance Company during the signing ceremony.

achieved another milestone, by concluding the distinct agreement with Sidra Medicine, a renowned institution for healthcare and research, not only in Doha but across the region. This unique partnership will open the doors for QLM insured members seeking specialized care within their reach through the direct billing arrangement.”

“The agreement will provide QLM's client base

access to all medical services provided by Sidra Medicine, not only the benefits of maternity and pediatric care. By this new contract, QLM will be the first insurance company in Qatar to provide full services to its clients at Sidra Medicine,” he added.

Ahmad Zebeib, Deputy CEO of QLM Life and Medical Insurance Company commented: “The expansion of the QLM network to cater to

its diversified segment of customers, is one of our top priorities. Our network is one of the largest medical networks for an insurance company in the MENA region and is comparable in terms of size and excellence of accessibility to major international insurance companies. We look forward to further expanding and strengthening our relationship with Sidra Medicine.”



Landmark Group employees celebrate QND

Landmark Group employees celebrating Qatar National Day in office. All the employees in the office were dressed up in traditional Qatari outfits followed by games and traditional Qatari snacks to celebrate the day.



قطر للطاقة
QatarEnergy

The General, Limited Tenders Committees and Supply Chain Department announces the following Tenders:

Important Notice:
Suppliers and Contractors who are already registered with QatarEnergy via e-Registration system and are in possession of a valid SAP ID issued by QatarEnergy can "Buy Tender Online and download Tender Document" from QatarEnergy website Effective 1st February 2016, payment of Tender Fee by Cash and Manual collection of Tender Document is discontinued.

SL NO.	TENDER NO.	TENDER SALE PERIOD		TENDER CLOSING DATE	TENDER BOND	BOND CURR.	TENDER FEE	FEE CURR.
		START DATE	END DATE					
1.	LT22108000	26.12.2022	01.01.2023	16.01.2023	80,000.00	QAR	200.00	QAR

Title of Tender: DISPOSAL OF HAZARDOUS AND NON-HAZARDOUS INDUSTRIAL WASTE

Mid-Tender Meeting Location: To be advised if required

Mid-Tender Meeting Date & Time: To be advised if required

2.	LT22109400	26.12.2022	01.01.2023	16.01.2023	150,000.00	QAR	200.00	QAR
----	------------	------------	------------	------------	------------	-----	--------	-----

Title of Tender: REPLACEMENT AND REFURBISHMENT OF FIN FAN TYPE AIR COOLERS

Mid-Tender Meeting Location: To be advised if required

Mid-Tender Meeting Date & Time: To be advised if required

3.	LT22MT0113	26.12.2022	01.01.2023	16.01.2023	2,000.00	QAR	N/A	
----	------------	------------	------------	------------	----------	-----	-----	--

Title of Tender: SALE & REMOVAL OF CATERPILLAR FORKLIFT

Mid-Tender Meeting Location: To be advised if required

Mid-Tender Meeting Date & Time: To be advised if required

- Tender documents can be purchased and downloaded from QatarEnergy Website-> Supply Management -> Tenders page during the Tender Sale Period mentioned above against each Tender. Request for issuance of Tender after the specified Tender Sale Period will not be entertained.
- Always refer to QatarEnergy Website (www.qatarenergy.qa) -> Supply Management -> Tenders page for up to date information on QatarEnergy Tenders. Subscribe to Tender Alert to receive notification in your email on new Tenders
- Changes to Tender Sale Period and Bid Closing Date will be updated in QatarEnergy website only.
- Brief Scopes of Work for the above tenders are posted on the QatarEnergy website
- QatarEnergy invites all prospective Suppliers and Contractors interested to participate in QatarEnergy Tenders to register online and obtain a QatarEnergy SAP Vendor Code, a mandatory requirement for the issue of Tender Documents by QatarEnergy.
- Suppliers and Contractors who are in possession of a valid SAP ID issued by QatarEnergy are instructed to maintain their Company Registration and Communication details upto date and valid via QatarEnergy e-Registration system on urgent basis.
- No queries will be entertained, or bids received, from entities who have not purchased tender documents in compliance with the above provisions.

QATARGAS OPERATING COMPANY LTD

Tender Invitation

No.	TENDER NUMBER / DESCRIPTION	TENDER ISSUE PERIOD	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER CLOSING DATE
1	SUP/C/MNT/5768/22 SUPPLY OF SKILLED ROTATING EQUIPMENT MECHANICAL TECHNICIANS FOR MACHINERY MAINTENANCE	26/12/2022 to 02/01/2023	0	75,000	12/01/2023

Scope of Work:
Contractor shall provide Rotating Equipment Technician, to perform the disassembly, inspection, overhaul, and reassembly of the compressors, Pumps Fans and blowers during the Planned and unplanned shut down under this Contract. Note for Bidders: a) The Bidder shall provide a list of similar works (must have executed minimum two (2) long term contracts (for min.1 year duration for Supply of Rotating Equipment Technicians who have worked with OEM or under OEM Supervision (Compressors / Steam turbines / Pumps / Mechanical seals). b) Bidder should have workshop facility within Qatar or outside Qatar for Overhauling/maintenance of rotating equipment such as compressors / steam turbines / pumps / mechanical seals) .

Bid Validity: Bid should be valid for 180 days from the Tender Closing Date.

Place for Tender Collection and Bid Submission:
ITT document for this tender will be available in Qatargas website under Suppliers tab >Current Open Tenders. The bids shall be submitted through the Qatargas online platform (SMART by GEP).



تقوغاز

The World's Premier LNG Company

QNL sees record books checked out in 2022

FROM PAGE 1

The Power of Habit - Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business, by Charles Duhigg; *IELTS*, by Monica Sorrenson; and *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, by Daniel Kahneman are among the top three books in this category.

With a free membership to QNL, anyone can have access to over a million books, magazines, newspapers and periodicals – for both children and adults – in 16 different languages.

“It is a very welcoming place with massive number of books in every subject you look for,” said Steven, a new resident in Qatar.

“The library was one of the first places I visited in Qatar,” said Steven, who has an interest more in books on theology and economy. And Rifka, a long-term resident who often takes her children to the library, said, “I take my two daughters at least once a month to the library, they enjoy the experience than reading at home.”

Not only for residents but for visitors also the Qatar National Library was a huge attraction during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

Director of Strategy and Strategic Projects at QNL, Hind Al Khulaifi recently said that the library has “welcomed the world” during the tournament. “The look in the eyes of fans as they come through our door is wonderful to see, as is the happiness they feel when we tell them we have the books they're looking for,” said Al Khulaifi.

Health sector makes major strides in 2022

FAZEENA SALEEM
THE PENINSULA

Qatar has established a vast healthcare system of global standards as the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and its partners have continued to improve healthcare for people in the country in line with strategies aimed at achieving the Qatar National Vision 2030.

As part of its continued efforts, the healthcare sector witnessed great achievements during the year. The healthcare system in Qatar has continued the process of development, improvement and progress in achieving its strategic goals, as more than 90 percent of the outputs of the National Health Strategy 2018-2022 were archived this year.

The strategy includes 54 projects and 16 national goals emphasising on prevention, wellness, improving access to care and providing services in a more consistent and integrated manner.

Delivering smooth healthcare services during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 to fans without any disruption in day to day services was a also great accomplishment.

In addition to the services available at regular healthcare facilities, health services were provided to fans through more than 100 clinics in stadiums, fan areas and accommodations, 110 ambulances, and 212 mobile medical units. Some 2,275 employees worked in providing health services at the World Cup sites, while four hospitals affiliated to Hamad Medical

Corporation (HMC) were allocated for urgent non-emergency patients.

An average of 1,000 patients were seen at clinics dedicated for fans during the tournament and best services were provided to meet their needs.

In other areas, several new facilities and services were introduced and the health sector obtained international accreditations, as a result of continuous efforts by MoPH.

In 2022, all municipalities of Qatar received the title of Health City from the WHO in addition to Education City at Qatar Foundation received the title of Healthy Education City and Qatar University received the title of Healthy University.

The Ministry received international accreditation for public health services at the national level from the American Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), for a period of five years, thus making Qatar the first country in the world to receive this international accreditation after the United States.

In a major achievement, Hamad Medical Corporation won the grand prize in the field of epidemiological response presented by the Arab Hospitals Federation in March 2022.

Five facilities and services at HMC received the Patient Satisfaction and Service Excellence Award in March 2022, including the Communicable Disease Center, Home Health Care Services, Private Nursing Service, Daycare Centre, and Enaya Specialised Care Center, which was part of a two-year

The Ministry of Public Health succeeded in delivering smooth healthcare services during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 without any disruption in routine services.

pilot program to receive the Patient Satisfaction and Service Excellence Award by Planetree international.

The Ministry also obtained international accreditation for food safety management from the American Accreditation Board (AAB) in the field of inspection of imported and local



HMC's Trauma and Emergency Center was expanded during 2022.

food and local facilities, according to the "ISO 17020" system. The ministry's central food laboratories had previously received renewed international recognition from the AAB.

The number of hospitals in the public sector increased to 16 in 2022 and the Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) now operates health centres throughout the country.

Opening of Aisha bint Hamad Al Attiyah Hospital, which is the second largest hospital in Hamad Medical Corporation after Hamad General Hospital in terms of size and capacity, is one of the main additions to the health sector this year.

Several other facilities were also opened and established at HMC, including Al Maha Pediatric Specialized Care Center, the permanent intensive care unit, the physiotherapy and



Aisha bint Hamad Al Attiyah Hospital, the second largest hospital under Hamad Medical Corporation, opened in 2022.
PIC: RAJAN VADAKKEMURIYIL

centre by 60 percent, expanding Speech Therapy Unit for children with the addition of 12 treatment rooms at Qatar Rehabilitation Center.

The number of health centres, including centres affiliated with the Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) managed by the Qatar Red Crescent in accordance with an agreement with the Ministry increased to 33 centres in 2022.

Also the private health sector witnessed a significant expansion — number of facilities increased during 2022 and reached 10 hospitals, 19 day surgery centres, 390 general and specialised health centres, including dental centres, in addition to 31 diagnostic centres, including medical laboratories, diagnostic radiology centres, and dental laboratories.

The number of health workers in the public and private sectors has also increased to 46,371 in 2022.

In e-health services, several

achievements were made including efficient use of MyHealth Patient Portal which enables patients to access their electronic medical files directly via the internet; Nar'aakom application for the services at PHCC; and other important projects such as the electronic system for pharmacy management and drug control, and the participation of the ministry, represented by the administration of the Medical Commission (MC), in the project of fingerprinting, vital data and conducting medical examination for expats in their countries.

As a result of improving and raising the level of public health among individuals, through an integrated and comprehensive system that provides effective and sustainable solutions to current and future challenges to public health, in cooperation between all health sectors, overall increased life expectancy is witnessed in Qatar.

Qatar cements position as art and culture hub in the Middle East

JOELYN BALUYUT
THE PENINSULA

In 2022, Qatar further cemented its position as a hub for arts and culture in the region, highlighting not only the heritage and tradition of this country but also the Middle East in general.

Qatar Museums over the years has added an "immersive experience" allowing visitors to engage themselves in the attractions and artifacts of the museums, providing a fresh narrative in this digital age.

The art and tradition are not just visible inside of a building or room; they are also evident in public places like streets, parks, airports, institutions of higher learning, and medical centres. This year alone, 40 newly created and commissioned public artworks have been installed throughout Doha, transforming spaces and connecting people.

Latest of these public artworks are Doha Mountains (2022) by Swiss artist Ugo Rondinone, on view along Doha's Ras Abou Aboud beachfront near Stadium 974; The Doha Modern Playground (2022) by Shezad Dawood at Al Masrah Park; and 'Dugong', a polychromed mirror-polished stainless-steel sculpture made by renowned American artist Jeff Koons at the Corniche.

Another development is the opening of the 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum, the first of its type in the Middle East, which joined the Qatar Museums family in March. The museum offers an unforgettable and inspiring interactive journey through the history and legacy of sports worldwide and the Olympic Games.

The nation's reputation as a premier arts and culture destination in the region and globally has been reinforced through a series of cultural initiatives launched by Qatar Museums from July.



The programme started with the October re-opening of the completely reimagined and reinstalled Museum of Islamic Art (MIA), designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect I M Pei, a celebrated landmark in the heart of Doha. MIA presented its collection in completely new thematic interpretations to engage with audiences both local and international, and also included a new family trail.

A wide-range programme of exhibitions across eight museums and galleries in Doha is also happening until now to 2023/2024, including Baghdad: Eye's Delight at the Museum of Islamic Art, Maison Valentino exhibition that pays homage to its founder at M7, exhibitions on the Art Mill Museum of international modern and contemporary art, and on the Lusail Museum, designed by Herzog & de Meuron, giving visitors their first glimpse of what they can expect from these two new art institutions now being developed by Qatar Museums.

Qatar Museums has also extended its collaboration all the way to New York. September this year, it collaborated with New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art, encompassing the exchange of exhibitions, programmes, and scholarly cooperation.

In recognition of Qatar's support, a gallery at The Met presenting art from the

Umayyad and Abbasid Periods (7th-13th centuries) has been named the Qatar Gallery. As part of the collaboration between the institutions, Qatar Museums has lent works from its renowned collections to The Met for exhibitions.

In addition to introducing the general public to the world of arts, culture, and heritage, Qatar Museums also cultivates local, regional, and international talent through hosting creative projects like Al Najadah and the annual Fire Station Artist in Residence (AIR) Programme.

Al Najadah is a production-oriented and inclusive creative cluster hosting a multidisciplinary community of emerging and established creatives focused on Qatar's burgeoning New Crafts: Contemporary Heritage, Culinary Arts and Digital Experiences. While AIR is an opportunity for artists residing in Qatar to develop their art practice and includes mentorship, working with curators, visiting critics, open studios, networking opportunities, and access to the building's facilities, such as the woodshop and fabrication lab.

On to 2023, the Lusail Museum, designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architects Herzog & de Meuron, will start construction early next year. It will be constructed at Lusail, the residence of Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani, the

statesman, diplomat, and poet who founded Qatar. The upcoming museum will be a place of ideas, meetings and encounters, exchange and identity, said its Director Dr. Xavier Dectot.

And eight years from now, the Art Mill Museum will open

its door and will house exceptional and international collections dating back from 1850 to present, bringing different cultures from all over the world. The museum will transform an industrial flour mill at the Old Doha Port along Corniche that currently

houses the Qatar Flour Mills. Art Mill Museum Director Catherine Grenier said the museum will include multidisciplinary works from 19th century to present day and represents the culmination of a 25-year culture plan for the country.



The proposed Lusail Museum

FREE VEHICLE
RECALL

وزارة التجارة والصناعة
Ministry of Commerce and Industry
دولة قطر
State of Qatar

Indian Chieftain, Springfield,
Chief Vintage, Chief Classic

Manufacturing
Year

2016 - 2019

DEFECT

A possible electrical defect in the vehicle control module (VCM) that may result in loss of front lighting

PROCESS

Contact the dealer for the free required repair

CONTACT

Protech Powered Sports Co.
Phone: 44974934
protech.recall@protech.com.qa

PROTECH
POWERED SPORTS CO.

For any consumer protection issues please contact us on the hotline 16001

[mociqatar](#) | 16001 | +974 66111400 | [www.moci.gov.qa](#)



Shop for 50 QR from the participating stores and get a free coupon to enter the grand raffle for 50 prizes:

- A Car (CHERY TIGGO 8 WHITE 2023)
- 2 (CHERY TIGGO 7 WHITE and BLACK 2023)
- 5 (LG NANOCELL 8K SMART 75 TV)
- 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)
- 6 (OSCAR 60 X 60 CERAMIC COOKING RANGE)
- 6 (OSCAR ELECTRIC OVEN)

50 جائزة PRIZES

إشتري بمبلغ 50 ريال قطري من المحلات المشاركة واحصل على كوبون مجانياً للدخول في السحب الكبير على 50 جائزة:

- سيارة (CHERY TIGGO 8 WHITE 2023)
- عدد 2 (CHERY TIGGO 7 WHITE and BLACK 2023)
- عدد 5 (LG NANOCELL 8K SMART 75 TV)
- 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)

Al Aziziyah العزيرية	Umm Ghuwailina أم غويلينة	Old Al Ghanim الغانم العتيق	Pan Emirates Bombay silk center Villeroy and Boch شركة السيف للتبريد والتكيف الامانة للديكور ومواد البناء Levante منزل السيراميك للتجارة LG	Max Home Box Steve Madden Villeroy and Boch Pablosky Huawei Show room Xiaomi Show room LG Nike Vans Sun And Sand Timberland Under Armor	Villaggio Mall مول فيلاجيو
SAUDIA HYPER MARKET	ترليون للوساطة العقارية جولدن يخت	مركز السعيد التجاري	SAUDIA DEPARTMENT STORE MAJLIS SHOPPING CNETER Dana Hypermarket RT SALWA Brymax Trading Company	Ezdan Mall Al Wakrah ازدان مول - الوكرة	Steve Madden
Umm Salal أم صلال	Madinat Khalifa مدينة خليفة	Mansoura المنصورة	The Centre المركز	Doha Festival City دوحة فستيفال سيتي	City Center Doha mall سيتي سنتر الدوحة
HAPPY BABY CENTER	نظارات ألفا RETAIL MART	مركز السعيد التجاري شركة البشري للتجارة والمقاولات	Bin Omran بن عمران	Carter's Pan Emirates Max Home Centre Steve Madden Villeroy and Boch Villeroy and Boch Pablosky LG NIKE The North Face Vans Timberland Columbia Nike Under Armor	Max Home Centre Villeroy and Boch LG LG RT DCC Sun And Sand NIKE Columbia Timberland
Mesaieed مسيعيد	Al-Gharafa الغرافة	Al Khor الخور	Al Shaheen EST المستقبل الواعد للتنظيفات	Royal Plaza Mall رويال بلازا مول	Al Asmakh Mall الأصمخ مول
LG RETAIL MART	HAPPY BABY CENTER MAJLIS SHOPPING CENETR	مركز السعيد التجاري LG SAUDIA HYPER MARKET	Al Rayyan الريان	Al Rahal land & sea equipment Articles & Events	Max Home Centre
Asian Town المدينة الآسيوية	Al Wakrah الوكرة	Q MALL كيو مول	Al Shaheen EST محلات السعيد التجاري Max FANTINO SHOES FANTINO/ULTIMA SHOES LG SAUDIA HYPER MARKET	Al Khor Mall مول الخور	Dar Al Salam Mall دار السلام مول
SAUDIA DEPARTMENT STORE KENZ DOHA HYPER MARKET	FANTINO SHOES HAPPY BABY CENTER RETAIL MART RETAIL MART Dana Hypermarket	مركز السعيد التجاري	Mattar Qadem المطار القديم	RT ALKHOUR	Max Sun And Sand
Al Sadd السد	Souq Al Maamoura سوق المعمورة	Souq Faleh سوق فالخ	Al Shaheen EST معرض الجميل موزاييك جاليري ليفانتي كتشنز لتجارة المطابخ Levante Kitchens LG KENZ MINI MART NEW INDIAN SUPER MARKET RT DOHA	Salwa road طريق سلوى	Gulf Mall جلف مول
EVENTS ARTICLES	RT PARCO	محلات السعيد التجاري	Al Khor Mall مول الخور	Mall of Qatar قطر مول	Max Home Centre
Muaither معيذر	Doha Souq سوق الدوحة	Al-Nassr St شارع النصر	RT DOHA	Hyatt Plaza حياة بلذا	Place Vendôme Mall بالاس فاندوم مول
SAUDIA HYPER MARKET SAUDIA HYPER MARKET SAUDIA MINI MART NEW HAPPY BABY KIDS TOWN Maha Bazaar Supermarket	LG	Solez Huawei Show room Xiaomi Show room		Homes R us مطعم ألا توركا	Homes R us Carter's Centerpoint
Industrial Area المنطقة الصناعية	Al Muntazah المنتزه	Barwa Village قرية بروة			
MAJLIS SHOOPING CENTER RETAIL MART	Brymax Trading Company	Max Brymax Trading Company LG RETAIL MART Brymax Trading Company			
Others مناطق أخرى	Msheireb مشيرب	Al-Markhiya المرخية			
Home Centre Bombay silk center LG محمد الشناوي جروب ترندي أون لاين شوبيق REGENCY SHOPPING COMPLEX	Panda Hypermarkert BOMBAY SILK CENTER	FANTINO SHOES FANTINO/ULTIMA SHOES			
	Najma نجمة				
	LG MAJLIS SHOPPING CENETR				

FROM 1 NOV TO 31 DEC 2022

وزارة التجارة والصناعة
Ministry of Commerce and Industry
Your Family Shopping Companion

Shop with Confidence
For Complaints and Suggestions
16001
License number 6363/2022

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

جمهورية قطر
جمهورية قطر
جمهورية قطر

المنظمون
Organised by

للإشتراك والاستفسار: 44557840 - 70440540

من ١ نوفمبر حتى ٣١ ديسمبر ٢٠٢٢

برعاية
Sponsored by

وزارة التجارة والصناعة
Ministry of Commerce and Industry
Your Family Shopping Companion

تسوق بثقة
للتقديم الشكاوى والاقتراحات
16001
رقم الترخيص 2022/6363

Syrian Kurds protest Paris attack

AFP — HASAKEH, SYRIA

Hundreds of Syrian Kurds staged a protest in northern Syria yesterday in response to a deadly attack targeting members of the ethnic community in Paris this week.

A gunman opened fire at a Kurdish cultural centre and a hairdressing salon in Paris on Friday, killing three Kurds.

The suspected gunman, a 69-year-old Frenchman, was arrested and later confessed to a “pathological” hatred for foreigners, Paris prosecutor Laure Beccuaud said.

The semi-autonomous Kurdish authorities in north-eastern Syria called for the yesterday protest in Hasakeh, which drew hundreds of people brandishing photos of the three

The semi-autonomous Kurdish authorities in northeastern Syria called for the yesterday protest in Hasakeh, which drew hundreds of people brandishing photos of the three victims and calling for accountability.

victims and calling for accountability.

“Kurds are fighting against oppression and they are massacred everywhere, even in Paris, the city of love and freedom,” said activist Evin Basho, 33, demanding that the killer be brought to justice.

She was among those who marched through the city chanting “the martyrs of Paris are forever in our hearts” and repeating slogans against “the extermination” of the Kurdish people.

Often described as the

world’s largest people without a state, the Kurds are a Muslim ethnic group spread across Syria, Turkiye, Iraq and Iran.

Protester Azad Suleiman, 55, told AFP he felt Kurds were being targeted in the diaspora and at home.

“This is a war against our people, targeting us in the four parts of Kurdistan and even in Europe,” he said, adding he had high hopes that the French authorities would bring the perpetrator to justice.

“We will not concede to the enemies in Kurdistan and we



Hundreds of Syrian Kurds protest in Syria’s northeastern city of Hasakeh yesterday in response to a deadly attack targeting members of the ethnic community in Paris this week. (AFP)

will not abandon our revolution,” Suleiman said.

Furious Kurdish demonstrators had clashed with French police after the attack, which revived the trauma of three unresolved murders of Kurds almost 10 years ago in the same area of Paris.

Hezbollah hands over suspected killer of UN peacekeeper: Source

AFP — BEIRUT

Lebanon’s powerful Hezbollah group has handed over a man suspected of killing an Irish United Nations peacekeeper earlier this month, a security official told AFP yesterday.

Private Sean Rooney, 23, was killed and three others injured on December 14 when their UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) vehicle was attacked near the village of Al-Aqbiya in the country’s south, a stronghold of the Iran-backed group.

UNIFIL acts as a buffer between Lebanon and Israel and operates near the border.

“The main shooter has been arrested by security forces after Hezbollah handed him over hours ago,” the security official said, declining to be identified because he was not authorised to speak to the media.

It was not immediately clear if the individual arrested was a member of the group.

Hezbollah is cooperating in the probe led by Lebanese military intelligence, the official said, adding that “preliminary investigations are nearly complete.”

Earlier this week, a judicial official told AFP that Lebanese investigators had identified suspects in the attack, adding that there were “at least two” shooters.

A car carrying armed men followed the UNIFIL vehicle, the judicial source had said, citing preliminary findings and calling the attack “premeditated”.

Hezbollah has repeatedly denied involvement in the incident, and its security chief Wafic Safa has described the killing as “unintentional”.

Hezbollah has repeatedly denied involvement in the incident, and its security chief Wafic Safa has described the killing as “unintentional”.

Witnesses said villagers in the Al Aqbiya area blocked Rooney’s vehicle after it took a road along the Mediterranean coast not normally used by UNIFIL.

Al Aqbiya is just outside UNIFIL’s area of operations, the force has said.

The three passengers were injured when the vehicle hit a pylon and overturned.

Over the years, there have been a number of incidents between Hezbollah supporters and UN peacekeepers but they have rarely escalated.

UNIFIL has urged Beirut to ensure a swift investigation into the first violent death of one of its peacekeepers in nearly eight years.

The force was set up in 1978 to monitor the withdrawal of Israeli forces after they invaded Lebanon in reprisal for a Palestinian attack.

Israel withdrew from south Lebanon in 2000 but fought a devastating 2006 war with Hezbollah and its allies.

Lebanon and Israel remain technically at war.

S Africa fuel tanker blast death toll rises to 15

AFP — JOHANNESBURG

The death toll from a fuel tanker explosion in a South African city east of Johannesburg has risen to 15, the health minister said yesterday.

“Yesterday (Saturday), the death toll was at 10 people and now we are sitting at 15 as of this morning,” Joe Phaahla told reporters at Tambo Memorial Hospital.

The tanker, transporting liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), was caught beneath a bridge close to the hospital and houses on Saturday morning in Boksburg, east of Johannesburg.

The minister said three

hospital employees, two nurses and a driver, died later from severe burn injuries.

Thirty-seven people were injured, including 24 patients and 13 staff members who were in the hospital’s accident and emergency unit at the time of the blast. They “sustained severe burns and have been diverted to neighbouring hospitals”, Phaahla said.

Others were hit by shattered glass, he added, while some were hurt as they were in the parking lot or in front of the hospital.

“We send our deepest condolences for the families that lost their loved ones,” he said.

Videos on social media showed a huge fireball under the bridge, which the tanker appeared to have been too high to go under. It was carrying 60,000 litres of LPG, which is used especially in cooking and gas stoves, and had come from the southeast of the country.

The health minister said the blast severely damaged the hospital’s accident and emergency unit and X-ray departments.

“The roof was damaged, ceilings fell, windows broken, and other equipment damaged,” Phaahla said.

On most of the hospital’s floors, windows had shattered, he added. Witness Jean Marie

Booyesen described on Saturday how she felt a “huge jolt” in the early hours of the morning, shortly after 6:30 am (0430 GMT).

“I went upstairs to have my cup of tea and I saw immense flames, I thought a house was on fire.” She said she later learned of the deaths of “two... here across the road, 16, the girl, and 25, the boy, who came and did my lawn every weekend for me”. Another witness named William, who did not give his surname, said people nearby had felt the blast. “I think I was 50 metres (164 feet) away from the scene... We did burn behind our backs,” he said.



27 injured in Cairo stadium collapse

Basketball fans try to clear a podium that collapsed and caused injuries to fans during the Egyptian Super match between Alexandria’s Al Ittihad and Cairo’s Al Ahly at Hassan Mostafa Sports Hall in the 6th of October City on the western outskirts of Egypt’s capital on December 24, 2022. At least 27 people were injured when part of the stadium collapsed during a match, Egypt’s health ministry said. Most suffered non-life-threatening injuries. (AFP)

Jerusalem named Arab media capital

QNA — TRIPOLI

The Council of Arab Information Ministers chose the city of Jerusalem as the permanent capital of Arab media, in an affirmation of the centrality of the Palestinian cause, and in appreciation of the emotional status and the special historical and legal character of this holy city.

The Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the Media and Communication Sector of the League of Arab States, Ambassador Ahmed Rashid Khattabi said before the opening session of the consultative meeting of Arab information ministers in the Libyan city of Tripoli, on the sidelines of the closing festival of the activities of Tripoli, as capital of Arab media 2022, that it was agreed to name Jerusalem as the permanent capital of Arab media, in parallel with the selection of another capital every year, pointing out that the capital of Arab media project constituted one of the most prominent initiatives adopted by the Council at its forty-seventh regular session in 2016, with the aim of shedding light on national media work in the member states, and opening prospects for fruitful projects for Arab media cooperation.

On the sidelines of the closing ceremony of the activities of Tripoli, as capital of Arab media 2022, the late Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, who was assassinated by the Israeli occupation forces, was awarded the “Al Saraya Al Hamra” award for Arab Journalism.

Fishermen return to Iran years after Somalia kidnapping

AFP — TEHRAN

Fourteen Iranian fishermen seized by the Al Shabaab militant group in Somalia, some as long as eight years ago, have returned home, news outlets in the country said yesterday.

The fishermen were abducted in international waters near Somalia and released after “lengthy negotiations with government officials, tribal chiefs and Somali elders”, the ISNA news agency reported.

They were welcomed in a special ceremony at Tehran’s Imam Khomeini International Airport on Saturday night before being transported to their southern hometown of Chabahar, it

added. Their release comes almost a month after Somali police said they discovered 20 foreigners — 14 Iranians and six Pakistanis — near territory controlled by the militant group.

At the time, Somali police said some had been kidnapped by Al Shabaab in 2014, while others had been abducted on the southern coast of Harardhere in mid-2019.

It was unclear how they came to be released, and police provided no further details, citing an ongoing inquiry.

Reports suggested they could have been abducted by pirates and handed over to Al Shabaab, an affiliate of Al Qaeda that includes foreign fighters among its ranks.

M23 rebel retreat a ‘sham’: DR Congo army

AFP — KINSHASA

DR Congo’s army called an M23 rebel withdrawal from a strategic town near the eastern city of Goma a “sham” on Saturday, saying the militia is reinforcing its positions elsewhere.

The M23 group has conquered swaths of territory in North Kivu province in recent months and advanced to within a few dozen kilometres of Goma.

Under heavy international pressure to lay down arms, the Tutsi-led rebels took part in a ceremony Friday to deliver the town of Kibumba to an East African military force recently deployed in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

The rebels had called the move a “goodwill gesture done in the name of peace”.

The commander of the East African Community force, Jeff Nyagah, had also

told reporters that the M23 was due withdraw to Mount Sabyinyo, which demarcates the border between the DRC, Uganda and Rwanda.

But the DRC’s army stated on Saturday that the handover was a “sham” designed to distract Congolese people and the international community.

Clashes with the M23 erupted on Friday afternoon in Virunga National Park, the military

said, adding that the rebels had also reinforced several positions with a view to occupying territory west of Goma.

The DRC has repeatedly accused its smaller central African neighbour Rwanda of backing the M23, although the latter denies the charge.

The United States and France, among other Western countries, nevertheless agree with the DRC’s assessment.

بمفتنا ملاك للعقارات التالية

للبيع وللإيجار

بأسعار مناسبة

لاإيجار

مكاتب إدارية بمنطقة بن عمران

For Rent administrative offices in the Bin Omran area

للبيع

مبنى إداري مساحة العقار 687م2 عبارة عن طابق أرضي وثلاثة طوابق وقبو بالإضافة الى مواقف خاصة بالمبنى

Administrative building for sale 687 sqm The building boats a ground floor, three top floors, abasement,and parking .

للبيع

قطعة أرض مميزة في «مدينة لوسيل» مساحة البيع 3,953 متر مربع

Land for sale at Energy City Qatar-Lusail Land Size : 3.953 sqm

للبيع

قطعة أرض مميزة في «مدينة لوسيل» مساحة البيع 4,656 متر مربع

Land for sale at Energy City Qatar-Lusail Land Size : 4.656 sqm

للتواصل مع المالك مباشرة

Directly From The Owner... contact

55486133 30347361 33535273

Nepal's former guerrilla chief becomes new prime minister

REUTERS — KATHMANDU

A former Maoist guerrilla who led a decade-long insurgency against Nepal's monarchy was yesterday appointed prime minister for a third time, in alliance with the main opposition after last month's election returned a hung parliament.

Pushpa Kamal Dahal, who still goes by his nom de guerre Prachanda - meaning "fierce" - will head the new government for the first half of the five-year term with the support of the opposition Communist Unified Marxist-Leninist (UML) party and some other smaller groups, party officials said.

"He has been appointed and commands the support of a big majority of parliament," Tika Dhakal, an aide to President Bidhya Devi Bhandari said.

Prachanda, who replaces

Analysts said Prachanda was unlikely to provide the country with stability due to many coalition partners.

Sher Bahadur Deuba of the Nepali Congress party, will step down in 2025, making way for the UML to take over the office, local media reported.

"This is the understanding. Remaining work of distribution of key other posts and ministries is still to be worked out," Dev Gurung, the general secretary of Prachanda's Maoist Centre party said after a meeting of the new coalition.

The new coalition comes to power hours after Prachanda, 68, surprisingly walked out of the ruling alliance led by Deuba

of the Nepali Congress party. Deuba refused to back Prachanda for the prime minister's job.

Deuba and Prachanda had both campaigned in the November election pledging to keep the old alliance intact for several years.

Prachanda's Maoist Centre party won 32 seats in the 275-member House of Representatives. The UML has 78 seats, and the rest, required for the 138-majority, will be controlled by smaller groups.

The Nepali Congress party will be the main opposition controlling 89 seats.

Analysts said Prachanda was unlikely to provide the country with stability due to many coalition partners. He also faces serious economic challenges.

Inflation is more than 8%, the highest in six years. Nepal,



Nepal's former guerrilla leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal, better known by his nom de guerre Prachanda, hands over his documents to President Bidya Devi Bhandari to claim majority for his appointment as the new prime minister, at the president's office in Kathmandu, yesterday. (AFP)

tucked between China and India, also faces dwindling foreign exchange reserves, with an increasing dependence on imports of basic goods.

"It is unlikely for the economy to grow as political instability will spook investment and businesses," former central bank governor Deependra

Bahadur Kshetri told Reuters.

Nepal has seen 10 government changes since 2008 when the 239-year-old monarchy was abolished.

Rohingya refugee boat lands in Indonesia after month at sea

AFP — BANDA ACEH

A broken-down boat carrying 57 Rohingya refugees landed on Indonesia's western coast yesterday after a month at sea, police said.

Thousands of the mostly Muslim Rohingya, heavily persecuted in Myanmar, risk their lives each year on long, expensive sea journeys — often in poor-quality vessels — in an attempt to reach Malaysia or Indonesia.

The wooden vessel with 57 men on board arrived around 8 am local time (0100 GMT) on a beach in the westernmost Aceh province, local police spokesman Winardy said.

"The boat had a broken engine and it was carried by the



Health workers check a Rohingya refugee who was feeling sick after his arrival by boat in Indonesia's Aceh province, yesterday. (AFP)

informed by some locals that the boat had docked there.

He said four of the men on board were sick and had been transported to a hospital.

Telmaizul Syatri, the head of the local immigration office, said the refugees will be temporarily housed at a local government facility.

"We will coordinate with the International Organisation for Migration and the UNHCR so that it can be handled well," Syatri said.

This is the third Rohingya refugee boat to arrive in Indonesia in recent months.

Two boats carrying a total of 229 Rohingya landed in Aceh on November 15 and 16, according to the United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR).

Yesterday's arrival comes after the UNHCR and Southeast Asian politicians called for the rescue of another vessel carrying as many as 200 Rohingya refugees, including women and children, which has been stranded at sea for several weeks.

That boat has been reported in waters close to Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and India in the Andaman Sea and the Malacca Strait, one of the world's busiest shipping routes.

The UNHCR said last week that it has been in the water since late November, and it had received reports of at least a dozen people dying on board. Those left on the boat have no access to food or water.

China stages 'strike drills' around Taiwan, citing provocation

REUTERS — BEIJING/TAIPEI

China's military said it had conducted "strike drills" in the sea and airspace around Taiwan yesterday in response to what it said was provocation from the democratically-governed island and the United States.

Taiwan, which China claims as its own territory, said the drills showed Beijing was destroying regional peace and trying to cow Taiwan's people.

China staged war games around Taiwan in August following a visit to Taipei by then-US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and on Saturday it condemned the United States for a new defence authorisation law that boosts military assistance for Taiwan.

In a brief statement, the Eastern Theatre Command of China's People's Liberation Army said it had carried out "joint combat readiness patrols and joint firepower strike drills" around Taiwan, though it did not specify the exact location.

"This is a resolute response to the current escalation of collusion and provocation from the United States and Taiwan," it added, without giving details.

"Theatre forces will take all necessary measures to resolutely defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity," Taiwan's defence ministry said China's actions "once again highlight its mentality of resolving differences by force and destroying regional peace and stability".

Taiwan-US cooperation contributes to the freedom, openness, peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific, and Taiwan will continue to boost its military in accordance with the enemy threat and its self-defence needs, the ministry said.

"The Chinese Communist's 'military intimidation' acts are obviously aimed at cowering our people and are not conducive to (China's) international image," it added.

Taiwan has complained of repeated Chinese military activity nearby over the last three years or so as Beijing seeks to pressure Taipei to accept Chinese sovereignty.

IN BRIEF

Maldives court finds former President guilty of corruption

MALE: The criminal court of Maldives yesterday found the country's former president Abdulla Yameen guilty on corruption and money laundering charges related to receiving kickbacks from a private company.

The court said it expects to announce the sentence soon. Yameen has denied any wrongdoing.

Yameen, who lost power in 2018, was sentenced to five years in jail and fined \$5m in 2019 for embezzling \$1m in state funds, which the prosecution said was acquired through the lease of resort development rights.

After his sentencing, Yameen was shifted to house arrest in 2020 but was freed months later.

Since his release, Yameen, the half-brother of former dictator Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, has returned to active politics with a campaign against Indian influence in Maldives, raising concerns in New Delhi.

Yameen is the declared presidential candidate for the Progressive Party of the Maldives for an election due in 2023. *-Reuters*

China rejects US policy towards Beijing

BEIJING: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi expressed his country's rejection of the wrong policy of the US towards Beijing.

In a conference held yesterday on China's international situation and foreign relations over the course of the current year, the Chinese foreign minister said that China strongly rejected the wrong US policy towards Beijing. Wang also called on the US side to change course, establish an objective and reasonable perception, pursue a positive and pragmatic policy towards China, and work to lay the foundations for the stable development of China-US relations.

On Chinese-Russian relations, Wang pointed out that this year, the two countries deepened good-neighbourly relations, friendship and cooperation, also the two sides made the comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination more mature and flexible.

On European countries, the Chinese minister added that his country has continued to seek friendship and cooperation with Europe, and will remain committed to the healthy development of relations between the two sides on the basis of mutual respect and equality. *-QNA*

Three NGOs stop work in Afghanistan after Taliban ban on women staff

AFP — KABUL

Three foreign aid groups, including Save the Children, announced yesterday they were suspending their operations in Afghanistan after the Taliban ordered all NGOs to stop their women staff from working.

The announcement came as top officials from the United Nations and dozens of NGOs operating in Afghanistan met in Kabul to discuss a way ahead after the Taliban's latest restriction delivered a blow to humanitarian work across the country.

"We cannot effectively reach children, women and men in desperate need in Afghanistan without our female staff," Save the Children, the Norwegian Refugee Council and CARE said in a joint statement.

"Whilst we gain clarity on this announcement, we are suspending our programmes, demanding that men and women can equally continue our lifesaving assistance in Afghanistan."

Saturday's order issued by the Taliban authorities drew swift international condemnation, with governments and organisations warning of the impact on humanitarian services in a country where millions rely on aid.

The latest restriction comes

less than a week after the hardline Islamists banned women from attending universities, prompting global outrage and protests in some Afghan cities.

The Ministry of Economy on Saturday threatened to suspend the operating licences of NGOs if they failed to implement the order.

The ministry, which issues these licences, said it had received "serious complaints" that women working in NGOs were not observing a proper Islamic dress code.

A meeting of the Humanitarian Country Team, which comprises top UN officials and representatives of dozens of Afghan and foreign NGOs was being held in Kabul to discuss whether to suspend all aid work following the latest Taliban directive, aid officials said.

The United Nations condemned the ministry's directive and said it would seek an explanation from the Taliban about the order, which by excluding women "systematically from all aspects of public and political life takes the country backward, jeopardising efforts for any meaningful peace or stability in the country".

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the ban would be "devastating" to Afghans as it would "disrupt

vital and life-saving assistance to millions".

"I'm the only breadwinner of my family. If I lose my job my family of 15 members will die of hunger," said Shabana, 24, a woman employee with an international NGO working in Afghanistan for decades.

"While the world is celebrating the arrival of the new year, Afghanistan has become a hell for women."

The ministry said women working in NGOs were not observing "the Islamic hijab and other rules and regulations pertaining to the work of females in national and international organisations".

But women employees AFP spoke to dismissed the charge.

"Our offices are gender segregated, and every woman is properly dressed," said Arezo, who works for another foreign NGO.

It remained unclear whether the directive impacted foreign women staff at NGOs.

The international community has made respecting women's rights a sticking point in negotiations with the Taliban government for its recognition and the restoration of aid.

The ban comes at a time when millions across the country depend on humanitarian aid provided by international donors through a vast network of NGOs.



Skating on ice rink

People skate on an ice rink during Christmas day in Tokyo, yesterday. (AFP)

China's Zhejiang has one million daily COVID-19 cases, expected to double

REUTERS — BEIJING

China's Zhejiang, a big industrial province near Shanghai, is battling around a million new daily COVID-19 infections, a number expected to double in the days ahead, the provincial government said yesterday.

Despite a record surge of cases nationwide, China reported no COVID-19 deaths on the mainland for the five days through Saturday, the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention said yesterday.

Citizens and experts have called for more accurate data as infections surged after Beijing made sweeping changes to a zero-COVID policy that had put hundreds of millions of its citizens under relentless lockdowns and battered the world's second-largest economy.

Nationwide figures from China had become incomplete as the National Health Commission stopped reporting asymptomatic infections, making it harder to track cases. Yesterday the commission

stopped reporting daily figures, which the China CDC then published.

Zhejiang is among the few areas to estimate their recent spikes in infections including asymptomatic cases.

"The infection peak is estimated to arrive earlier in Zhejiang and to enter a period of elevated level around New Year's Day, during which the daily new infection number will be up to two million," the Zhejiang government said in a statement.

Putin says Russia ready to negotiate over Ukraine

REUTERS — MOSCOW

Russia is ready to negotiate with all parties involved in the war in Ukraine but Kiev and its Western backers have refused to engage in talks, President Vladimir Putin said in an interview aired yesterday.

Russia’s February 24 invasion of Ukraine has triggered the most deadly conflict in Europe since World War Two and the biggest confrontation between Moscow and the West since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.

There is, thus far, little end in sight to the war.

The Kremlin says it will fight until all its aims are achieved while Kiev says it will not rest until every Russian soldier is ejected from all of its territory, including Crimea which Russia annexed in 2014.

“We are ready to negotiate with everyone involved about acceptable solutions, but that is up to them - we are not the ones refusing to negotiate, they are,” Putin told Rossiya 1 state television in the interview.

“We are ready to negotiate with everyone involved about acceptable solutions, but that is up to them — we are not the ones refusing to negotiate, they are,” Putin told Rossiya 1 state television in the interview.

CIA Director William Burns said in an interview published this month that while most conflicts end in negotiation, CIA’s assessment was that Russia was not yet serious about a real negotiation to end the war.

An adviser to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said that Putin needed to return to reality and acknowledge that it was Russia which did not want any negotiations.

“Russia single-handedly

attacked Ukraine and is killing citizens,” Mykhailo Podolyak said on Twitter. “Russia doesn’t want negotiations, but tries to avoid responsibility.”

Putin said Russia was acting in the “right direction” in Ukraine because the West, led by the United States, was trying to cleave Russia apart. Washington denies it is plotting Russia’s collapse.

“I believe that we are acting in the right direction, we are defending our national interests, the interests of our citizens, our people. And we have no other choice but to protect our citizens,” Putin said.

Asked if the geopolitical conflict with the West was approaching a dangerous level, Putin said: “I don’t think it’s so dangerous.”

Putin said the West had begun the conflict in Ukraine in 2014 by toppling a pro-Russian president in the Maidan Revolution protests.

Soon after that revolution, Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine and Russian-backed separatist forces began fighting



Relatives of Ukrainian servicemen and civilians captured by Russian forces hold placards during a rally at Independence Square, in Kiev. (AFP)

Ukraine’s armed forces in eastern Ukraine.

“Actually, the fundamental thing here is the policy of our geopolitical opponents which is aimed at pulling apart Russia, historical Russia,” Putin said.

Putin casts what he calls a “special military operation” in Ukraine as a watershed moment when Moscow finally stood up to a Western bloc he says has been seeking to destroy

Russia since the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union.

Ukraine and the West say Putin has no justification for what they cast as an imperial-style war of occupation which has sown suffering and death across Ukraine.

Putin described Russia as a “unique country” and said the vast majority of its people were united in wanting to defend it.

“As for the main part - the

99.9% of our citizens, our people who are ready to give everything for the interests of the Motherland - there is nothing unusual for me here,” Putin said.

“This just once again convinces me that Russia is a unique country and that we have an exceptional people. This has been confirmed throughout the history of Russia’s existence.”

Italian former Foreign Minister Frattini dies at 65

REUTERS — ROME

Franco Frattini, who served twice as Italy’s foreign minister and held several other cabinet posts, died on Saturday at the age of 65, Italian media reported.

Frattini, who had been ill for some time with cancer, died in a Rome hospital.

He was foreign minister under governments headed by Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi 2002-2004 and 2008-2011 and held two other cabinet posts in governments headed by Berlusconi and Lamberto Dini in the 1990s.

From 2004 to 2008 he was European commissioner for justice and at the time of his death he was president of Italy’s Council of State, a consultative body that oversees public administration. He started his political activity as a member of the Socialist Party and later joined Berlusconi’s centre-right parties.

Duma prepares higher taxation for Russians who left country

REUTERS — MOSCOW

Vyacheslav Volodin, the speaker of the Duma, said the Russian lower house of parliament was preparing a law to introduce higher taxation for people who have left the country, as many have since the war in Ukraine began in February.

“It is right to cancel preferences for those who have left the Russian Federation and to introduce an increased tax rate for them,” Volodin wrote on the Telegram messaging app.

“We are working on appropriate changes to the legislation.” The number of Russians who have left since the start of the war is unclear. By early October, some local media had reported that as many as 700,000 had fled following the September announcement of a mobilisation drive to call up as many as 300,000 to fight. The government rejected that figure at the time.

Russia’s 13% personal income tax is deducted automatically by domestic employers. Russians working abroad who are Russian tax residents must pay the tax independently, according to the Federal Tax Service of Russia.

“It’s completely understandable why they fled,” Volodin said. “Those who realized that they had made a mistake have already returned. The rest should understand: the vast majority of society does not support their act and believes that they betrayed their country, relatives and friends.”

Sunak criticised for asking homeless man if he ‘works in business’

REUTERS — LONDON

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak faced criticism on Saturday for seeming out of touch with ordinary people when he asked a homeless man at a charity whether he “worked in business” and wanted to get into the finance industry.

Sunak, a former Goldman Sachs banker and one of

Britain’s wealthiest people, was serving breakfast at a homeless shelter in London on Friday, when he began chatting with a man who identified himself as Dean.

“Do you work in business?” the prime minister asks the man at one point during the conversation, as he hands him a plate of sausages, toast and eggs.

“No, I’m homeless. I’m

actually a homeless person,” the man replies.

Angela Rayner, deputy leader of the opposition Labour Party, posted a clip of the exchange on Twitter, calling it “excruciating,” while another Labour lawmaker, Bill Esterson, called Sunak “out of touch”.

His ascent to the British premiership in October made Sunak the richest occupant of

Number 10 Downing Street at a time when the country is struggling with a cost-of-living crisis.

The prime minister this week made surprise phone calls to British diplomats and military personnel around the world to give them Christmas wishes, his office said on Friday.

His awkward exchange with the homeless man began when

the man asks Sunak if he’s “sorting the economy out”.

When the homeless man then says he is interested in business and finance, Sunak replies that he used to work in finance too, before asking: “Is that something you would like to get into?” “Yeah I wouldn’t mind,” says Dean. “But, I don’t know, I’d like to get through Christmas first.”



Police divers search the Landwehr Canal in Berlin yesterday in connection with the stolen jewels of the Green Vault in Dresden. (AFP)

Divers hunting for Germany’s stolen ‘Green Vault’ artefacts

BLOOMBERG — BERLIN

Around 20 police divers searched the waters of Berlin’s Landwehr Canal yesterday as part of the investigation into the 2019 looting of treasures from Dresden’s famous “Green Vault.”

Officers secured the immediate surrounding area and the operation was likely to “take some time,” police in the state of Saxony, where Dresden is the capital, said in a statement.

They said they were unable to provide further information, including on whether the

search had yielded positive results.

German authorities announced last weekend that they had recovered 31 items in Berlin that represented a “significant part” of the Dresden artefacts.

The initial haul included a diamond-encrusted dagger, a pearl necklace, and dozens of other pieces estimated by German media to be worth more than \$1bn.

It later emerged that the state of Saxony carried no insurance on the jewels, which it said was standard practice

because the premiums typically exceed potential losses over the longer term.

The Dresden incident was one of a number of heists carried out at German museums in recent years. In November, thieves broke into a museum in Bavaria and made off with nearly 500 ancient gold coins worth several million euros.

In 2020, a Berlin court convicted three men of stealing a 100kg (220-pound) gold coin worth \$4m from a museum in the centre of the German capital.

Suspect in Paris shooting admits to ‘pathological’ hatred of foreigners

AFP — PARIS

A French man suspected of killing three Kurds in Paris has confessed to a “pathological” hatred for foreigners, Paris prosecutor Laure Beccau said yesterday.

The 69-year-old man was removed from custody for health reasons on Saturday and taken to a police psychiatric facility.

Beccau said in a statement that the suspect was “depressive” and “suicidal” and said he “wanted to kill foreigners” after a robbery in his home in 2016.

The shooting at a Kurdish cultural centre and a nearby hairdressing salon on Friday sparked panic in the city’s bustling 10th district, home to several shops and restaurants and a large Kurdish population. Three others were wounded in the attack.

The suspect said he initially wanted to kill people in the northern Paris suburb of Seine-Saint-Denis, which has a large immigrant population, before deciding to go to the 10th district instead.

Many in the Kurdish community have expressed anger at the French security services, saying they had done too little to prevent the shooting.

The frustration boiled over on Saturday and furious demonstrators clashed with police in central Paris for a second day running after a tribute rally.

The capital’s police chief Laurent Nunez told BFM

The suspect — named as William M. by French media — is a gun enthusiast with a history of weapons offences who had been released on bail earlier this month.

television channel on Saturday that 31 officers and one protester were injured in the disturbances, while 11 people were arrested, “mainly for damage”.

The suspect — named as William M. by French media — is a gun enthusiast with a history of weapons offences who had been released on bail earlier this month. The retired train driver was convicted for armed violence in 2016 by a court in Seine-Saint-Denis, but appealed.

A year later he was convicted for illegally possessing a firearm.

Last year, he was charged with racist violence after allegedly stabbing migrants and slashing their tents with a sword in a park in eastern Paris.

- ‘He’s an idiot’ - “He is crazy, he’s an idiot,” his father was quoted as saying by the M6 television channel.

Often described as the world’s largest people without a state, the Kurds are a Muslim ethnic group spread across Syria, Turkiye, Iraq and Iran.

Harry, Meghan brand UK tabloid apology for column ‘PR stunt’

AFP — LONDON

Prince Harry and wife Meghan on Saturday accused *The Sun* of a “PR stunt” after the British tabloid apologised and said it regretted publishing a much-criticised column about the couple.

The piece, in which former “Top Gear” host Jeremy Clarkson said he “hated” Meghan, sparked a big backlash and became the UK Independent Press Standards Organisation’s (IPSO) most

complained-about article.

In it, Clarkson said he dreamed of the day when Meghan “is made to parade through the streets of every town in Britain while the crowds chant ‘shame!’ and throw lumps of excrement at her”.

IPSO received more than 20,000 complaints and many high-profile figures criticised the comments, including author Philip Pullman and London Mayor Sadiq Khan.

The Sun, which removed the

December 16 article from its website three days later at the request of Clarkson, said in its Friday apology that it would also now be removed from its archives. “We are sincerely sorry,” the tabloid said in a statement on its website.

“Columnists’ opinions are their own, but as a publisher, we realise that with free expression comes responsibility.” But in a biting response, a spokesperson for the Duke and Duchess of Sussex — as they are formally known — criticised

it for failing to contact Meghan to apologise directly.

“The fact that *The Sun* has not contacted The Duchess of Sussex to apologise shows their intent. This is nothing more than a PR stunt,” the spokesperson said.

“While the public absolutely deserves the publication’s regrets for their dangerous comments, we wouldn’t be in this situation if *The Sun* did not continue to profit off of and exploit hate, violence and misogyny.

“A true apology would be a shift in their coverage and ethical standards for all. Unfortunately, we’re not holding our breath.” The article had been written in response to the couple’s recent Netflix docuseries “Harry & Meghan”, in which they were highly critical of the voracious UK tabloid press.

In his own response earlier this week, Clarkson said on Twitter he made “a clumsy reference to a scene in Game of Thrones and this has gone down badly with a great many people.”

22 dead as savage US blizzard cuts power and snarls travel

AFP — NEW YORK

More than 200,000 Americans woke up without power on Christmas morning as a days-long winter megastorm that hammered several eastern US states yesterday left more than 20 people dead.

The extreme weather, a mix of prolonged blizzards and historic cold, plunged wind chill temperatures in all 48 contiguous US states below freezing this weekend, stranded holiday travelers with thousands of flights cancelled and trapped residents in ice- and snow-encrusted homes.

Twenty-two weather-related deaths have been confirmed across eight states, including at least seven fatalities in western New York, where ferocious snows, relentless winds and deep freezes have plunged Buffalo and surrounding towns into crisis.

While large swathes of the country have begun shovelling out from the massive storm and temperatures in some locations were returning to seasonal normality, Buffalo remained in the grips of “a major disaster,” with

The extreme weather has severely taxed the country’s electricity grids, with multiple power providers urging customers to reduce usage to minimise rolling blackouts in places like North Carolina and Tennessee.

emergency responders unable to reach several high-impact areas, a senior official said early Sunday.

“We do have seven confirmed deaths at this point as a result of the storm in Erie County. There may be more,” county executive Mark Poloncarz told reporters.

He described ferocious conditions, with hours-long whiteouts and bodies discovered in cars and under snow banks in a region where Governor Kathy Hochul deployed the National Guard to help with rescues.

“It was as bad as anyone has ever seen it,” Poloncarz said.

‘Conditions are just so bad’

The National Weather Service warned that blizzard conditions in the Great Lakes region caused by lake-effect snow would continue on Christmas Day, with “additional snow accumulations of 2 to 3 feet (0.6 to 0.9 meters) through

tonight.” One couple in Buffalo, which sits across the border from Canada, said on Saturday that with the roads completely impassible, they would not be making a 10-minute drive to see their family for Christmas.

“It’s tough because the conditions are just so bad... a lot of fire departments aren’t even sending out trucks for calls,” said 40-year-old Rebecca Bortolin.

A broader travel nightmare was in full effect for millions.

The “bomb cyclone” storm, one of the fiercest in decades, forced the cancellation of more than 1,500 US flights on Sunday, in addition to some 3,500 scrapped Saturday and nearly 6,000 on Friday, according to tracking website Flightaware.com.

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg tweeted Saturday that “the most extreme disruptions are behind us as airline



Vehicles move along a highway in Louisville, Kentucky, under freezing temperatures on Friday. (AFP)

and airport operations gradually recover.” But travelers remained stranded or delayed at airports including in Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, Detroit, Minneapolis and New York.

Road ice and white-out conditions also led to the temporary closure of some of the nation’s busiest transport routes, including the cross-country Interstate 70.

Drivers were being warned not to take to the roads — even as the nation reached what is usually its busiest time of year for travel.

The extreme weather has

severely taxed the country’s electricity grids, with multiple power providers urging customers to reduce usage to minimize rolling blackouts in places like North Carolina and Tennessee.

At one point on Saturday, nearly 1.7 million customers across the country were without electricity in the biting cold, according to tracker power-outage.us. But the figure dropped substantially by Sunday, although more than 200,000 customers in eastern states still lacked power.

Canadian authorities have

also issued severe weather warnings. Hundreds of thousands were left without power in Ontario and Quebec provinces, many flights were canceled in major cities and train passenger service between Toronto and Ottawa was suspended.

In British Columbia province, authorities said 53 people were injured when a passenger bus crashed late Saturday on a highway known as the Okanagan Connector northeast of Vancouver. The cause of the crash was under investigation.

Brazil election-denier camps ‘incubators of terrorism,’ says official

REUTERS — RIO DE JANEIRO

Election-denying protesters camping outside Brazilian army bases have become “incubators of terrorism,” Brazil’s incoming justice minister said yesterday, a day after police detonated an explosive device and arrested a suspect they accused of links to the Brasilia camp.

“Yesterday’s serious events in Brasilia prove that the so-called “patriotic” camps have become incubators for terrorists,” tweeted Flavio Dino.

“There will be no amnesty for terrorists, their supporters and financiers.”

Supporters of President Jair Bolsonaro have been camped outside army bases in Brazil for weeks, urging the military to overturn the victory of leftist President-elect Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who takes office on January 1.

In a later tweet, Dino said he would propose the creation of “special groups to combat terrorism and irresponsible weaponry. The rule of law is not compatible with these political militias.”

News of the bomb added a



An anti-bomb policeman tries to defuse an explosive artefact in Brasilia, Brazil. (REUTERS)

new dimension to post-election violence in Brazil, where tensions remain high after Brazil’s most fraught election in a generation.

Bolsonaro, who has yet to concede defeat, has made

baseless claims about the credibility of Brazil’s voting system, and many of his hardcore supporters believe him.

The Brasilia camp, outside the army headquarters, has become one of the country’s

most extreme. On December 12, the day Lula’s victory was certified, some of the camp-dwellers attacked the federal police HQ in Brasilia.

Robson Cândido, head of the Civil Police in Brasilia, said

a 54-year-old man from the northeastern state of Para had been arrested and confessed to planting the device in a fuel truck near the Brasilia airport in order to sow chaos.

“He came to participate in the protests, outside the army headquarters, and he’s part of that movement that supports the current president,” he told reporters.

“They’re in that mission, which according to them is ideological, but which has got out of control.” Police also found assault-style rifles and other explosives at an apartment rented by the man in Brasilia.

Cândido said the suspect was a registered gun-owner, known as a CAC, a group that has swelled sixfold to nearly 700,000 people since Bolsonaro was elected in 2018 and began loosening gun laws.

Cândido also said the man, and those helping him, had tried to activate the explosive device, but it had not gone off. He said it was still unclear how many other people were involved.

“We’ve never had bombs here in Brazil,” he said.

Migrants dropped near VP Harris home in frigid cold

AP — WASHINGTON

Three buses of recent migrant families arrived from Texas near the home of Vice President Kamala Harris in record-setting cold on Christmas Eve.

Texas authorities have not confirmed their involvement, but the bus dropoffs are in line with previous actions by border-state governors calling attention to the Biden administration’s immigration policies.

The buses that arrived late Saturday outside the vice president’s residence were carrying around 110 to 130 people, according to Tatiana Laborde, managing director of SAMU First Response, a relief agency working with the city of Washington to serve thousands of migrants who have been dropped off in recent months.

Local organizers had expected the buses to arrive yesterday but found out Saturday that the group would get to Washington early, Laborde said. The people on board included young children.

Some were wearing T-shirts despite temperatures hovering around -9 degrees Celsius. It was the coldest Christmas Eve on record for Washington, according to the *Washington Post*.

Laborde said employees had blankets ready for the people who arrived on Christmas Eve and moved them quickly onto waiting buses for a ride to an area church. A local restaurant chain donated dinner and breakfast. Most of the arrivals were headed to other destinations and expected to remain in Washington only briefly.

Gov Greg Abbott’s office did not respond to a request for comment yesterday morning. His office said last week that Texas has given bus rides to more than 15,000 people since April to Washington, New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia.

53 people hospitalised in Canada after bus accident

AFP — MONTREAL

More than 50 people have been hospitalized in western Canada after a passenger bus crashed on a highway, provincial authorities said.

The cause of the Saturday evening accident, which occurred on a highway some 330km east of Vancouver in an area of British Columbia hit by days of bad winter weather, has yet to be provided.

British Columbia Premier David Eby said he was “shocked and saddened” by the news. “Our thoughts are with those impacted by the crash, their loved ones, and the first responders and health-care workers giving their all to treat people and keep them safe,” he said in a statement.

Regional health authority Interior Health tweeted 53 patients were being treated at three hospitals but said it could not yet give details on patient conditions.

A portion of the highway impacted by the crash was closed into Sunday morning, provincial transportation authorities tweeted.

The accident occurred as brutal weather has battered wide swathes of North America, snarling transport and causing numerous deadly accidents during one of the busiest travel periods of the year.

Twitter restores suicide prevention feature after media report

REUTERS — NEW YORK

Twitter has restored a feature that promotes suicide prevention hotlines and other safety resources to users looking up certain content, after coming under pressure from some users and consumer safety groups over its removal.

Reuters reported on Friday that the feature was taken down a few days ago, citing two people familiar with the matter, who said the removal was ordered by the social media platform’s new owner Elon Musk.

After publication of the story, Twitter head of trust and safety Ella Irwin confirmed the removal and called it temporary.

Twitter was “fixing relevance, optimizing the size of the message prompts and correcting outdated prompts,” Irwin said in an email to Reuters. “We know they are useful and our intent was not to have them down permanently.” About 15 hours after the initial report, Musk, who did not initially respond to requests for comment, tweeted “False, it is still there.” In response



Twitter logo and Elon Musk silhouette are seen in this illustration. (REUTERS)

to criticism by Twitter users, he also tweeted “Twitter doesn’t prevent suicide.” The feature, known as #ThereIsHelp, places a banner at the top of search results for certain topics. It has listed contacts for support organizations in many countries related to mental health, HIV, vaccines, child sexual exploitation, COVID-19, gender-based violence, natural disasters and freedom of expression.

By Saturday, the banner returned to searches about suicide and domestic violence in multiple countries under terms like

“shwtwt,” shorthand for “self-harm Twitter.” Whether the feature had been restored for other categories was not clear. The feature was not appearing for some search queries that Twitter has previously said triggered it, such as “#HIV.” Irwin did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Saturday.

Twitter bans users from encouraging self-harm, though consumer safety groups have criticized the company for allowing posts that they say violate the policy.

On Saturday, tweets showing graphic imagery of people cutting their arms appeared beneath banners on searches for self-harm.

The disappearance of #ThereIsHelp had led some consumer safety groups and Twitter users to express concerns about the well-being of vulnerable users of the platform.

In part due to pressure from such groups, internet services including Twitter, Alphabet’s Google and Meta’s Facebook have for years tried to direct users to well-known resource providers for safety issues.

Bye-bye Ya Ya and Le Le: Memphis pandas to be returned to China

REUTERS — MEMPHIS

A zoo in Memphis, Tennessee, is returning two giant pandas that had been on loan from China for 20 years, prompting celebrations by animal advocates who said the health of the animals had deteriorated due to neglect.

The announcement on Wednesday came after months of criticism by In Defense of Animals and other advocacy groups that have accused the zoo of providing inadequate

care to the pandas, Ya Ya and Le Le. Critics called on the zoo to provide them with better food, more uncaged time and ultimately a transfer to a panda refuge.

IDA posted a video on Twitter in February that showed the pandas pacing in circles around their enclosure as proof they were suffering from “physical, mental, and emotional deprivation.” It received thousands of likes and was retweeted by singer Billie Eilish.

A spokesperson for the zoo said the decision to return the pandas to China had nothing to do with pressure from animal advocates.

China requires foreign zoos that host pandas on loan to allow older animals to spend their final days on Chinese soil. At 24 and 22, respectively, Le Le and Ya Ya have exceeded the giant panda life expectancy in the wild by almost 10 years, according to the spokesperson.

Giant pandas, whose black

and white faces have made them beloved around the world, are considered a vulnerable species, with much of their mountainous natural habitat in southwest China under threat from deforestation.

According to the World Wildlife Fund, about 1,800 pandas are left in the wild and another 500 in zoos around the world. With the return of Ya Ya and Le Le to China, US zoos will have a total of 10 giant pandas.

Ya Ya and Le Le helped “pioneer research and conservation projects” and drew visitors to Memphis to “get a small taste of the exquisite culture of the People’s Republic of China,” according to the zoo’s statement on Wednesday.

In a statement, IDA said it was “delighted to celebrate this momentous victory” and hoped the move would “prompt all zoos to put animals’ needs first and release them to accredited sanctuaries.”

PRAYER TIMINGS



FAJR 4:54AM
SUNRISE 6:17AM
DHUHR 11:34AM
ASR 2:32PM
MAGHRIB 4:53PM
ISHA 6:23PM

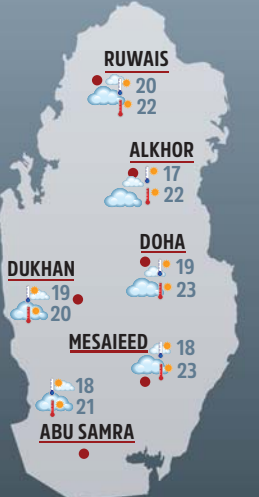
WEATHER TODAY



19°C
Minimum



23°C
Maximum



Partly cloudy to cloudy at times with a chance of rain maybe thundery at places and cold by night.



HIGH TIDE
7:00 - 18:00



LOW TIDE 1:00 - 14:00

Male panda at Dutch zoo turns out to be female

AFP — THE HAGUE

A two-year-old giant panda at a Dutch zoo has caused a stir by turning out to be a female and not a male as initially thought.

The discovery at the Ouwehands Zoo was made during a routine medical check-up on Fan Xing, who was the first giant panda to be born in the Netherlands.

The zoo's manager confirmed the news on national television late Thursday.

"Fan Xing surprised us," said Jose Kok, in a statement released by the zoo after the broadcast interview.

"For us, the sex was just a fact we wanted to check during the exam under anaesthesia, to be sure."

The panda underwent a short medical examination a few months after being born, which has to be done quickly so that the baby can be reunited with its mother.

But Kok said that determining sex is difficult in a young baby not under anaesthetic.

"We were so convinced the baby was male we never doubted it," she said.

Fan Xing was born on May 1 to two giant pandas -- mum Wu Wen and dad Xing Ya -- who were loaned to the Netherlands by China in 2017 for 15 years.

Her name was revealed in October. "Fan" is a reference to the Chinese name for Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh and "Xing" means star, a reference to van Gogh's famous painting, Starry Night.

She will soon be sent back to China as planned as part of an international breeding programme.

Giant pandas were removed from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's red list of endangered species in 2016.

Envoy applauds Indonesian World Cup volunteers

THE PENINSULA — DOHA

The Indonesian Embassy in Qatar held an appreciation nights for Indonesian volunteers for the FIFA World Cup Qatar.

The event was held at the ambassador's residence on Friday.

Indonesian Ambassador to Qatar H E Ridwan Hassan expressed his appreciation for the Indonesian volunteers at the World Cup. "They are actually the ambassadors of Indonesia who stand face to face with fans from all over the world."

Meanwhile, one of the volunteer representatives, Ahmad Syarnubi Fatah, said he was

Around 90 Indonesians were part of the 20,000-strong volunteer force for the World Cup.

proud to be part of the 20,000-strong volunteers for the World Cup. "Even though I needed to travel for about 2.5 hours every day, I still enjoyed this volunteering programme."

At least 90 Indonesian citizens participated as volunteers in the biggest sporting event. While most of them are residents in Qatar, some came directly from Indonesia or other countries. During the tournament, they played various



Ambassador Ridwan Hassan with Indonesians who volunteered for Qatar 2022.

role such as assisting media team and helping fans with disabilities.

In addition to volunteers, there are also young Indonesians who also participated in many World Cup activities.

"There were dozens of Indonesian children who were involved as ball crews, flag bearers or escort players at the World Cup," said Ali Murtado, head of Social and Cultural Affairs at the Indonesian

Embassy in Doha.

Apart of volunteers, Indonesian Embassy also honoured Indonesian cultural groups and individuals in Qatar who had actively promoted Indonesian culture during the World Cup.

Co-written by Qatari composer Dana Al Fardan, musical 'Broken Wings' available to stream online

THE PENINSULA — DOHA

The recent London production of Broken Wings, which took to the stage at Charing Cross Theatre, is now available to stream online for audiences to enjoy until New Year's Day.

The critically acclaimed musical, with a beautiful original score by Middle Eastern duo: Qatari composer and singer-songwriter Dana Al Fardan, and West End actor, singer, and writer Nadim Naaman, was first premiered in 2018 and had sell-out shows at the Theatre Royal Haymarket in London, the Beitiddein Festival in Beirut, Katara Opera House in Qatar, and The Dubai Opera.

Based on the poetic novel of the same name by Lebanese-American writer, poet and visual artist, Kahlil Gibran, the majestic new musical available to stream has world-renowned theatre and Broadway producers, namely Katy Lipson, Bonnie Comley, Stewart F. Lane, and Edward Prophet, at the helm.

Receiving 5-star reviews from the industry's most trusted sources including West End Best Friend, Dress Circle Antics, and Fairy Powered Productions, Broken Wings has been described by All The Dazzles as: "An absolute must-see..." and Broadway World advised: "Grab a ticket or ten for this musical while you can..."

Dana Al Fardan said: "Broken Wings will always hold a special significance for me, not only because it was my first musical, but because it was my first exercise in introducing this prolific figure of Arab origin to a West End audience.

"Thank you to the Aria Entertainment team for making this stream possible."

The events of Broken Wings highlight key issues of the time, yet the themes and debates raised remain increasingly relevant today, over a century later; the fight for gender



equality, the freedom to live life to the fullest, a world where tradition and modernity is celebrated alike, wealth versus happiness, immigration, and the importance of 'home'.

Audiences can stream Broken Wings until New Year's Day at 7:30pm GMT.

Florida leads US population growth for first time in 65 years

BLOOMBERG — WASHINGTON

Florida, which has seen a surge in migrants since the onset of the pandemic, was the state with the fastest-growing population in 2022, taking top spot for the first time since 1957, US Census Bureau data show.

Florida's population increased by 1.9% to 22.2 million between 2021 and 2022, the data show, surpassing Idaho, which led last year. Florida had the second-largest numeric gains, behind Texas.

"For the third most-populous state to also be the fastest growing is notable because it requires significant population gains," the bureau's Marc Perry, Luke Rogers and Kristie Wilder said in a statement.

Wealthy Northeasterners and Californians have long flocked to Miami, drawn to its warm weather and lower taxes. The pandemic accelerated that shift.

Avatar: The Way of Water gains over \$855m in global ticket sales

BLOOMBERG — NEW YORK

Walt Disney Co.'s science-fiction epic *Avatar: The Way of Water* battled winter storms in the US and Canada to bring in an estimated \$56m in ticket sales this weekend through yesterday.

It garnered another \$168.6m in theaters internationally over the weekend, for a total haul of \$855.4m globally since its December 16 release, Disney said in a statement yesterday.

The company predicted the film would take in \$82m domestically over the four days that include today after Christmas.

While the movie easily topped the box office, its performance raises some questions. Domestic ticket sales fell 58% from its \$134.1m opening weekend.

That's typical for a big film release, but executives at theater chains and at Disney had said they expected *The Way of Water* would be more resilient. That was before storms shut some cinemas and brought dangerously cold weather in many parts of the US, however.

The original Avatar had a strong, but not spectacular, opening in 2009. It became the highest-grossing picture in Hollywood history because it stayed on top of the box office for seven weeks. In

all, that movie sold \$2.92bn worth of tickets globally, buoyed by word-of-mouth about its 3D effects and fans who saw it multiple times.

Writer-director James Cameron secured a massive budget to make the sequel, with *The Way of Water* production costs alone topping \$350m.

Disney is planning to release three more Avatar films through 2028. Whether it can make that investment pay off remains to be seen.

While domestic box office receipts for *The Way of Water* came in below some estimates in its opening weekend, the film generated \$50m a day in ticket

sales globally after that, with many kids out of school and adults taking time off.

Ticket sales may benefit from improving weather and a return of theatergoers in the coming weeks.

The entertainment business is still struggling to convince movie fans to come back to theaters after pandemic-related closures.

Films are appearing on streaming services much faster than they did in the past, as media giants look to bulk up subscriptions to those services. That's conditioned people to wait a few weeks to see new movies at home.



Building covered in ice

A building is covered in ice from the spray of Lake Erie waves during a winter storm that hit the Buffalo region in Hamburg, New York, US, on Saturday. (REUTERS)

Canadian polar bears disappearing fast

AFP — OTTAWA

Polar bears are disappearing fast from the Western part of Hudson Bay, on the southern tip of the Canadian Arctic, according to a new government survey.

The number of female bears and cubs in particular has seen a dramatic decline.

Researchers have flown over the region — which includes the town of Churchill, a tourist destination touted as the "polar bear capital of the world" — every five years to count the number of bears and extrapolate population trends.

During the last survey in late August and early September 2021, the results of which were released earlier this month, they spotted 194 bears and, based on that count, estimated a total population of 618 bears, down from 842 five years earlier.

"Comparison to aerial surveys estimates from 2011 and 2016 suggests that the WH (Western Hudson Bay population)

may be decreasing in abundance," the study said.

It also "revealed significant declines in the abundance of adult female and subadult bears (cubs) between 2011 and 2021." "The observed declines are consistent with long-standing predictions regarding the demographic effects of climate change on polar bears," the researchers said.

They also cited possible displacements of bears to neighboring regions and hunting for the population decline.

The bears' sea-ice habitat has been disappearing at an alarming rate, with the far north warming up to four times faster than the rest of the world.

The sea ice has become less thick and is breaking up earlier in the spring as well as freezing later in the fall.

The bears rely on the ice for foraging for seals, movement and reproduction. Since the 1980s, the ice pack in the bay has decreased by nearly 50 percent in summer, according to the US National Snow and Ice Data Center.

French star Omar Sy returns to Senegalese roots for WWI movie

AFP — DAKAR

One of France's best-loved stars, Omar Sy, has returned to his Senegalese roots for a movie about colonial troops who fought for France in the World War I trenches.

Sy — best-known to an international audience for the Netflix thriller series "Lupin" — was in Dakar last week for the glitzy premiere of the much-awaited "Tirailleurs." The story is about a young man in Senegal named Thierno who is press-ganged into the French army, prompting his father to enlist

voluntarily to keep an eye on him. Both are sent to the butchery of the Western Front.

More than 200,000 Africans served in the French armed forces during the first world war.

Many fought as "tirailleurs," or front-line infantry, where losses were often devastating yet remain overlooked in history books and official records.

French-born Sy, who in the film speaks in his mother tongue of Fula, said he was swept away by the movie's French-Senegalese currents.

"This is totally my story. It's totally my identity," he told AFP.

Sy said he had "many emotions" about the film, to which he had invited friends, relatives and Senegalese members of the crew for the premiere.

"It's about being able to acknowledge and remind ourselves of what these men have contributed," Sy told AFP. "It's something that our generation needs." Senegalese music stars Youssou N'Dour and Ismael Lo were among local celebrities who attended.

"Tirailleurs" director is Mathieu Vadepied, who teamed

up with Sy in 2011 to make "The Intouchables," an acclaimed comedy drama about a wealthy but haughty quadriplegic and his ebullient black helper from the gritty Paris suburbs.

Vadepied said the film and choice of Dakar for the launch were a tribute to "all these soldiers who took part in these wars." "The history between France and Senegal and the other countries in Africa is now a distant but shared history. We are intertwined." "Tirailleurs," which had its festival premiere in May in Cannes' Un Certain Regard section, goes on

commercial release in France and Senegal in early January. The English version is entitled "Father & Soldier." Among the public who watched the premiere, many said the film turned a vital spotlight on a painful and often forgotten colonial episode.

"We need (a film like this) to open minds and to serve the duty of remembrance. Not all of us are going to read a 500-page book," said Salome Bar, a 21-year-old French-Senegalese student. "There is still a taboo," she said. "You can't be healed of that wound so easily."