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BOOK VISIT



GRADUATION CEREMONY

Sheikha Jawaher honours outstanding female QU graduates

QNA/THE PENINSULA — DOHA

Consort of H H the Amir H H Sheikha Jawaher bint Hamad bin Suhaim Al Thani patronised Qatar University's (QU) Graduation Ceremony of the 46th batch (class of 2023) of female students, held at QU's Sports and Events Complex yesterday. The ceremony was attended by a number of Their Excellencies Sheikhs and Ministers, along with members of the university's board of trustees, university vice presidents, and the graduates' guardians.

During the ceremony, Her Highness honoured the 499 outstanding students, while President of Qatar University Dr. Hassan Rashid Al Derham handed the certificates to the 3,147 graduate students in various disciplines.

A film about the academic journey of female students was displayed, in addition to the achievements and accomplishments of QU during the 2022-2023 academic year and the most prominent activities, pro-

- In terms of research, Qatar University is today considered the fastest developing in academic publishing in the MENA region.
- A film about the academic journey of female students was screened, showing the achievements and accomplishments of QU during the 2022-2023 academic year.

grammes, and research innovations in various fields.

Graduating student Noura Fahad Al Dosari spoke on behalf of the female graduates.

This year 3147 female graduates from a total of 3913, graduate from the following academic degrees: bachelor's, diploma, master's, doctorate, and doctor of pharmacy. The ceremony included graduates of the following semesters:



Consort of H H the Amir H H Sheikha Jawaher bint Hamad bin Suhaim Al Thani with other dignitaries during the Graduation Ceremony of the 46th batch of Qatar University female students.

Summer 2022, Fall 2022 and Winter 2023, and those expected to graduate Spring 2023.

In his speech, Dr. Al Derham said, "Today, we celebrate the 46th graduation, since the establishment of Qatar University in 1977, where we graduate a new cohort of 3913 students, to join the ranks of the over 64,000 graduates before them, and who had the honor of contributing to the construction and development of

this dear country."

"Qatar University remains the vessel of development and renaissance for society in general, and for Qatari women in particular. The university has provided the Qatari state and society with consecutive groups of outstanding female graduates who participated and shared with their male brothers in many important fields, in order to achieve the comprehensive development and renaissance of our dear country, Qatar.

"Qatar University recognizes its responsibility as the national university and its role as a major source for supplying the job market with the necessary competencies to achieve the state's development plans and as a home of expertise that benefits all sectors of the state and society. In this context, Qatar University's previously implemented transformational strategy was a success, leading the University to achieve most of its desired goals." ➔P3

MoL measures help reduce occupational heat stress cases

SANAULLAH ATAULLAH THE PENINSULA

The measures implemented by the Ministry of Labour (MoL) contributed greatly to curbing the number of injuries resulting from occupational heat stress in recent years in Qatar.

Minister of Labour H E Dr. Ali bin Smaikh Al Marri has stressed Qatar's keenness to upgrade heat stress prevention legislation in line with labour market developments.

The Minister was addressing the opening ceremony of the



International Labour Organization

وزارة العمل
Ministry of Labour
State of Qatar - دولة قطر



- Minister of Labour H E Dr. Ali bin Smaikh Al Marri stressed Qatar's keenness to upgrade heat stress prevention legislation in line with labour market developments.
- Qatar leads the way in safeguarding workers from the negative impacts of occupational heat stress.

International Conference on Occupational Heat Stress under the theme "Implementation of Practices, Sharing of

Experiences" which began yesterday in Doha.

The two-day event organised by MoL in collaboration with the

International Labour Organization (ILO), will discuss the latest measures, challenges, and opportunities to adopt progressive approaches that can help reduce the impact of heat stress on the work environment. The conference will also align with global and regional trends in addressing this issue.

"Qatar leads the way in safeguarding workers from the negative impacts of occupational heat stress. The country was one of the first in the world to implement a comprehensive plan aimed at reducing the detrimental effects of high temper-

atures on workplace productivity," said the Minister.

He explained that the Ministry increased the period during which it is prohibited to work in open places during the summer, as the total prohibited working hours became higher compared to the countries in the region.

The Minister noted the adoption of various practices to ensure the implementation of legislation on the ground, including the promotion of awareness campaigns for employers and workers and inspections of worksites. ➔P5

QT launches annual awards to honour top performers in tourism industry

JOELYN BALUYUT THE PENINSULA

Qatar Tourism, in partnership with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), launched yesterday an annual awards programme designed to recognise and celebrate the excellence of businesses that made remarkable contributions to the country's tourism industry.

The initiative seeks to acknowledge businesses that go above and beyond in delivering outstanding and distinct tourism experiences in Qatar. The awards, called "Qatar Tourism Awards", are intended to shine focus on the elements that contribute to crafting a visitor's experience at every touchpoint of their journey by recognizing tourist firms that consistently achieve excellence in customer service delivery.

In a press conference held Tuesday at The Ned Doha, Chairman of Qatar Tourism and Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, H E Akbar Al Baker said that the launch of awards is designed to recognise outstanding efforts of stakeholders in the tourism sector.

"Through this programme, we hope to inspire and encourage our partners to develop new and innovative initiatives that will continue to elevate Qatar's reputation as a world-class tourism destination."

"In recent years, Qatar has experienced an exceptional transformation of its tourism industry which has elevated the country to being a world-class destination. The hospitality in Qatar has seen a remarkable investment in new hotels, resorts, attractions, and restaurants, all of which cater to diverse interests and tastes. The impact of this transformation is evident in the growth of our visitor numbers and the consistency in outstanding service and experience in our country." ➔P4

RECYCLING TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

Ministry of Municipality to implement new project for waste recycling, management

SANAULLAH ATAULLAH THE PENINSULA

The Ministry of Municipality plans to build an engineered landfill with the highest international standards and specifications and operate a plant for the segregation of recyclable materials in Al Khor to bring about the best solution for waste recycling and management.

"This is part of the efforts of the Ministry to promote sustainability and optimal use of resources with its future projects following Qatar National Vision 2030," said Minister of Municipality H E Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Subaie.

The Minister was speaking at the opening ceremony of the 3rd Recycling Towards Sustainability Conference and Exhibition 2023 which began yesterday in the Sheraton Doha Hotel.

The two-day event is being organised by the Ministry of Municipality under the slogan "Together We Make the Difference for a Sustainable Future" for exchanging expertise and experiences about the latest methods and technologies in the field of waste recycling and treatment.

Over 35 waste recycling and management experts will be speaking in several sessions at the conference. An associated exhibition is hosting 40 pavilions showcasing the latest technologies, products, and services in the field of waste management and recycling.



Minister of Transport H E Jassim bin Saif Al Sulaiti (1st left), Minister of Municipality H E Dr. Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Subaie (2nd right), Minister of Justice H E Masoud bin Mohammed Al Amri (3rd right), and Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council H E Dr. Hamda bint Hassan Al Sulaiti (2nd left) touring the 3rd Recycling Towards Sustainability Conference & Exhibition in Doha yesterday. PIC: RAJAN VADAKKEMURIYIL

The Minister said that the Ministry of Municipality has developed many plans, laws, and integrated goals for the safe disposal of waste of all kinds in all locations utilizing the latest methods.

The Domestic and Solid Waste Treatment Center in Mesaieed produced over 271 million kilowatts per hour of electricity and 35,000 tonnes fertilizers in 2022. Over 27,000 tonnes of recyclable materials were also segregated last year," said the Minister.

He said that as a culmination of its pioneering role in the treatment and recycling of waste, the Center won GCC Award in the field of municipal work at its fourth session, in the category of Best Practices in Waste Management and Recycling.

The Minister said that the Ministry recently disposed of all tire stocks accumulated in the country for many years, after developing a well-studied plan for the safe disposal of discarded tires and finding successful solutions in recycling them at sites. ➔P4

Qatar condemns brutal Israeli aggression

QNA — DOHA

The State of Qatar condemned in the strongest terms the brutal Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip, considering it a new episode in the series of horrific occupation crimes against the defenseless Palestinian people, especially women, and children.

In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs warned of the fading chances of peace and the widening of the cycle of violence due to the provocative Israeli escalation in the occupied Palestinian territories. The minister underscored the need for the international community to move urgently to provide the necessary protection for the Palestinian people and to compel Israel to stop its flagrant violations of international law and force it to respect international legitimacy resolutions.

The ministry reiterated Qatar's firm position on the justice of the Palestinian cause and the legitimate rights of the brotherly Palestinian people, including the establishment of their independent state on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Qatar Press Center condemns Israeli attacks on Gaza

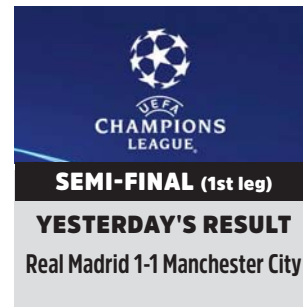
THE PENINSULA — DOHA

Qatar Press Center has expressed its strong condemnation of the continuous attacks by the Israeli occupation forces against civilians and innocent people in Gaza Strip.

The Center affirms the official stand of Qatar, which condemns the continuous Israeli violations that directly affect people's lives and have no justification.

The attack on Gaza which took place yesterday and the day before is the clearest evidence that there is a clear Israeli violation of all previous agreements and rounds of truce said the center.

The international political statements issued yesterday condemn the attacks of the Israeli occupation forces, but they are not sufficient to deter it and hold Israel accountable for the ongoing war crimes against our brothers in Palestine, the Centre said.



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Horrific crimes against defenseless

BUSINESS 13

QatarEnergy enters Suriname offshore exploration

SPORT 19

Al Sadd, Al Arabi gear up for thriller as tickets for Amir Cup final sold out



Congratulations, Class of 2023!

President Michael H. Schill, Dean Marwan M. Kraidy, faculty, and staff of Northwestern University in Qatar wish the Class of 2023 success in their future endeavors.

Abdul Karim Abdur Rahman Raghavulu Anisetty	Hakem Al Meqdad	Muhammad Abdullah Imran Tahir
Abdullah Imran	Haoyun Xue	Muhammad Shahan Ejaz
Adelaide Uwantege	Haregewoin Zeleke Mehari	Muneera Ibrahim J O Fakhroo
Aesha Ihab Farouk Mohamed Ahmed Hussein	Hend Ahmad M I Al-Derbasti	Nadia Mustafa Yaqoub Al Hinai
Aisha Saad Al-Jassim	Hissa Mohammed KHT Al-Kuwari	Nathanael Sisay Gemechu
Alanoud Mohammed E S Al-Aqeedi	Hoi Leng lam	Neeha Rashid
Ali Khalid J.M. Al-Thani	Hongji Feng	Noof Ahmad A H Al-Ansari
Ali Umair Ahmar	James Paul Nyaga Mburu	Noora Abdulrahman Al-Thani
Alreem Abdulla N S Al-Khalifa	Jassim Hamad Al-Thani	Noura A.S. AlShantti
Alwaleed Khalid A I Al-Marikhi	Jehad Nael AlHallaq	Paribesh Sitoula
Antonella Sansalone	Jiwon Seo	Peiwen Zou
Areesha Khan Lodhi	Julia Magdalena Śmietana	Princess Jannah Sismar Collado
Asmae Nakib	Khadija Ahmad	Raghdan Alhennawi
Ayah Amro Y O Shouhdy	Kholoud Ibrahim M Y Kafoud	Rea Singh Mishra
Azma Hasina Mulundika	Kim Joseph Makhoul	Reema Faisal Al Hajri
Bader Mohammed M S Alshamlan	Lana Mohammad Al-Qatami	Reema Sultan M A Al-Suwaidi
Beatrice Zemelyte	Lena Raed Nawaf Al-Homoud	Sadeem Khalid M M Al-Qurashi
Ben Arnold Mwangi	Leticia Mendes Da Costa Bila	Safin Hasan
Bizawit Addis Merawi	Majd Basim Nasr Allah Heikel	Sahar Rabih Bou Hamdan Ghanem
Buthaina Mohammed S M Al-Mana	Makeda Shimelis Ararso	Saif Hamad M A Al-Tamimi
Buthaina Saad A H Al-Muhannadi	Malek Abdallah El Bini	Sara Mohammed F A Al-Mana
Chadi Lasri	Mariam Khamis M K Al-Khulaifi	Sara Yousef A M Muftah
Dana Hussameddin AlKhiyami	Mariana Xavier Brito de Araujo	Sarah Shamim
Dana Khaled M H Alawad	Mary Ann Kuriyan	Selenat Bezuayehu Debebe
Dana Mohamad Maher Said Al-Hayek	Mary Jessy Milena Uwikuzo Kaligirwa	Shaikha Hassan A A Al-Abdulghani
Dania Ammar Abdulhameed Abureqaiba	Maryam Fahad J. A. Al-Thani	Shaikha Khalifa H. J. Al-Thani
Elyssa Gaddas	Maryam Khalid N I Al-Hail	Sida Lai
Fai Mohammed S A Al-Naimi	Maryam Zeyad M I Al-Jaidah	Tala Khalid Bibi
Fajar Salem Al-Kubaisi	Mashael Talal S B Almannai	Tasmia Mohamed Jabbar Belal
Farouk Essalhi	Maya Amjad M. Alississ	Tayyaba Imran
Fatima Mohammed S A Al-Mohannadi	Mo'men Ghanem Ahmad Hasanain	Thethe Gwiza Ngulula
Fatma Oueslati	Mohammed Hamad M H Al-Hawal	William Gitta Lugolobi
Ghada Ahmad S A Al-Raesi	Mohammed Saleh M M Al-Khulaifi	Xingyu Qin
Habeebah Hany Tharwat Abdelhamid	Monazza Asif Farooqi	Yara Amr Abdelhamid Mahrous
Hajar Youssef A ElMalem	Moza Abdulla A H Al-Kamali	Yichen Tao
	Moza Ahmad S. J. Al-Romaihi	Zeest Marrium

Sheikha Jawaher honours outstanding female QU graduates



H H Sheikha Jawaher bint Hamad bin Suhaim Al Thani in a group photo with high-achieving female students of Qatar University's class of 2023 at the graduation ceremony yesterday.

FROM PAGE 1

Dr. Al Derham said, "Currently, the University is on the verge of approving the university's strategic plan for the next phase, in line with the Third National Development Strategy (2023-2030)."

"In terms of research, Qatar University is today considered the fastest developing in academic publishing in the MENA region. Its research centres and researchers are also working on many tasks required by all development projects in our generous country, in partnership with various vital institutions, especially state institutions."

Addressing the graduating Class of 2023, Dr. Al Derham said, "Dear graduates, Qatar University is not merely a passing stage in your career, that ends with the culmination of study and graduation, but it is the starting point and reference to which the graduate



H H Sheikha Jawaher along with Ministers, officials, faculty and graduates at the commencement ceremony.

returns whenever she needs more knowledge. The university, with its professors and all its sectors, spare no effort in serving you with more science and knowledge.

"Today, as we celebrate the success of our daughters and their graduation, we must pay

homage and respect to the parents, and we extend our thanks and congratulations to all of them.

"I also cannot fail to mention the faculty members of Qatar University, who have provided their knowledge and experience to build a new

generation of women that our country needs. Graduates, today you are on the threshold of a milestone; yesterday you were students in the university halls, and today you are entering professional life, where you will contribute to building your country and your nation. So, my

dear daughters, you should always remember your responsibilities before Allah (SWT), towards your homeland, and H H the Amir. Work; give back; and serve this country, which has given you so much, and may you live up to your expectations."

Meanwhile, Al Dosari, a graduate from the College of Law, said, "Today I stand before you, proud and full of happiness, representing the graduates of the 46th batch of Qatar University. My sisters, 'The human being is the most important building block of a nation and its greatest investment. Qatar has invested in its youth, it progresses by you and looks forward to you.' These are the words of H H The Amir of the State of Qatar."

She continued, "We have experienced many challenges and difficulties during our university career. However, we did not surrender,

and we continued to excel, with diligence and creativity. 'You have a future', a statement said to me by one of the distinguished professors, which illuminated my path, and I realised very well that I am on the right track, despite the magnitude of the responsibilities."

"Undoubtedly, each of us suffered pressures, and went through challenges, perhaps intensified for some of us, so that the whole university future is at stake, but we succeeded in achieving what we saw yesterday as a dream."

Host of the ceremony, Zainab Mohamed Al Mahmoud, a member of QU faculty, Arabic department, College of Arts and Sciences, said, "We are pleased and honoured to live with you these great moments, as Qatar University today celebrates a new batch of outstanding graduates, today we appreciate their efforts and the efforts of all those who supported them."

VCUarts Qatar holds commencement for class of 2023

THE PENINSULA – DOHA

Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar (VCUarts Qatar) held the commencement ceremony for its graduating class of 2023 at Hamad Bin Khalifa University's Multaqa Students Center in Qatar Foundation's (QF) Education City on May 8.

64 students from VCUarts Qatar's Art History, Fashion Design, Graphic Design, Interior Design, Painting + Printmaking and MFA programs will graduate from the art and design university this year.

The class of 2023 graduates include 19 Graphic Design students, 20 Interior Design students, six Painting + Printmaking students, seven Art History students, five Fashion Design students, and seven MFA students. The dignitaries who attended the ceremony included H E Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, and senior representatives of Doha Film Institute, Reach Out to Asia, and Qatar Leadership Centre.

The commencement speaker was Shaikha Hanadi bint Nasser Al Thani, a Qatari business leader, reminded the soon-to-be graduates of the need to "dream big" and "embrace challenges".

She said, "As an economist, you may wonder why I stand before you today. It is because I believe that creativity, when

64 students are graduating from the art and design university this year.

paired with discipline and persistence, leads to greatness. The renowned economist John Maynard Keynes once said, 'The difficulty lies not so much in developing new ideas as in escaping from old ones.' My life and career have revolved around this quote.

"Class of 2023 (...) As you embark on the next chapter of your lives, remember that there is no perfect job, and no career path is without challenges. Embrace those challenges, learn from them, and grow. As you leave the nurturing embrace of VCUarts Qatar, I urge you to remain committed, curious, and courageous. "Qatar is a nation that embraces challenges, fosters unity, and celebrates creativity. You, the graduating class of VCUarts Qatar, will continue this legacy."

From VCUarts Qatar, the University's Dean, Amir Berbić, Interim Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Dr. Cherif Amor; Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, Dr. Katherine Wildman; the Deans, Directors, Associate Deans and Chairs of the University's many departments and programs, and faculty and staff, were present to mark the occasion.



Qatar Museums Chairperson H E Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani (third right) and other dignitaries and faculty attending VCUarts Qatar commencement ceremony 2023.

VCUarts Qatar's Dean Berbić said, "You are graduating into a world that is wholly different from when your journey at VCUarts Qatar began.

"You should be incredibly proud of everything you've accomplished in the last four years when the world itself was starting a new chapter of its own. Now, it is up to you to take ownership of the opportunities that await you in this environment. "The FIFA World-cup in Qatar showed us that it takes designers, artists, storytellers and creators to shape meaningful and profound experiences — take a moment to appreciate how you are uniquely positioned to take the creative reins in this country while the legacy of an incredible World Cup is still fresh — indeed, your time is now."

The event was also attended by guests from VCUarts Qatar's renowned home campus, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) and Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts (VCUarts), in Richmond, US. They included Dr. Michael Rao, President, VCU; Dr. Carmenita Higginbotham, Dean and Special Assistant to the Provost, VCUarts, and Dr. Scott Breuninger, Dean, The Honors College, VCU, all of whom shared special messages congratulating the graduating Class of 2023.

Dr. Michael Rao, President, VCU, said, "Good design makes our lives better. Helping people understand the world around them, and navigate it more easily, is as vitally important as anything else we do. That's why

we have worked together to prepare you not just to be designers, or artists — or doctors, or engineers, or teachers. We've educated you to be deep thinkers. We've educated you to be the leading innovators of the world. You will be creating the future — for yourselves, for Qatar, for the world." Valedictorian and Graphic Design senior Fatima Nazir spoke on behalf of her peers when she said, "One of the most valuable lessons we learn during our time at VCUarts Qatar is to "trust the process." Designing is a challenging field that often requires a lot of articulation and experimentation, but through patience and a willingness to explore new ideas, we have been able to push our limits and create some of our best works."

Ashghal wins eight safety awards from British Safety Council

THE PENINSULA – DOHA

For the fourth year in a row, the Public Works Authority (Ashghal) has received international acclaim for its efforts in health and safety and making occupational health and safety one of its strategic pillars.

The authority, represented by the Roads Projects Department (RPD), claimed 8 international safety awards from the British Safety Council for the Local Areas Infrastructure Programme projects in 2023.

The Roads and Infrastructure Project in Umm Slal (Package 1) won the International Safety Award with Distinction, which is considered the highest grade in this category. Five other projects won the International Safety Award with Merit, and they are: Roads and Infrastructure in Al Wajba East (Packages 1 & 3) with one nomination, Roads and Infrastructure in Al Mearad and Southwest of Muaither (Package 3), Roads and Infrastructure in Jeryan Nejama, Roads and Infrastructure in Semaisma Village (Package 1), Roads and Infrastructure in Um Slal Ali, Um Ebairiya Village, South Um Al Amad and North Bu Fessela (Package 1).

In addition, the Bu Samra Border Crossing Project and the Roads and Infrastructure Project in Al Mearad and Southwest of Muaither (Package 2) received the International Safety Award.

Eng. Saoud Al Tamimi, Roads Projects Department Manager, said: "This consecutive and distinctive win by Ashghal, one year after another, together with the Local Areas Infrastructure Programme's, winning 8 international health and safety awards for the fourth year successively, prove the Authority's success in reinforcing the principle of maintaining health and safety in its construction projects. It also reflects the Authority's leading position in, and significant impact on, the Qatari construction sector in terms of spreading awareness and disseminating best Health and Safety practices."

Mike Robinson, Chief Executive Officer of the British Safety Council, congratulated Ashghal on their success in winning this significant number of International Safety Awards.

CMC ELECTION

Authorities using technology to facilitate voters, candidates

QNA – DOHA

The Supervising Committee of the 7th Central Municipal Council (CMC) elections has capitalised on technology to facilitate voters and candidates, Director of the Ministry of Interior's (MoI) Elections Department, Major General Majid Ibrahim Al Khulaifi, who is also the Supervising Committee's head, said yesterday.

Speaking to QNA, Major General Al Khulaifi said that SMSs replaced all paper receipts for various applications.

The Committee made it possible to submit an electronic voter registration application through Metrash2 app, and to inquire about electoral

registration through Metrash2 app or through the MoI portal, in addition to providing a barcode to locate polling stations, Al Khulaifi added.

He added that the current law regulating the CMC elections does not allow an electronic vote casting and tabulation, voicing hopes for the appropriate legal amendments to expand the use of electronic technologies in the next elections.

He also highlighted all the election phases — preparation, voter registration, candidate registration, election campaigns, up to the voting day on which the votes will be tabulated and election results announced.

Al Khulaifi reiterated the

conditions stipulated by law including that voters must have an original Qatari nationality or have obtained it more than 15 years ago; they must be above 18 years old on May 4, 2023; they have not been previously convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude or dishonesty, unless they have been rehabilitated; and they must be residing in the constituency where they have the right to vote, must not be affiliates of the armed forces or the police

He added that all candidates must be Qatari, and that whoever acquires Qatari nationality must have his father born in Qatar. Candidates must be 30 years or above, fluent in reading and

writing, and among those with recognised competence and honesty, he added.

The conditions, according to Al Khulaifi, also stipulate that a candidate must not have been previously convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude or dishonesty, unless they have been rehabilitated; they permanently live and be on the voter lists in the constituency in which they are running for elections; and that they should not be affiliates of the Ministry of Defence or the MoI or any other military agency.

Every constituency has three voting stations, one of which is dedicated to receiving voter registration applications, verifying the required voter conditions, and approving the

final voter lists, he said.

Major Gen. Al Khulaifi added that the second committee, known as Election Committee, receives candidate applications, verifies the prerequisite and approves the final candidate lists, in addition to monitoring the votes casting and counting as well as election results announcement.

The third committee examines appeals and grievances submitted to it at various election phases, he added.

Major Gen. Al Khulaifi urged citizens to exercise their right to vote as the key index to measure the election success. Voters are invited to exercise their rights and responsibly participate in selecting their CMC representatives, he added.

WCM-Q graduates 42 new doctors

Govt measures help reduce occupational heat stress cases

FROM PAGE 1

“Qatar has undertaken, since 2019, the implementation of the largest study ever on the effects of occupational heat stress in coordination and cooperation with international partners. The study’s findings have contributed to the global understanding of occupational heat stress and provided insights into potential solutions. As a result, the study has made recommendations aimed at improving worker protection,” he added.

The Minister said that the world is suffering from the climate change crisis, which affected the entire world, in addition to the challenges related to global warming and its impact on work.

He stressed the importance of holding a series of meetings to discuss ways to prevent the impact of high temperatures on the work environment, as it is one of the priorities of the occupational safety and health policy.

The Minister emphasised MoL’s ongoing collaboration with both regional and international partners in the national occupational safety and health system.

“This partnership aims to improve prevention measures and enhance the nation’s capacity to monitor heat stress cases,” he added.

For his part, Khalifa Khamis Mattar Al Kaabi, Representative of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry in the UAE and member of the International Labour Organization Governing Body for West Asian countries affirmed that employers are firmly committed to the issue of occupational safety and health.

He stressed taking appropriate measures to avoid accidents and injuries and protect workers.

“Safeguarding the well-being and safety of workers is not solely a moral or legal responsibility but also an

essential requirement for achieving sustainable economic growth within countries. It is also crucial for countries that supply a significant portion of the workforce in other nations”, he noted.

Bilal Malkawi, Regional Secretary, International Transport Workers Federation said that Qatar has taken a key step towards addressing the impact of occupational heat stress by adopting advanced legislation that is considered a model to be followed at the level of countries in the region.

He appreciated the efforts made by Qatar in the field of protecting workers from the negative effects of heat stress, pointing to the need to adopt a comprehensive approach to occupational safety and health that depends primarily on prevention from the negative effects of different circumstances.

Dr. Ruba Jaradat, Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for the Arab States,



Minister of Labour H E Dr. Ali bin Smaikh Al Marri (right) interacts with a participant on the sidelines of International Conference on Occupational Heat Stress, in Doha, yesterday.

ILO, said that the rise in global temperatures presents challenges that might increase occupational illnesses, which could have adverse effects on workers in both the short and long term.

Heat stress causes a decline in worker productivity, as it is estimated that 2% of the total working hours are lost around the world each year, according to ILO, she said, noting that there are expectations of a loss of 3 and 5% of working hours in some Gulf countries by the year 2030 due to heat stress.

Abdullah Bin Zaid Al Mahmoud Center hosts programmes to introduce Islamic culture

QNA – DOHA

Abdullah Bin Zaid Al Mahmoud Islamic Cultural Center at the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs continues to provide its educational programmes to the communities residing in the country, which includes introducing Islam and Islamic culture and programmes for teaching Arabic to non-native speakers, in addition to holding educational activities and religious lectures, which generally aim to provide an integrated and balanced picture of Islam, its culture and civilization.

In this context, a number of university students and a number of tourist guides wishing to learn about Qatar’s culture and heritage visited the centre as part of their training

programme on tourist guidance on the Discover Qatar platform. During their visit to the centre, they learned about various aspects of Qatari culture and Islamic civilization. This visit comes as a continuation of the cooperation with the authorities concerned with tourism work in the country, where the centre contributes to educating tour guides about the heritage and culture in Qatar.

In the same context, nine students from the student exchange programme of Texas A&M University visited the centre, and learned about Qatari culture through the centre’s heritage hall, and Islam, its law and civilization through the main cultural hall of the centre. They admired and praised the centre’s work.

Occupational safety and health commemorative stamps launched

THE PENINSULA – DOHA

The Ministry of Labour, in cooperation with the Qatar Postal Services Company (Qatar Post), has launched a set of occupational safety and health stamps.

Minister of Labour H E Dr. Ali bin Smaikh Al Marri inaugurated the stamps during the opening ceremony of International Conference on Occupational Heat Stress in Doha yesterday.

The initiative aims at highlighting the efficiency of laws aimed at mitigating the impact of heat stress, while also enforcing the highest safety regulations for constructing facilities and public infrastructure.

The commemorative stamps are characterised by the expression of four different entities, namely the Ministry of Labour (MoL), the Public Works Authority (Ashghal), the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy (SC), and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Stamps were presented under the



title “Safety and Health at Workplace: A Basic Right and a Shared Responsibility”.

Minister of Labour also honoured Asma Bint Abi Bakr Primary School for Girls, Al Bandari Mubarak Al Jarboui and Lujain Mustafa Alyan for their efforts in the field of innovation in addressing heat stress during the event.

Minister of Labour, ILO officials discuss cooperation

THE PENINSULA – DOHA

Minister of Labour H E Dr. Ali bin Smaikh Al Marri held meetings with a number of visiting dignitaries and officials on the sidelines of the International Conference on Occupational Heat Stress yesterday.

They included Manuela Tomei, Assistant Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO); H E Khalifa Khamis Mattar Al Kaabi, Representative of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry in the UAE and member of the ILO Governing Body for West Asian countries; Bilal Malkawi, Regional Secretary, International Transport Workers Federation and Amer Al Hajri, Director of the Executive Office of the Labour Ministers of GCC.

During the meetings, they reviewed aspects of joint cooperation, and ways to support and develop them during the coming period, especially updating legislation related to occupational heat stress and the need to adopt an integrated approach to prevent the effects of heat stress worldwide.

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Class of 2023

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مباروك

لدفعه ٢٠٢٣

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Qatar, Morocco discuss cooperation in field of social development and family

Minister of Social Development and Family H E Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser Al Misnad, who is currently visiting Rabat, met with the Minister of Solidarity, Social Integration and the Family of the Kingdom of Morocco H E Aawatif Hayar. During the meeting, they discussed aspects of the bilateral cooperation and the existing projects between the two countries in the fields of social development and family and ways to enhance and develop them, in addition to a number of issues of common concern. (QNA)

CLASS OF 2023

Northwestern University graduates encouraged to create impact

THE PENINSULA – DOHA

Marking 11 years since the school's first graduation in 2012, Northwestern University in Qatar celebrated the graduation of the Class of 2023.

This year's ceremony began with Marwan M. Kraidy, dean and CEO of Northwestern Qatar, congratulating the graduating class on their achievements and highlighting the importance of imagination in the days after graduation. "The skills and knowledge you acquired at Northwestern Qatar will serve you well, but what will serve you even better is your imagination," said Kraidy. "Imagination spurs innovation and discovery; it enables us to envision new ways of being, of encountering the other, of knowing the world. Briefly stated, imagination is a catalyst for excellence."

Kraidy urged the Class of 2023 to center excellence in their journeys after graduation but to do so with humility. "Excellence, tafawwoq, shares the same root with horizon, or ufoq ... but be careful, for another word with the same root is fawqiyya, or the feeling of superiority towards



Northwestern University graduating students at the graduation ceremony held at the Education City.

others, a human defect we should all strive to avoid, for gratitude and humility are prerequisites to excellence," said Kraidy.

Secretary General of the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy H E Hassan Al Thawadi, who addressed the graduating class as this year's graduation speaker, drew parallels between his work leading the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar and their resilience as students on the way to graduation, underscoring the importance of finding passion and

determination in achieving success.

"When I was your age, I did not know how exactly to help write history, but I knew I wanted to take part in that for myself, my country, and for the global community we are all a part of," said Al Thawadi. "Find your passion and let it drive you towards your goals and dreams. Let it take you to places you did not think were possible. Your strength and resilience will surprise you. Your creativity will amaze you. Your determination

Awqaf Ministry honours winners of Al Muhaddis Al Saghir competition

QNA — DOHA

The General Directorate of Endowments at the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs has honoured the winners of Al 'Muhaddis Al Saghir' competition on memorising and reciting prophetic traditions. The contest was held under the supervision of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Ministry Education and Higher Education.

Dr. Sheikh Khalid bin Mohammed bin Ghanem Al Thani, Director of General Department of Endowments at Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, in a statement, praised the great turnout for this year's edition of the competition.

He said that the number of participants reached 6,705



Dr. Sheikh Khalid bin Mohammed bin Ghanem Al Thani, Director of General Department of Endowments honouring a winner of Al Muhaddis Al Saghir competition during a ceremony.

male and female students and parents out of them 4,015 male and female students and parents received a good and above mark. Sheikh Khalid said that the competition comes in

line with the objectives of the endowment fund to serve the Qur'an and Sunnah, and seeks to achieve many goals, including instilling love for the Prophet, in the hearts of the participants.

have the ability now to tell our stories in different forms. You have the ability to tell our story and break down stereotypes and remove barriers to diversity, change, and positive coexistence."

In addressing her fellow graduates, Aesha Hussein, the student speaker, encouraged them to use the skills they developed at Northwestern Qatar to create new opportunities and make a positive impact in the world.

"Don't wait for an opportunity to come up; create your own opportunity," said Hussein. "We have the tools and the power to tell stories. Take those tools, challenge, and question what you're being told, go out there and tell stories, write, film, create, investigate."

This year's ceremony also featured the announcement of the Class of 2023 awards. Xingyu Qin received the Dean's Award, Zeest Marrium was the recipient of the Communication Award, Fatma Oueslati of the Journalism and Strategic Communication Award, Khadija Ahmad received the Liberal Arts Award, and Jehad Nael AlHallaq the Student Leadership Award.

QRDI, CDTI launch programme to support research projects

JOEL JOHNSON
THE PENINSULA

The Qatar Research, Development, and Innovation (QRDI) Council, in joint efforts with the Spanish Center for the Development of Technology and Innovation (CDTI), launched yesterday 'Qatar Spain Innovation Programme' (QASIP), a combined funding initiative to support the

research and development projects.

The event was graced by the presence of Ambassador of Spain to Qatar H E Javier Carbajosa Sanchez and Secretary General of the QRDI Council Eng. Omar Ali Al Ansari along with other representatives and dignitaries. At the occasion, Ambassador Sanchez said that the good governance seen in countries such as Qatar promoting innovations is going to build a better future.



Ambassador of Spain to Qatar H E Javier Carbajosa Sanchez (third right) and Secretary General of the QRDI Council Eng. Omar Ali Al Ansari (center) along with other officials during the event.

Speaking to *The Peninsula* on the sidelines of the event, Ambassador Sanchez said, "These events will enable networking between Qatari friends and Spanish rivals. With two funding agencies that are ready to put forward several economic resources to fund initiatives will not only result in close relations between our economies but they are going to bring layers of innovation and technologies, which is the future of our countries."

Eng. Al Ansari highlighted that "The programme aims to connect Qatari and Spanish businesses to develop cutting-edge solutions, bringing together the brightest minds and innovative talent from both countries."

Speaking about the significance of the partnership between CDTI and QRDI, Eng. Al Ansari said that "This is our first bilateral innovation programme in Qatar. It is also the first for CDTI in the region and the first bilateral programme between Qatar and any country. So it's a one-of-a-kind collaboration."

Commenting on the number of applications expected to apply to the programme, he said: "This year is a pilot year so we are rolling out a limited scale and next year based on the success we will be scaling it to a different level."

Addressing the gathering, Cristina Gracia, International Programme Manager at CDTI, and Haya Al Ghanim, Director at QRDI Council briefed on the innovative research programme carried out by the two entities in areas that interests the two countries in addition to providing details about the programme.

The officials mentioned that QRDI will offer funds in Qatar and CDTI will be providing them in Spain. In addition to that, QASIP expects to encounter specific market needs and socio-economic challenges that come under the interest of Spain and Qatar. Having stated that, it is open for all R&D projects covering many areas like energy, health, resource sustainability, and digital technology.

In terms of funding, QRDI will offer a grant of up to QRI.5m per project including qualifying capital expenditure, manpower, and SMEs.

On the other hand, CDTI will be providing partial reimbursable aid of up to 85 percent of the approved budget. The minimum budget for these fundable activities will be €175,000 (QR43,877). The proposals to submit applications will commence on May 26 and the deadline is on September 7. The finalists and awardees will be announced by February 2024.

Qatar participates in Nakba Day 75th Anniversary

QNA — CAIRO

The State of Qatar, represented by its permanent delegation to the Arab League, participated in the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Nakba and the Palestinian Prisoners' Day, organized by the Arab League's General Secretariat today at its headquarters in Cairo.

Assistant Arab League Secretary-General for Palestine and the Occupied Arab Territories Affairs Ambassador Said Abu Ali said in a speech on behalf of the Secretary-General that the Nakba's anniversary recalls the terrible tragedy that befell the Palestinian people as a result of the occupation of their land, their unjust and aggressive displacement, and their being subjected to a series of heinous crimes and massacres.

He added that this occasion is also a reminder of the continued absence of international justice and the Palestinian people's continuous cry out to global conscience for more than seven decades.

He added that crimes committed will not fall under a statute of limitations no matter how much time passes, calling for the activation of international justice mechanisms to prosecute Israeli officials for their crimes and holding them accountable, explaining that the responsibility falls on the shoulders of the International Criminal Court to expedite its procedures in order to achieve this goal and ending this impunity.

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Minister of State for Foreign Affairs meets ambassador of Philippines



Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad Al Muraikhi met yesterday with Ambassador of the Republic of the Philippines to the State of Qatar H E Lilibeth Velasco Pono. During the meeting, they discussed bilateral cooperation relations between the two countries.

ICOM Qatar announces new members of National Committee

THE PENINSULA — DOHA:

International Council of Museums (ICOM) Qatar has announced the formation of the new National Committee chaired by Sheikha Amna bint Abdulaziz Al Thani.

The formation of this council marks a significant step towards strengthening Qatar's position in the field of museums on an international scale. The panel of board members will include, Dr. Fatema Al Sulaiti, who will sit as Vice Chair of ICOM Qatar Committee, Dr. Hafiz Ali Abdulla, Sheikh Abdulaziz Al Thani, Jack Thomas Taylor, Zeina Arida, Aisha Al Attiya, Mariam Al Suwaidi (treasurer), Dr. Rashid Malheya (secretary) and Nabilah Asarow (secretary).

Sheikha Amna bint Abdulaziz Al Thani, Chair of

ICOM Qatar, said, "I am pleased to congratulate all members on the formation of ICOM Qatar, which will undoubtedly strengthen our role in the international museum community. Museums play a vital role in cultural, artistic, social, scientific, and educational development, and we believe that ICOM Qatar will contribute significantly to these areas.

I see the ICOM Qatar Council as a unique platform that offers opportunities for cooperation and exchange of experiences among members of the global network. Together, we can exchange ideas, expertise, and knowledge that will promote the progression of museum practices.

I look forward to working with all members of the ICOM Qatar committee and wish

them every success in their efforts to promote museums and cultural heritage in Qatar and beyond."

Ahmad Musa Al Namla, Chief Executive Officer of Qatar Museums, the nation's preeminent institution for art and culture, congratulated ICOM on the formation of the new board and said: "I am thrilled to see the new formation of ICOM Qatar and congratulate all appointed members on their roles.

The ICOM Qatar committee is committed to promoting and advancing the museum industry in Qatar and the region, and the newly formed council will be instrumental in achieving this goal. Under the leadership of Sheikha Amna bint Abdulaziz Al Thani, the ICOM Qatar team is well-positioned to achieve great success."

COMMENDABLE PERFORMANCE

Qatar International School achieves outstanding results in BSO inspection

THE PENINSULA — DOHA

Penta International recently conducted a British Schools Overseas inspection (BSO) of Qatar International School (QIS) and the report was "outstanding," for the second consecutive time.

The rigorous inspection, which is fully accredited by the Department for Education of the UK Government, covered key areas such as: leadership and management, quality of the curriculum, quality of teaching and learning, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students, welfare, health and safety, and the overall quality of the education provided.



Front view of the entrance to the Qatar International School.

QIS is a British International School founded in 1977 and has grown to become one of Qatar's top private schools, with over 2000 students on roll.

QIS is a British International School founded in 1977 and has grown to become one of Qatar's top private schools, with over 2000 students on roll and a campus featuring a variety of specialist facilities and spaces for enhanced learning, along with an exceptional team of staff that supports each student in their journey of learning.

The inspection found that QIS offers, "an excellent British education that fully meets the

needs of its students. Students are supported to become independent, creative and resourceful learners, while a love of learning is balanced with high academic outcomes and strong personal development." The inspection noted, "the outstanding behaviour displayed by all students," and the "highly effective staff," in ensuring all students have a detailed understanding of where they are on their learning journey."

"The curriculum at QIS is rich, varied and imaginative, providing students with a wide range of opportunities in linguistic, STEM, human and social, physical and creative areas of learning. Classrooms and outdoor areas are equipped with stimulating and interesting resources. The school has also implemented initiatives and UK best practices to ensure students can better transition to

universities around the world." The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students was also praised. "The school fosters an inclusive and supportive environment where students from different nationalities feel welcome and accepted." Multicultural days and assemblies are regularly organised to showcase the diversity of the student body, which represents over 70 different nationalities.

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety was also seen as excellent, where healthy diets and lifestyles are promoted throughout all year groups, this is embedded in the PSHE curriculum as well as weekly assemblies.

The results of the inspection were incredibly positive from a parent's perspective as well, with parents, "extremely satisfied with the school's education provision

and the academic progress of their children."

Importantly, they also felt, "that teaching is excellent, students behave very well and their children thoroughly enjoy attending the school," which they also agreed offers, "good value for money."

The IGCE results from 2018-2022 indicate an overall increase each year with 52 percent of the students obtaining 5 x A*-A grades in 2022. The AS levels results from 2018-2022 indicate an overall increase each year with 44 percent now obtaining 3 x A-B grades. The A levels also show a similar transition with 60 percent of students obtaining 3 x A*-B. The academic standards achieved by students at QIS are outstanding, with some recording the highest marks in Qatar, the Middle East and even the World in recent years.

9th Senyar Festival begins

THE PENINSULA — DOHA

Katara Beach witnessed the launch of the Hadaq and Fahah competitions within the ninth edition of the Senyar Festival yesterday, which records the participation of 58 teams and 697 participants, including 64 from the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and 61 from the country's residents.

At around 7am, the participants went from Katara Beach to Sealine. The competitions will start on today, from 4am to 6:15pm. As for the closure, it will be on Friday at four in the afternoon.

Jihad Al Jaidah, a member of the Organising Committee of the Festival, said that this version had some differences in terms of hunting, calculating points and weight, as in this way the effort and fatigue are reduced on the contestants as well as on the Committee, noting that in previous years the result was calculated based on the largest amount of catch, and some of the participating teams brought in very large

quantities of fish, which constitutes a great effort on the captains and the referees, stressing that this method was welcomed by the contestants, and he added.

The total prize for this edition amounted to QR2,200,000 for the first 15 positions, indicating that the cessation of competitions due to the pandemic for a period of three years gave a great incentive to the participants in this edition with greater enthusiasm and vigor.

The Organizing Committee had previously held an informative meeting during which it determined the conditions and criteria to be adopted in the arbitration.

Including that the loader should be made of wood (traditional or advanced) and suitable for sailing and meet safety conditions and navigation devices, and be licensed by government agencies, and each team consists of 8 to 12 people. With the need to provide a certificate of medical examination for all team members.



Participants arrive for the 9th Senyar Festival.

Apparel Group launches 25 new stores in Middle East and India

THE PENINSULA — DOHA

Apparel Group unveils 25 new stores across various brands, including R&B, Beverly Hills Polo Club, Crocs, Dune London, Birkenstock, Steve Madden, Levi's, Havaianas, Ximi Vogue, The Children's Place, BBZ, LC Waikiki, and LC Waikiki Kids, as part of its ambitious expansion strategy.

The retail conglomerate solidifies its international presence, strengthening its foothold in KSA, UAE, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, and India.

Apparel Group, a global leader in fashion and lifestyle retail, is proud to announce the launch of 25 new stores across the Middle East, and India, reinforcing its commitment to providing an unparalleled shopping experience for customers.

In Kuwait, Apparel Group opens 12 new stores in the prestigious Khiran Mall. The brands making their debut include Beverly Hills Polo Club, Dune London, Birkenstock, Steve Madden, Levi's, Havaianas, Ximi Vogue, The Children's Place, BBZ, R&B, LC Waikiki, and LC Waikiki Kids, demonstrating the Group's dedication to offering a wide array of shopping choices to consumers in the region.



One of the newly launched stores of the Apparel Group.

The Group's homegrown brand, R&B, continues its rapid expansion with the opening of 9 new stores in various locations, such as Hijaz Mall in Makkah, KSA, Salalah Grand Mall in Oman, Tahlia Street in Qunfudha, KSA, Panorama Plaza in Kharj, KSA, Tawar Mall in Qatar, Al Nakheel in Ras Al Khaimah, UAE, The Avenues Mall in Kuwait, Hilite Mall in Calicut, India, and City Centre Mall in Mangalore, India.

In the UAE, Crocs has opened a new store in Deerfields Mall, further expanding

its presence in the region. Beverly Hills Polo Club also celebrates store openings in Deerfields Mall, Abu Dhabi, UAE, as well as in Al Shateea Mall, Dammam, KSA, and Sharaya Street, Makkah, KSA.

Apparel Group's relentless pursuit of growth and innovation ensures that customers can enjoy a diverse selection of fashion, footwear, and lifestyle products. The expansion strategy underlines the Group's dedication to providing an outstanding shopping experience across the region and beyond.

NCSA conducts Cyber Security training programme at the Ministry of Justice

THE PENINSULA — DOHA

The Center for Legal and Judicial Studies, in collaboration with the National Cyber Security Agency, represented by the National Cyber Excellence Department, is conducting a training course on cybersecurity, with the participation of more than 50 trainees from various government entities. The course started on April and will last till June 2023.

The "Legal Regulations of Cybersecurity" programme aims to provide participants with the necessary skills in the field of cybersecurity, develop their capabilities, raise awareness of cyber risks, as well as provide fresh legal professionals with the basic principles of cybersecurity and how to face cyber challenges, in addition to shedding light on cybersecurity governance strategies and laws in the State of Qatar.

The course included practical experience of the most prominent cyber-attacks, viruses, malware, cyber judicial rules, critical infrastructure protection mechanisms and methods of combating cyber-attacks.

The course also discussed the commitment of national entities to apply cybersecurity

The course included practical experience of the most prominent cyber-attacks, viruses, malware, cyber judicial rules and critical infrastructure protection mechanism.

standards and legal regulations. In this regard, Dr. Saleh Ali Al Fadalla, Director of the Center for Legal and Judicial Studies at the Ministry of Justice, said that this course comes within the framework of the Center's training plan for the year 2023, which includes a collaboration programme with the National Cyber Security Agency to host experts from the agency to conduct trainings for all levels of professionals working in the legal field. For her part, Dalal Al Aqeedi, Director of the National Cyber Excellence Department at the National Cyber Security Agency, explained that this is the second year of collaboration with the National Cyber Security Agency to implement the "Legal Regulations of Cybersecurity" course directed to legal professionals in all parts of the country.

She expressed the agency's happiness in this partnership to enhance the cyber culture among different professionals and develop their capabilities in dealing with cyber threats and risks.

She also stressed that the agency spares no effort in collaborating with national entities and ministries in order to exchange expertise and spread a culture of cyber security and digital safety among all society segments and mainly the vital sectors.

Engineer Iman Al-Hamad, an information security expert, presented a comprehensive overview of cybersecurity and its pillars. She also discussed the importance of fostering the knowledge of legal professionals with the basic principles of cybersecurity and ways to face cyber challenges, in addition to considering cybersecurity governance strategies and laws in the State of Qatar.

The "Legal Regulations of Cybersecurity" programme, which runs from April till the beginning of June, deals with several pillars, including types of cyber threats and risks, national cybersecurity laws, methods of protecting and securing corporate and personal data and managing cyber risks and others.

AGGRESSION

Four children among 15 killed in Israeli strikes on Gaza

AFP — GAZA CITY

A series of Israeli strikes in the Gaza Strip yesterday killed at least 15 people, with both sides bracing for an escalation. Islamic Jihad group vowed to "avenge" the deaths in a pre-dawn raid involving some 40 Israeli aircraft. The first Israeli strike hit targets in the crowded coastal territory for nearly two hours from just after 2am (2300 GMT Monday). The Gaza health ministry said four children were among those killed and 20 people were wounded, with some in critical condition in the attacks which left buildings ablaze and reduced others to rubble. The Israeli army said it had targeted three leaders of Islamic Jihad. Army spokesman Daniel Hagari expressed regret over the death of "uninvolved" people. Islamic Jihad confirmed the deaths of three senior members — Jihad Ghannam, Khalil Al Bahtini and Tareq Ezzedine — before their bodies were later carried through the streets in mass funeral processions.

The Gaza deaths bring to 123 the number of Palestinians killed in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict so far this year.

A separate air strike in the late afternoon on the city of Khan Yunis in southern Gaza killed two men in a car, the health ministry said. Following the morning attack, Islamic Jihad vowed to retaliate, with spokesman Daoud Shehab warning that "the resistance considers that all cities and settlements in the Zionist (Israeli) depths will be under its fire". Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh, whose movement rules Gaza, said "assassinating the leadership" would bring "greater resistance". The Israeli military warned residents within 40 kilometres of the Gaza border to stay near bomb shelters until Wednesday evening. Moscow's diplomatic mission to the Palestinians said one of the dead was a Russian citizen, a doctor who was



A damaged building is pictured after an Israeli air strike in Gaza City yesterday. (AFP)

killed alongside his wife and one of his children. Israel last week traded air strikes on Gaza for rocket fire from the enclave, an exchange sparked by the death in Israeli custody of a Palestinian hunger striker with ties to Islamic Jihad, which ended with an Egypt-brokered truce. Islamic Jihad said yesterday that Israel had "scorned all the initiatives of mediators" and vowed it would "avenge the leaders" killed in the latest air strikes. The group said Ghannam

was secretary of the Al Quds Brigades military council, Bahtini the military commander in northern Gaza, and Ezzedine a military leader in the West Bank who operated from Gaza. UN Middle East peace envoy Tor Wennesland said he was "deeply alarmed" by the latest violence and described the killing of civilians as "unacceptable". Jordan said it was taking steps to "immediately stop this dangerous escalation". Israel and Gaza militants have fought multiple wars since Hamas took control of the enclave in 2007. Following the air strikes yesterday, Egypt stated its "total rejection of such attacks" which it said "inflame the situation in a way that could get out of control in the occupied Palestinian territories." The Gaza deaths bring to 123 the number of Palestinians killed in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict so far this year. Nineteen Israelis, one Ukrainian and one Italian have been killed over the same period, according to an AFP count based on official sources from the two sides.

Sudan’s death toll rises as warring sides continue talks

AP — CAIRO

The death toll from the ongoing clashes in Sudan has risen to 604 people, including civilians, the UN health agency said yesterday. The new figures come as representatives of the warring parties are holding talks in Saudi Arabia. More than 5,100 people were also wounded in connection with the fighting, World Health Organization spokesperson Tarik Jasarevic told reporters. On Monday, the Sudanese Doctors' Syndicate, which tracks only civilian casualties, said that the fatalities had reached 487. The conflict started on April 15, after months of escalating tensions between the military, led by Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, and a rival paramilitary group called the Rapid Support Forces, or RSF,

commanded by Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo. The fighting has turned urban areas into battlefields and displaced nearly 700,000 people on top of the 3.7 million who had already been internally displaced within the country before the conflict began, according to the U.N. migration agency. On Monday, the Saudi Foreign Ministry said that talks between delegations of both warring sides were expected to continue for a few more days in the coastal city of Jeddah. The talks are part of a diplomatic initiative proposed by the kingdom and the United States in hopes of ending the fighting. Meanwhile, Burhan accused the RSF of using residential neighbourhoods as their military bases and civilians as human shields. In an interview late Monday with an Egyptian TV channel,

Al-Qahira Al-Akhbariya, he insisted they must withdraw all their troops from the capital, Khartoum, before any truce agreement can be reached. "If this is not achieved, there will be no point in going to Saudi Arabia, or engaging in any negotiations," he said. "We won't go ahead with any initiative that does not bring back normalcy and ensure the safety of our citizens." Also yesterday, the UN special envoy for the Horn of Africa said the conflict is "profoundly" affecting its relations with neighbouring South Sudan. Hanna Serwaa Tetteh told the UN Security Council that the unstable situation has "the potential for more than 200,000 South Sudanese refugees hosted by the Sudan returning home prematurely to a country where two-thirds of the population already needs humanitarian assistance."

Top envoys from Turkiye, Syria to meet in Moscow

AFP — ISTANBUL

The foreign ministers of Turkiye and Syria will hold their first official meeting today since the start of Syrian civil war more than a decade ago, officials said. The talks in Moscow will also involve the top diplomats of Russia and Iran, Turkiye's foreign ministry said in a statement. The announcement delivers a diplomatic boost to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan just days before he faces the toughest general election of his 21-year rule on Sunday. A reconciliation with Syria is also supported by Erdogan's opponents and plays an important part in Turkiye's election campaign. Erdogan has pledged to speed up the repatriation of nearly four million Syrian refugees and migrants who fled to Turkiye to escape poverty

and war. An agreement with Damascus is seen as a prerequisite for this process. Iran and Russia have been helping mediate talks between the two sides. Ankara said the repatriation will be discussed at the talks. The sides will "exchange views on the normalisation of relations between Turkiye and Syria, discuss humanitarian issues... and the voluntary, safe and dignified return of asylum seekers," the Turkish foreign ministry said. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu exchanged a few words with his Syrian counterpart on the sidelines of a regional summit in 2021. But both sides insisted that this did not mark a resumption of formal talks. The Moscow meeting follows several rounds of lower-level talks in Moscow involving the four countries' defence ministers.

Turks abroad wrap up voting in landmark election

AFP — ISTANBUL

Millions of Turks living abroad wrapped up voting yesterday ahead of Sunday's presidential and parliamentary ballot. Polls show President Recep Tayyip Erdogan locked in a tight battle with rival Kemal Kilicdaroglu and his alliance of six parties that span Turkiye's cultural and political divide. The first votes were cast by Turks who moved from poorer provinces to Western Europe over the decades under job schemes aimed at combating the continent's labour shortage in the wake of World War II. Such voters comprise 3.4 million of Turkiye's 64.1 million registered electorate and tend to support more conservative candidates. Official turnout on the morning of the last day of overseas voting yesterday was reported at 51 percent — a touch lower than in past elections.

Autopsies reveal organs missing in Kenya cult deaths

AFP — NAIROBI

Autopsies on corpses found in mass graves linked to a religious cult in Kenya have revealed missing organs and raised suspicions of forced harvesting, investigators said, with a fresh round of exhumations resuming yesterday. The discovery of mass graves last month near the Indian Ocean coastal town of Malindi has stunned the deeply religious Christian-majority country in what has been dubbed the "Shakahola forest massacre". Police believe most of the bodies belong to followers of self-styled pastor Paul Nthenge Mackenzie who is accused of ordering them to starve to death "to meet Jesus". While starvation appears to be the main cause of death, some of the victims were strangled, beaten, or suffocated, according to chief government pathologist Johansen Oduor. Court documents filed on Monday said some of the corpses had their organs removed, with police alleging the suspects were engaged in forced harvesting of body parts. "Post mortem reports have established missing organs in some of the bodies of victims who have been exhumed," chief inspector Martin Munene said in an affidavit filed to a Nairobi court. It is "believed that trade on human body organs has been well coordinated involving several players", he said. Munene said that Ezekiel Odero, a high-profile televangelist, had received "huge cash transactions," allegedly from Mackenzie's followers who sold their property at the cult leader's bidding.

Crosswords and Sudoku are only available in the print edition of *The Peninsula*

POLITICAL CRISIS

Pakistan’s ex-PM Imran Khan arrested, sparking protests

AP — ISLAMABAD

Pakistan’s former Prime Minister Imran Khan was arrested yesterday as he appeared in court to face charges in multiple graft cases, a dramatic escalation of political tensions in the country that sparked demonstrations by his supporters in at least three cities.

Khan, who was ousted in a no-confidence vote in April 2022 but remains the leading opposition figure, was dragged from the Islamabad High Court by security agents from the National Accountability Bureau, said Fawad Chaudhry, a senior official with his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party. Khan was shoved into an armored car and whisked away.

Chaudhry denounced the arrest of the 71-year-old former cricket star as “an abduction.” Pakistan’s independent GEO TV broadcast video of Khan being hauled away.

Afterward, a scuffle broke out between Khan’s supporters and police outside the court. Some of Khan’s lawyers and supporters were injured in the melee, as were several police,

Chaudhry said. Khan’s party complained to the court, which requested a police report explaining the charges for Khan’s arrest.

Khan was taken to the garrison city of Rawalpindi, near Islamabad, for questioning at the offices of the National Accountability Bureau, according to police and government officials. He also was to undergo a routine medical checkup, police said.

Khan had arrived at the Islamabad High Court from nearby Lahore, where he lives, to face charges in the graft cases.

He has denounced the cases against him, which include terrorism charges, as a politically motivated plot by his successor, Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, saying his ouster was illegal and a Western conspiracy. Khan has campaigned against Sharif and demanded early elections.

Yesterday’s arrest was based on a new warrant from the National Accountability Bureau obtained last week in a separate graft case for which Khan had not obtained bail, making him vulnerable to arrest. He is scheduled to



Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party activists and supporters of former Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran clash with police during a protest against the arrest of their leader in Lahore yesterday. (AFP)

appear before an anti-graft tribunal today, officials said.

“Imran Khan has been arrested because he was being sought in a graft case,” Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah Khan told a news conference. He alleged Pakistan’s treasury had

lost millions of dollars while Khan was in office due to illegal purchases of lands from a business tycoon.

As the news of the arrest spread, about 4,000 of Khan’s supporters stormed the official residence of the top regional

commander in Lahore, smashing windows and doors, damaging furniture and staging a sit-in as troops there retreated to avoid violence. The protesters also burned police vehicles and blocked key roads.. Protesters also smashed the

Khan had arrived at the Islamabad High Court from nearby Lahore, where he lives, to face charges in the graft cases.

main gate of the army’s headquarters in the garrison city of Rawalpindi, where troops exercised restraint. Hundreds of demonstrators shouted pro-Khan slogans as they moved toward the sprawling building.

In the port city of Karachi, police swung batons and fired tear gas to disperse hundreds of Khan supporters who had gathered on a key road.

Raouf Hasan, another leader from Khan’s party, told Al Jazeera English television that the arrest is “blatant interference in the judicial affairs by the powers-that-be.”

Hasan added that Khan “was virtually abducted from the court of law.” Khan’s arrest came hours after he issued a video message before heading to Islamabad, saying he was “mentally prepared” for arrest there.

UK official visits Hong Kong after years of strained ties

AP — HONG KONG

The first British minister visiting Hong Kong in five years said his country will not “duck” its historic responsibilities to people living in its former colony while engaging with China in areas they share common interests.

The remarks by Dominic Johnson, minister of state in the Department for Business and Trade, were published in an opinion piece in the South China Morning Post yesterday. He wrote that the UK will be clear about its right to act when China breaks its international commitments or abuses human rights.

Johnson’s trip this week came after relations between Hong Kong and Britain became increasingly tense following the enactment of a Beijing-imposed national security law, which the

Johnson said his trip included meetings with the city’s leading investors and government officials to foster investment ties between both sides.

UK earlier called “a clear breach” of the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration. The declaration included a promise to retain Hong Kong’s rights and freedoms for 50 years after it was returned to China’s rule in 1997.

Following the introduction of the sweeping security law in 2020, 105,200 residents have started new lives in Britain via a special visa that allows them to live and work in the UK and apply for British citizenship

after six years, according to U.K. official data. Johnson said his trip included meetings with the city’s leading investors and government officials to foster investment ties between both sides. He tweeted on Monday that he met with CK Hutchison chairman Victor Li, the elder son of tycoon Li Ka-shing, to discuss their investment plans in Britain.

In another tweet, he said he also talked to Christopher Hui, Hong Kong’s secretary for financial services and the Treasury, on their works to remove market barriers and increase trade between both sides. “I’m in Hong Kong as part of my mission to promote the UK as a leading destination for investment and trade,” he wrote on Twitter.

The British consulate in Hong Kong said the visit would allow Johnson to reengage on

dialogue including trade and investment, clean growth and future bilateral visits, in addition to promoting collaboration between Hong Kong and the UK after the COVID-19 pandemic and the imposition of the security law.

His visit also includes a meeting with Hong Kong Commerce Minister Algernon Yau, a lunch with some members of the British Chamber of Commerce and a visit to local tech hub Cyberport, it added. Johnson is slated to conclude his trip on Tuesday evening.

When asked about Johnson’s visit, Hong Kong leader John Lee said he welcomed any foreign officials to visit Hong Kong and encourage the promotion of economic development, commercial exchanges and people-to-people relationship.

Divisive Thai ex-PM vows to return from exile after polls

AP — BANGKOK

Thailand’s self-exiled former prime minister said yesterday he wants to return home by July, making his declaration less than a week before the country heads to polls in which his daughter is a frontrunner.

Thaksin Shinawatra tweeted for the second time this month that he would like to come home to see his grandchildren. He said he is prepared to face justice, including several convictions on charges including abuse of power and corruption.

“I have made a decision that I’ll go home to raise my grandchildren by this July, before my birthday. Please excuse me. It’s been nearly 17 years that I have to be away

from my family. I’m already old,” he said.

Thaksin, 73, was a populist prime minister when he was ousted by a military coup in 2006. He fled Thailand to escape a prison term in several criminal cases, which he decried as politically motivated. The government of his sister, Yingluck Shinawatra, was also toppled in a 2014 coup led by the current prime minister and candidate in the May 14 election, Prayuth Chan-ocha.

If Thaksin follows through on his pledge to return before his birthday on July 26, he could face at least a decade behind bars. Thaksin is a popular but divisive figure in Thai politics, and there are concerns that his return could be disestablishing.

P IN BRIEF

21 dead after bus plunges off bridge in India

AFP — NEW DELHI: At least 21 people died yesterday when a bus crashed off a bridge in India, officials said, reportedly after the driver fell asleep at the wheel.

The vehicle smashed through a barrier and plummeted around six metres (20 feet) onto a dry river bed south of the central city of Indore in Madhya Pradesh state.

“At least 21 people have died,” a senior police official said, without wishing to be named. The dead included three children and 10 women, the *Times of India* newspaper reported. The bus driver had fallen asleep at the wheel before the crash and had fled the scene, the daily said.

Top Indonesian police officer given life for drug trafficking

AFP — JAKARTA: A high-ranking Indonesian police officer was given a life sentence on Tuesday for trafficking five kilograms (11 pounds) of methamphetamine that was originally confiscated as criminal evidence.

A court in Jakarta found Teddy Minahasa Putra guilty of ordering his subordinate to swap the seized methamphetamine with potassium alum in a plot to illicitly sell drugs.

Putra, who was previously the police chief for West Sumatra province, then trafficked the methamphetamine through a civilian intermediary, the court heard.

Putra’s lawyer told reporters outside the court that an appeal would be filed, local media reported.

TROOPS DEPLOYED

Indian villages burned to ashes in ethnic violence

AFP — HEIROKLIAN

The road to Heiroklian is smooth and freshly laid, with a sign proclaiming it part of an Indian government development initiative. But ethnic violence has reduced the village itself to little more than smouldering ashes.

Sanatomba picked through the ruins of his sister’s home in the northeastern state of Manipur, trying to salvage anything of value, but could only recover a traditional stool. “This used to be my sister’s kitchen,” the 20-year-old says.

“That was her room and she kept her TV there, the fridge there, the almirah (cupboard) for clothes there. But now everything she shared with her husband, four children and other family members is gone forever.” More than 50 people have been killed in the hilly border region in clashes between the majority Meitei people, who are mostly Hindus, and the mainly Christian Kuki tribe.

Thousands of troops have been deployed to restore order, while around 23,000 residents have fled their homes for the safety of ad-hoc army-run camps for the displaced. Sanatomba’s sibling is among them. They are Kuki, and he is sure she and her family will never be able to return.



An Indian army soldier inspects a ransacked church that was set on fire by a mob in the ethnic violence hit area of Heiroklian village in Senapati district, in India’s Manipur state on Monday. (AFP)

“She told me to come here and look for anything I can find,” he says, his hands and feet covered in black soot. The rest of the village suffered a similar fate, its three settlements littered with broken doors, burnt-down water tanks, and forced-open metal trunks.

The towering village church, a school building, and even a jackfruit tree were set on fire by the attackers. The raiders stole residents’ cattle

and poultry, Sanatomba said.

“Those animals they couldn’t take alive, they killed and took away as meat.

“I am afraid of Meitei people.” The far-flung states of northeast India — sandwiched between Bangladesh, China and Myanmar — have long been a tinderbox of tensions between different ethnic groups.

The spark for the latest ethnic clash was a protest about plans to

give the Meitei “Scheduled Tribe” status. A form of affirmative action to combat structural inequality and discrimination, that classification would give them guaranteed quotas of government jobs and college admissions.

Violence erupted in the regional capital Imphal and elsewhere, with protestors setting fire to vehicles and buildings. According to villagers, Meitei mobs armed with guns and petrol cans then attacked Kuki settlements in the hills.

Authorities are concerned there could be more reprisal attacks “as both communities have now accumulated weapons”, an army officer said. “Are you sure that none of you have any weapons that you would like to surrender?” a senior officer asked a Kuki gathering at a village outside Imphal on Monday.

“The other community has promised to surrender their weapons if you do too,” he added. “I want you to consider this as it doesn’t help either community to have these weapons in circulation.” None of the mostly male audience did so. Thanglalleme Kuki, 32, a teacher at a private school, watched from a hilltop as his village of Kamuching was attacked and burned to the ground, spending two nights in the jungle before being rescued and taken to an army camp.

China orders Canadian diplomat expulsion in tit-for-tat response

AP — BEIJING

China announced the expulsion of a Canadian diplomat yesterday in retaliation for Ottawa ordering a Chinese consular official to leave the country over alleged threats he made against a Canadian lawmaker and his family.

The Foreign Ministry said China was deploying a “reciprocal countermeasure to Canada’s unscrupulous move,”

which it said it “firmly opposes.” It said Jennifer Lynn Lalonde, the top Canadian diplomat in the business hub of Shanghai, has been asked to leave by May 13 and that China “reserves the right to take further actions in response.” The Canadian Embassy in Beijing had no immediate comment on the expulsion order.

“We understand there is retaliation but we will not be intimidated,” Canadian Prime

Minister Justin Trudeau said after the Chinese move. “We will continue to do everything necessary to keep Canadians protected from foreign interference.” Trudeau’s government said it is expelling a Chinese diplomat whom Canada’s spy agency alleged was involved in a plot to intimidate an opposition lawmaker and his relatives in Hong Kong.

China took control of the former British colony in 1997,

and in recent years has effectively ripped up an agreement to maintain its unique political and civil rights for 50 years by gutting its democratic institutions and free press. China regularly uses threats against family members to intimidate critics in the Chinese diaspora.

A senior Canadian government official said Toronto-based diplomat Zhao Wei has five days to leave the country. It wasn’t immediately clear if

Zhao was still in Canada.

Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly said in a statement that Canada declared Zhao “persona non grata” and that Canada would “not tolerate any form of foreign interference in our internal affairs.” “Diplomats in Canada have been warned that if they engage in this type of behavior, they will be sent home,” she said.

Canada’s spy service indicated that in 2021, opposition

Conservative lawmaker Michael Chong and his Hong Kong relatives were targeted after Chong criticized Beijing’s human rights record. Canada’s spy agency has not released details publicly.

Chong has been critical of Beijing’s treatment of members of the Turkic Muslim Uyghur ethnic group in China’s Xinjiang region, hundreds of thousands of whom have been detained in prison-like political reeducation camps.

VICTORY DAY CELEBRATIONS

Putin tells WWII event West is waging a ‘real war’ on Russia

AP — MOSCOW

President Vladimir Putin declared yesterday that the West has unleashed “a real war” against Russia, reprising a familiar refrain at scaled-down Victory Day celebrations that may reflect the toll the Ukraine conflict is taking on his forces.

Putin’s remarks came just hours after the Moscow fired its latest barrage of cruise missiles at targets in Ukraine, which Russia invaded more than 14 months ago. Ukrainian authorities said air defences destroyed 23 of 25 missiles launched.

The Russian leader has repeatedly sought to paint his invasion of Ukraine as necessary to defend against a Western threat. Kiev and its Western allies say they pose no such threat and that Moscow’s war is meant to deter Western influence in a country that Russia considers part of its sphere of influence.

“Today civilization is once again at a decisive turning point,” Putin said at the annual commemorations celebrating the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II. “A real war has

The Russian leader has repeatedly sought to paint his invasion of Ukraine as necessary to defend against a Western threat. Kiev and its Western allies say they pose no such threat and that Moscow’s war is meant to deter Western influence in a country that Russia considers part of its sphere of influence.

been unleashed against our motherland.”

Putin has often used patriotic rhetoric that harkens back to the earlier war in an effort to rally his citizens and forces — and May 9 is one of the most important dates in the Russian political calendar. But this year’s celebrations were markedly smaller, at least partially because of security concerns after several drone attacks have been reported inside Russia.

Some 8,000 troops took part in the parade in Moscow’s Red Square yesterday — the lowest number since 2008. Even the procession in 2020, the year of the COVID-19 pandemic, featured some 13,000 soldiers, and last year, 11,000 troops took part. There was no

fly-over of military jets, and the event lasted less than the usual hour.

“This is weak. There are no tanks,” said Yelena Orlova, watching the vehicles rumble down Moscow’s Novy Arbat avenue after leaving Red Square. “We’re upset, but that’s all right; it will be better in the future.”

The Kremlin’s forces deployed in Ukraine are defending a front line stretching more than 1,000km, presumably thinning the ranks of troops available for such displays.

“This is supposed to be a showpiece for Russian military might. But so much of that military might has already been mauled in Ukraine that Russia has very little to show on its



Russian President Vladimir Putin and guests attend the Victory Day military parade at Red Square in central Moscow, yesterday. (AFP)

parade in Red Square,” said Keir Giles, a Russia expert at London’s Chatham House think tank.

Meanwhile, the traditional Immortal Regiment processions, in which crowds take to the streets holding portraits of relatives who died or served in World War II — a pillar of the holiday — were cancelled in multiple cities.

“That seems to be for fear that those people who have lost their relatives in this current war on Ukraine might actually join the processions and show just the scale of the casualties that Russia has suffered in its current war,” Giles said.

Russian media counted 24 cities that also scrapped military parades — another staple of the celebrations — for the first time in years. Regional officials blamed unspecified “security concerns” or vaguely referred to “the current situation” for the restrictions and cancellations. It wasn’t clear whether their decisions were taken in coordination with the Kremlin.

On a tribune in Red Square, Putin praised soldiers taking part in the war in Ukraine and urged Russians to stand together.

“Our heroic ancestors proved that there is nothing

stronger, more powerful and more reliable than our unity. There is nothing in the world stronger than our love for the motherland,” Putin said.

The guest list was also light amid Putin’s broad diplomatic isolation over the war. Initially, only one foreign leader was expected to attend this year’s parade — Kyrgyz President Sadyr Zhaparov. That was one more foreign guest than last year, when no leaders went.

At the last minute on Monday, officials announced that the leaders of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan would head to Moscow as well.

Sunak says UK police independent

AFP — LONDON

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak insisted yesterday that the country’s police forces were “operationally independent”, after a backlash about the arrest of anti-monarchists before they could protest at King Charles III’s coronation. Sunak defended London’s under-fire Metropolitan Police, which has been widely criticised for detaining six members of pressure group Republic early on Saturday, just hours before the event.

“They (the Met) make the decisions on the ground in the way that they see fit,” Sunak told broadcasters.

“That’s the way that we’ve always done it. That’s the right way to do it. It wouldn’t be right for me to interfere with their operational decisions.”

Graham Smith, Republic’s chief executive, was among those detained in central London, despite liaising for months with Met commanders before the planned protest.

He claimed he had assurances the demonstration would not be interfered with.

Police used new powers — enacted only last week and drawn up to target environmental activists following years of disruptive protests — to hold the anti-monarchists throughout Saturday.

Greenpeace sues Italian energy giant

AFP — ROME

Greenpeace Italy is suing Italian energy giant ENI for its contribution to global warming, it said yesterday, in the latest in a raft of climate lawsuits around the world.

The environmental organisation and fellow green campaigner ReCommon filed the suit along with 12 citizens from areas of Italy severely affected by extreme weather events, Greenpeace said in a statement.

The suit was “for past and potential future damages resulting from its contribution to climate change, of which ENI was well aware but chose to ignore for decades,” it said. Greenpeace said ENI’s policies were “in blatant violation of the Paris Agreement” signed by Italy.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

UN chief says Ukraine peace talks ‘not possible’ right now

AFP — CUACOS

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said peace negotiations to end the conflict in Ukraine were “not possible at this moment,” in an interview published by Spanish daily *El Pais* yesterday.

His statement came as the leaders of Russia and Ukraine called for victory during events commemorating the end of World War II.

“It is clear that the (two) parties are completely absorbed in this war” and “are convinced that they can win”, the UN chief was quoted as

“It is clear that the (two) parties are completely absorbed in this war” and “are convinced that they can win”, the UN chief Antonio Guterres was quoted as saying by the Spanish daily ‘El Pais’, yesterday.

saying by the newspaper.

Guterres said he hoped it was possible “in the future” to bring Russia and Ukraine to the negotiating table.



UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres

Russian President Vladimir Putin said yesterday at Moscow’s Red Square Victory Day parade the world was at a “turning point” and claimed a

WAR SANCTIONS

Germany, China clash over Ukraine

AFP — BERLIN

China and Germany traded barbs yesterday over Ukraine, with Beijing warning the EU against sanctions targeting its companies while Berlin said “neutrality” in the conflict meant taking Russia’s side.

At their second meeting in a month, the foreign ministers of the two countries, Qin Gang and Annalena Baerbock, clashed repeatedly over major powers’ responsibilities on the world stage.

Qin warned the European Union against imposing punitive measures against Chinese companies over Russia, saying it would take action to protect their interests.

Referring to discussions within the EU over possible restrictions on eight Chinese companies, he said that if punitive action was taken, “China will also take the necessary response to firmly protect the legitimate interests of Chinese companies”.

Chinese and Russian companies enjoy “normal exchanges and cooperation” which “should not be affected”, Qin said, following talks in Berlin with Baerbock.

China was “firmly against” other countries imposing their own regulations or taking unilateral action against it, added Qin, who is on a European tour also taking in France and Norway.



German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock (right) and China’s Foreign Minister Qin Gang react during a joint press conference following talks at the Foreign Ministry in Berlin, yesterday. (AFP)

EU ambassadors are meeting today to begin discussions on an 11th round of sanctions over Russia’s war on Ukraine. As part of the package, the EU’s executive has recommended halting exports of sensitive technologies to eight Chinese companies over suspicions they were selling them on to Russia.

The EU wants to crack down on the re-exportation via third countries to Russia of sensitive technology that can be used on the battlefield, such as microchips.

In Berlin, Qin insisted that Beijing

has always pushed for “peaceful dialogue” to end the war in Ukraine.

China will dispatch a special envoy to Ukraine on the matter, he said, urging Germany to do more to push for a ceasefire and peace talks.

But Baerbock pressed Beijing to take a clear stance against Russia, warning that neutrality in the war meant siding with Moscow. “Neutrality means taking the side of the aggressor, and that is why our guiding principle is to make it clear that we are on the side of the victim,” she said.

“war” had been unleashed against Russia.

The day before, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy vowed that Russian forces would be vanquished “just as Nazism was defeated”.

Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang is visiting Europe this week as China pushes to act as a mediator in the Ukraine conflict.

Yesterday, Guterres received the Carlos V European Award, given to individuals or organisations that have contributed to the enhancement of Europe’s cultural and historical values or to EU integration.

IN BRIEF

Dozens injured in Polish bus collision in eastern Germany

AP — BERLIN: A highway collision between a long-distance Polish bus and a truck injured dozens of people in eastern Germany, police in Poland and German news agency *dpa* reported.

The crash happened yesterday on the A 12 highway in the state of Brandenburg between the towns of Storkow and Fredersdorf.

German police said 35 people were hurt, including six with severe injuries, *dpa* said. Three helicopters, ambulances and police officers were on the scene, and the section of highway was closed. Police said the truck, which was travelling in the direction of Berlin, collided with the side of the bus when it tried to change lanes.

Italy intends to exit China Belt and Road pact as relations sour

BLOOMBERG — ROME: Italy has signalled to the US that it intends to pull out of a controversial investment pact with China before the end of the year.

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni reassured US House Speaker Kevin McCarthy during a meeting in Rome last week that while a final decision hasn’t been taken, her government is favouring an exit from its role in China’s massive Belt and Road Initiative, according to people present at the talks.

Italy signed onto the infrastructure initiative in 2019 when Giuseppe Conte was premier, becoming the only Group of Seven country to become part of the deal. Italy, like much of Europe, has been caught between Washington and Beijing, which have compounded in light of Beijing’s support for Russia.

Thousands rally against violence in Serbia after mass shootings

AFP — BELGRADE

Tens of thousands demonstrated in the Serbian capital Belgrade on Monday, with the protesters calling for the resignation of top officials and the curtailment of violence in the media, after back-to-back shootings stunned the Balkan country.

The “Serbia against

violence” demonstration saw members from across the country’s political divide come together after last week’s shootings — where 17 people were killed in less than 48 hours, including nine at an elementary school in Belgrade.

“We demand an immediate stop to further promotion of violence in the media and public space, as

well as responsibility for the long-standing inadequate response from competent authorities,” the leftist Let’s Not Let Belgrade Drown party said in a statement.

The demonstrators gathered in front of the country’s parliament before taking to the streets to rally near Serbia’s government offices.

Thousands also rallied in the

northern city of Novi Sad, where protesters threw flowers into the Danube river, which flows downstream to the capital.

“We are here because we can’t wait any longer. We’ve waited too long, we’ve been silent too long, we’ve turned our heads too long,” Marina Vidojevic, an elementary school teacher, told the crowd in Belgrade.

“We want safe schools, streets, villages and cities for all children.” The protesters also called for the resignation of a number of top officials — including the interior minister and head of Serbia’s intelligence agency.

Following the rally, President Aleksandar Vucic dismissed the protests during a live interview, calling it a “political” stunt.

ASYLUM SEEKING

US readies for migrant influx as Covid-era border rules lapse

AFP — EL PASO/ CIUDAD JUAREZ

The United States is girding for the arrival of thousands of migrants this week, with the expiry of pandemic-era rules that have made claiming asylum at the border all but impossible. The country's deep divisions over immigration are expected to be laid bare as a wave of people try to get a foothold in a place founded on the promise of safety and shelter, but where a rising tide of nationalism makes the welcome uncertain.

Some migrants escaping economic and political turmoil have already arrived, frustrated by the years-long lack of a legal pathway, squeezing through the holes that pockmark the 3,100km border between the world's wealthiest country and its southern neighbour. The Texan cities of El Paso, Brownsville and Laredo have declared a state of emergency as they struggle to cope with hundreds of people — most from Latin America, some from China, Russia and Turkiye — who are already there.

In El Paso, people sleep on the streets, sheltering from the sun under sheets, or sleeping on cardboard. Children beg for change. The city's mayor, Oscar Leeser, said his officials were readying for many more on Friday, judging by a recent tour of the neighbouring Mexican city of Ciudad Juarez. "On the street we estimated somewhere between eight to 10,000 people," he said. "There is a caravan... that will be here probably close to May 11, so I say the real number that we'll be dealing with is between 12 to 15,000 people." Overall numbers are far higher, with the US government estimating more than 150,000 migrants were now waiting in northern Mexico, a source familiar with the appraisals told CNN. The spike is expected because of the expiration of Title 42 tomorrow at 11.59pm Eastern Daylight Time (0359 GMT Friday). The rule was put in place under Donald Trump, ostensibly to prevent people with COVID-19 from entering the

The country's deep divisions over immigration are expected to be laid bare as a wave of people try to get a foothold in a place founded on the promise of safety and shelter, but where a rising tide of nationalism makes the welcome uncertain.

country. In practice it has been little more than a crude tool to swiftly expel those trying to migrate, without accepting their asylum claim. From Friday, migrants will once again be able to lodge asylum claims and have their cases dealt with through the legal system, a process that can take years. President Joe Biden's administration is under pressure from Republican opponents who claim immigration is out of control. Some in the party forecast over a



million people will arrive at the border in the next three months. With a presidential election 18 months away and immigration a regular fault line in the country's fractious politics, Biden is hoping new rules — and 1,500 active duty troops he has ordered to the border — will help staunch that flow. Under post-Title 42 arrangements, people who cross illegally will find it much harder to prove their case for asylum. Those who are rejected will be deported to their home countries or back to Mexico, and

barred from trying again for several years. Texas Governor Greg Abbott on Monday poured scorn on Biden's plans, saying the administration was "laying down the welcome mat to people across the entire world." He ordered hundreds of Texas National Guard soldiers to the frontier "to help intercept and repel large groups of migrants trying to enter Texas illegally." Under the new rules, would-be migrants are being encouraged to make their asylum application on an app, and to enter the country

DIPLOMATIC ROW

‘Canada will not be intimidated after China expels diplomat’

AFP — OTTAWA

Canada won't be intimidated by China's tit-for-tat expulsion of a Canadian consul after Ottawa this week ousted a Chinese diplomat accused of targeting a lawmaker critical of Beijing, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (pictured) said yesterday. "We decided that we needed to move forward in a responsible way to send a very clear message that we will not accept foreign interference and whatever next choices they make, we will not be intimidated," Trudeau told reporters in Ottawa, after Beijing accused his government of seeking to "sabotage" bilateral relations.

Relations between Beijing and Ottawa have been tense since Canada's 2018 arrest of a top Huawei executive and the detention of two Canadian nationals in China in apparent retaliation.

Canada announced on Monday the expulsion of a Chinese diplomat, Zhao Wei, at its consulate in Toronto, plunging the two nations into a fresh diplomatic row after years of cool relations. A few hours later China



responded by expelling the Canadian consul in Shanghai Jennifer Lalonde, accusing Canadian politicians and media of hyping up allegations of foreign meddling in Ottawa's affairs. This was characterised by Beijing as "a reciprocal coun-

termeasure in reaction to Canada's unscrupulous move." "Declaring a foreign diplomat persona non grata is a significant and serious step," Trudeau acknowledged, saying it "demonstrates firmness" of Canada's resolve. "We will continue to do everything necessary to keep Canadians protected from foreign interference or fear," he added. The Canadian move followed an outcry in Canada over allegations that Chinese intelligence had planned to target MP Michael Chong and his relatives in Hong Kong with sanctions for sponsoring a motion condemning Beijing's conduct in the Xinjiang region as genocide. Zhao Wei had allegedly

US announces \$1.2bn in new military aid for Ukraine

AFP — WASHINGTON

The United States yesterday announced a new \$1.2bn security assistance package for Ukraine to boost the country's air defences and provide it with additional artillery ammunition. The package underscores the continued US commitment to Ukraine "by committing critical near-term capabilities, such as air defence systems and munitions, while also building the capacity of Ukraine's armed forces to defend its territory and deter Russian aggression over the long term," the Defense Department said in a statement.

The assistance comes in the form of Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative funds, which pay for procurement of equipment from the defence industry or partners rather than providing equipment from existing US stocks. This avoids depleting US inventories, but means the assistance will take longer to reach the battlefield. The package features unspecified air defence systems and munitions as well as equipment to integrate Western systems with Ukraine's existing gear, which is mainly of Soviet vintage. It also includes ammunition for counter drone systems, 155mm artillery rounds, and commercial satellite imagery services.

P IN BRIEF

Hollywood writers need fair deal: President Biden

AP — WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden called for a "fair deal" for Hollywood's striking writers on Monday as he hosted a White House screening of the upcoming streaming series *American Born Chinese* to mark Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. Biden made his first public comments on the strike, which hits the one-week mark yesterday, in remarks ahead of the pilot's screening. He was joined by an overflow crowd of hundreds of community leaders, elected officials and cast members and producers from the show in the East Room and the State Dining Room. "Nights like these are a reminder of stories and the importance of treating storytellers with the dignity, respect and the value they deserve," Biden said. "I sincerely hope the writers strike in Hollywood gets resolved and the writers are given a fair deal they deserve as soon as possible."

Soldier to be sentenced for murder in Texas protest shooting

AP — AUSTIN: A US Army sergeant convicted of murder in the shooting death of an armed protester in a Black Lives Matter march in Texas faced up to life in prison when his sentencing hearing began yesterday, even as Gov. Greg Abbott presses for the chance to pardon the soldier. Sentencing for Daniel Perry is scheduled to last up to two days. State District Judge Clifford Brown, who presided over Perry's trial, last week denied his request for a new trial. Perry, who was working as a ride-share driver the night of the shooting, was convicted in April in the 2020 shooting of 28-year-old Garrett Foster, who was legally carrying an AK-47 rifle through downtown Austin during a summer of nationwide unrest over police killings and racial injustice. The verdict prompted outrage from prominent conservatives including former *Fox News* star Tucker Carlson, who called the shooting an act of self-defence and criticised Abbott on the air after he didn't come on his show. Abbott, a former judge, tweeted the next day that he looked forward to signing a pardon once a recommendation from the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles hits his desk.

RADICALISATION

Texas mall shooter embraced Nazi ideology

AFP — WASHINGTON

The man accused of killing eight people at a Texas shopping mall recently obtained large Nazi tattoos, praised other mass shooters and wrote just ahead of his attack that he would "fight hate with more hate." Mauricio Garcia, the 33-year-old who police say opened fire with an assault rifle on shoppers at the Allen Premium Outlets mall on Saturday, posted his diaries, photographs of his tattoos, and cryptic warnings of his coming attack on the Russian social media site OK.RU. His diaries expressed hate for women, Jews, and "diversity," rarely commenting on his own Hispanic ethnicity. He also posted pictures of his guns, body armour, and patches of

Mauricio Garcia posted his diaries, photographs of his tattoos, and cryptic warnings of his coming attack on the Russian social media site OK.RU.

skulls and the initials for "Right Wing Death Squad" popular with far-right militias. But there was no indication that Garcia was a part of any group or had the support of anyone else in his Saturday attack. Garcia was shot dead by a police officer shortly after launching his attack on the busy mall in the suburb north of Dallas, authorities said. His victims included three members of a Korean-American

family, two sisters of elementary school age, an Indian-American engineer, a security guard at the mall and a 32-year-old man. *MSNBC* reported that US law enforcement were examining Garcia's web pages on OK.RU as part of their investigation into the killing. There were strong indications that the page labelled "PsycoVision5," using a logo of a smiley face with a Hitler-style moustache, was Garcia's. It included extensive personal pictures, photos of his identity papers, a traffic ticket, and other personal items that closely tied him to the page. Garcia posted photos of tattoos he obtained last month, including a large swastika on his chest and the logo of the Nazi Party's Waffen SS paramilitary body.



Demanding president's ouster

Demonstrators participate in a protest to demand the impeachment of Ecuador's President Guillermo Lasso outside the National Assembly in Quito, yesterday. The National Assembly will decide whether or not to impeach President Guillermo Lasso for alleged corruption. (AFP)

El Chapo's son, Sinaloa members face sanctions

AP — WASHINGTON

The United States yesterday sanctioned a son of Mexican drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman, three members of the powerful Sinaloa cartel and two Mexican-based firms, alleging they trafficked fentanyl and other drugs into the US. The sanctions came the day Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador was to talk with President Joe Biden by phone about immigration and the fentanyl crisis. The Treasury Department designated El Chapo's son Joaquin Guzman Lopez and others for financial sanctions, including a freeze on American-owned assets and bank accounts and a ban on Americans doing

business with them. A Culiacan, Mexico, chemical and lab equipment company and a real estate business also were targeted for sanctions. The latest penalties by the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control follow a set of April fentanyl trafficking charges brought against three other Guzman sons, Ovidio Guzmán López, Jesús Alfredo Guzmán Salazar and Iván Archivaldo Guzmán Salazar, known as the Chapitos, or Little Chapos, and two dozen members of the Sinaloa cartel. Fentanyl is the deadliest drug in the US today. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 71,000 people died in the US from overdosing on synthetic opioids such as fentanyl in 2021.

FAJR 3:28AM
SUNRISE 4:53AM
DHUHR 11:30AM

PRAYER
TIMINGS

ASR 2:58PM
MAGHRIB 6:10PM
ISHA 7:40PM



**WEATHER
TODAY**

Hazy at places at first becomes relatively hot to hot daytime with some clouds at times.

**26°C**
Minimum

**37°C**
Maximum

DOHA  26  37	RUWAIS  25  37	ALKHOR  25  35	DUKHAN  26  40	MESAIEED  27  39	ABU SAMRA  23  44
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 **HIGH TIDE 6:00 - 21:00** **LOW TIDE 14:00 - 3:00**

Trending in QATAR

On The Peninsula social media platforms

Qatar launches commemorative stamps to underline heat stress

The Ministry of Labour, in cooperation with the Qatar Postal Services Company (Qatar Post) launched a set of occupational safety and health stamps regarding heat stress. The stamps were presented under the title, "Safety and Health at Workplace: A Basic Right and a Shared Responsibility".



Begging most prevalent during World Cup, Ramadan: Official

The begging incidents in Qatar were particularly prevalent during the 2022 World Cup and Ramadan time, according to First Lieutenant Fahad Jassim Al Mansoori of the Ministry of Interior's Criminal Investigation Department.



Imran Khan arrested in court in Islamabad

Officials from the party of Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan say he has been arrested as he appeared in a court in the capital, Islamabad, to face charges in multiple graft cases.



Jorge Messi denies transfer rumours

Paris Saint Germain star Lionel Messi's sporting agent and father, Jorge Messi, denied all rumours regarding his son having agreed to a deal with any club as of the moment, as reported by BeIN Sports.



QRCS allocates \$1m for urgent relief in Sudan

The Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) announced the allocation of \$1m to implement urgent relief interventions for the deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Sudan, aiming to provide support to 17,000 families, about 119,000 people.



More firms turning to VR for customer service training

JAPAN NEWS

Hotels, convenience stores and other businesses have increasingly turned to virtual reality to help train their staff amid a growing labour shortage.

VR has an advantage over conventional training manuals and in-person training as it allows staff to repeatedly receive realistic training. The use of VR has attracted attention as a means of maintaining high-quality customer service.

In March, convenience store chain operator FamilyMart introduced VR equipment to give store employees customer service training. The employees wear VR goggles and use a controller to learn various tasks, including using the register, ordering products and accepting orders for delivery.

Conventional training requires an instructor to be present to teach the employees the various customer-related tasks at the convenience stores, but with VR, the trainees can learn on their own,

VR has become an effective tool to allow staff to physically memorize procedures and safely experience some of the inherent dangers of the job.

reducing the training time to one-third of the 36 hours normally required. The VR-based training is available in 10 languages, including Japanese, English, Chinese and Vietnamese.

"We hope to improve our customer service, even though we've been short-staffed," said Daisuke Nonaka of the company's store management operation department.

In January, Kyoto College of Hotel, Tourism and Bridal Management in Kyoto developed a VR-based educational programme for hotels and inns. The programme walks students through such tasks as working the front desk and



A FamilyMart employee receives virtual reality customer service training in April in Minato Ward, Tokyo. (Japan News-Yomiuri)

taking restaurant reservations. The program is designed in a way so the scenarios change depending on the responses from the trainees, allowing them to learn to handle various situations while interacting with different virtual guests.

The manufacturing, automobile and railway industries have taken the lead in introducing VR-based training in the areas of inspection and repair. VR has become an effective tool to allow staff to physically memorize procedures and safely experience some of the inherent dangers of the job.

Amid a serious labor shortage, the food service and lodging industries have increasingly launched VR training programmes to improve efficiency.

The National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology in Tsukuba, Ibaraki Prefecture, has been researching and developing VR-based training since 2018. In February, the institute established guidelines for VR-based training for customer service. The guidelines include key points regarding reducing training costs, allowing companies to effectively teach their staff without the financial burden.

"The biggest challenge in the food service industry is cultivating staff," said Takashi Okuma, a research team leader at the institute. "We hope the new technology will help reduce the burden and improve efficiency in the entire industry."

Twitter to purge inactive accounts

AFP — SAN FRANCISCO

Elon Musk on Monday announced that Twitter is canceling accounts that haven't been used for a long time.

The move comes as Musk tries to ramp up engagement, and opportunities to make money, at the online platform he bought for \$44bn last year.

"We're purging accounts that have had no activity at all for several years, so you will probably see follower count drop," Musk said in a tweet.

Musk-mandated changes at Twitter from slashing staff to doing away with free verification check marks seen as stamps of authenticity have alienated users and advertisers.

Twitter's blue ticks were reinstated on some media, celebrity, and other high profile accounts late in April -- a move protested by many of the recipients.

Musk tweeted at the time that he was "paying for a few (subscriptions) personally." Many official media accounts regained a tick, including AFP, which has not subscribed to Twitter Blue. The reinstated ticks did not lure back US public radio NPR, which in mid-April suspended activity on its accounts.

Barbara Kingsolver, Hernan Diaz win fiction Pulitzer Prizes

AP — NEW YORK

The Pulitzer Prize for fiction was awarded Monday to two class-conscious novels: "Demon Copperhead," Barbara Kingsolver's modern recasting of the Dickens classic "David Copperfield," and Hernan Diaz's "Trust," an innovative narrative of wealth and deceit set in 1920s New York.

It's the first time the Pulitzers have awarded two fiction books in the category's 105-year history. Officials have declined to name a fiction winner several times, mostly recently in 2012.

"Trust" won the Kirkus Prize for fiction, was on the long list for the Booker Prize and was named by *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* as one of the year's best books.

Kingsolver's novel, the story of a young boy's struggles

and persistence as he grows up in southern Appalachia, was chosen by Oprah Winfrey last fall for her book club and named by *The Washington Post* as a top release of 2022.

The 68-year-old Kingsolver has long woven social issues into her novels and helped establish the PEN/Bellwether Prize for Socially Engaged Fiction. Speaking by phone Monday, the author said she regards the Pulitzer as an affirmation not just of her novel, but of a misunderstood and overlooked part of the country. Kingsolver is a longtime resident of Appalachia who currently lives on a farm in southwestern Virginia, and set "Demon Copperhead" close by.

"I wrote this book for my people because we are so invisible to the rest of the world and so persistently misrepresented," Kingsolver said. "I couldn't be happier (about the

Pulitzer) for this reason.

Diaz, also interviewed by phone, sees his book and Kingsolver's novel approaching a similar subject, class, from different perspectives. "Demon Copperhead" dramatizes life on the lower end of the extreme divide between rich and poor. "Trust," which begins with a novel-within-the-novel about a financial tycoon and his daughter, explores how such a world is created.

"I wanted to talk about the process itself of the accumulation of wealth," said Diaz, 49, whose debut novel "In the Distance" was a Pulitzer finalist. "I wanted to deal with class and money, and how money is really made." Several works with racial themes were honoured Monday. Beverly Gage's "G-Man," her widely acclaimed book on longtime FBI leader J. Edgar Hoover, was given the Pulitzer for biography.

Serene



A view from the Education City campus. Picture by Fazeena Saleem/The Peninsula.

40-YEAR-OLD SAGA

Nintendo banks on 'Zelda' to boost fortunes

AFP — TOKYO

Japanese video game giant Nintendo is banking on the latest instalment of its 40-year-old saga "Zelda" to breathe life into its business, after forecasting a drop in profits this year.

The firm will release "Tears of the Kingdom" on Friday, with clips circulating on the internet already racking up millions of views and generating feverish excitement among fans.

The saga of Princess Zelda and the elf-like warrior Link has shifted 125 million copies worldwide since its first edition in 1986.

It helped to forge "open world" games where the player is free to roam in virtual landscapes -- an idea later taken up by games from "Grand Theft Auto" to "Skyrim".

But its main challenge this year will be to boost the figures for the Japanese studio and prolong the life of its Switch console, which experts say is in its dotage after seven years on the shelves.

The game "will be by far the biggest contributor to Nintendo's sales this year", said Serkan Toto, an analyst at Kantan Games.

Yet the franchise was

something of a risk during the 1980s for a company that also boasts the "Super Mario" series as part of its stable.

The first episode, "The Legend of Zelda", plunged gamers into an unknown universe largely without instructions.

Creator Shigeru Miyamoto, who also gave life to Mario, was inspired by his childhood explorations of the Japanese countryside to offer a landscape of forests, lakes, caves and mountains.

"The scale of the game was huge at a time when most games were finished in an hour or two," said Kiyoshi Tane, an author specialising in the history of video games.

"The map was designed with a real emphasis on exploration, so it was something of a pioneer of what open-world games would become." The first Zelda hit the market only a few months after "Super Mario Bros", but the two games were far apart on the gaming spectrum.

The game was a smash hit from the off, and for the next two decades it pushed the boundaries of game design.

The 1998 edition "Ocarina of Time" pioneered a system to allow gamers to aim properly in 3D.