The Peninsula
Local focus, Global vision
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LNG PRODUCTION

Amir lays foundation stone of North Field Expansion Project

QNA/THE PENINSULA — DOHA

Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani yesterday laid the foundation stone of the North Field Expansion Project in the city of Ras Laffan.

The ceremony featured a documentary film on the phases of development of the North Field Expansion Project, which will raise Qatar's annual LNG production capacity from 77 million tonnes per annum to 126 million tonnes per annum by 2026, strengthening Qatar's leadership in LNG production worldwide.

Minister of State for Energy Affairs H E Eng Saad bin Sherida Al Kaabi delivered a speech on the occasion.

Following the inauguration, H H the Amir toured the project, during which H H listened to an explanation of its goals, and its ability to achieve sustainable growth and meet local and international needs for liquefied natural gas and its derivatives.

The ceremony was attended by a number of Their Excellencies the Ministers, CEOs, and senior officials of QatarEnergy's partners in the expansion project, and guests of the ceremony.



Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Minister of State for Energy Affairs H E Eng Saad bin Sherida Al Kaabi and Their Excellencies the Ministers, CEOs, and senior officials of QatarEnergy's partners in the expansion project during the ceremony.

The project includes six mega trains, each with a production capacity of eight MTPA of LNG, four of which are part of the North Field East expansion project, and two are part of the North Field South expansion project, contributing a total of 48 MTPA to the global LNG supplies.

Speaking at the ground breaking ceremony, Saad Sherida Al Kaabi stressed that the pioneering expansion project is a quantum leap in our country's leadership in the field of energy, and an embodiment of our goals towards optimal investment in our natural resources and our commitment to providing the world with a cleaner source of energy over many decades.

Al Kaabi said: "On the local level, this project will have short and long-term impacts that will be reflected across all sectors of the Qatari economy and will significantly enhance the State's revenues. This major expansion comes at a crucial time as natural gas occupies a pivotal position in the energy mix in a world facing geopolitical turbulences and is in dire need of clean energy sources that are in line with the global environmental goals." ➔P3



تميم بن حمد
@TamimBinHamad

Today, we laid the foundation stone for the North Field Expansion Project, which falls within our strategy to strengthen Qatar's position as a global producer of liquefied natural gas, and enhance its pioneering role in meeting the need for energy in the global market. I wish QatarEnergy and its partners best of luck for this project.

Biden thanks Amir for Qatar's mediation role

QNA — DOHA

Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani received a phone call from President of the friendly United States of America H E Joe Biden, yesterday.

During the call, they discussed strategic ties between the two countries and aspects of supporting and strengthening them in a range of fields, in addition to sharing perspectives on developments in the region, along with regional and international developments of common concern.

President Biden expressed, during the call, his deep thanks and appreciation for the mediation led by the State of Qatar that resulted in the release of a number of American citizens detained in Iran and their return to their homeland and relatives, noting the State of Qatar's effective and constructive role on the international stage.

For his part, H H the Amir affirmed the State of Qatar's belief in dialogue as the only way of resolving disputes and establishing peace, as well as proceeding with the state's efforts in mediation and disputes resolution, adding that the State of Qatar's commitment to its role as a reliable international mediator is not limited by regional borders, but goes far beyond to contribute to efforts to establish peace globally.

FOOD SECURITY

Qatar announces $2m grant for IOFS programmes

SANAULLAH ATAULLAH
THE PENINSULA

Minister of Municipality H E Dr. Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Subaie has announced a $2m grant from Qatar to Islamic Organisation for Food Security (IOFS) as a contribution to enhance its programmes.

The announcement was made during the 6th General Assembly of the Islamic Organisation for Food Security (IOFS) which was held in Doha yesterday under the theme "Together Committed to Action".

The event was attended by ministers, heads of delegations and delegates from 57 countries, eight institutions affiliated with the Islamic Organization for Food Security, and two regional and international organisations.

Minister of Municipality called for harnessing the power of diversity, experiences and resources to overcome the problems that member countries face to ensure food security.

Addressing the IOFS General Assembly, the Minister of Municipality called for setting up a strong coalition to face the great challenges of member states in ensuring food security.

"The organisation - by providing the necessary capabilities - will play a pivotal role in helping to improve food security indicators in our countries," said the Minister.

He called for harnessing the power of diversity, experiences and resources to overcome the multiple problems that member countries face to ensure food security through innovation, sustainable practices and fair distribution systems that leave no one without access to safe and adequate food.

"Qatar under the wise leadership of Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani attaches great importance to developing the economic sector in the country, including the agriculture and food security sector," said the Minister.

He said that Qatar has implemented its National Strategy for Food Security 2018-2023, the next version of which is being prepared for 2024-2030. ➔P4

EMPLOYMENT

New licensing procedure for electricians, plumbers

THE PENINSULA — DOHA

The Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation (Kahramaa) has introduced a testing and licensing procedure specifically designed for individual workers (electricians and plumbers), enabling them to operate their businesses in a legal and approved manner.

Kahramaa will publish a comprehensive list of all accredited contractors and individuals on the Corporation's official website to enhance accessibility for all members of Qatari society.

As part of the implementation process, Kahramaa stresses that licences granted to individual electricians and plumbers will be limited to maintenance work exclusively. It is important to note that these licences do not cover electrical connection work or water installations.

Kahramaa has announced the commencement date for Ministerial Resolution No. (2) of 2022, issued by Minister of State for Energy Affairs.

This resolution reestablishes the rules regulating the work of electrical connections and water installations and the conditions for granting and renewing licences to practice these endeavours. The resolution will come into effect today.

In an effort to ensure the seamless implementation of this decision, Kahramaa has undertaken various measures to streamline the licence application process.

These measures include developing theoretical and practical examinations for contractors. These initiatives exemplify Kahramaa's strategic vision of remaining vigilant to regulatory and legal changes, and proactively responding to them with utmost efficiency. ➔P3

CYBER SECURITY

NCSA certifications reflect Microsoft's efforts to provide trusted cloud services: Khalaf

AYENI OLUSEGUN
THE PENINSULA

After receiving the National Information Assurance Certification (NIA) from the National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA), Microsoft Qatar General Manager Lana Khalaf has disclosed that the credential buttresses Microsoft's commitment to Qatar.

In a statement to *The Peninsula*, Khalaf said Microsoft is proud that its cloud datacentre in Qatar has achieved the National Information Assurance Certification from NCSA.

"This certification confirms that Microsoft's cloud services are compliant with Qatar's national privacy laws and regulations. It also reflects our continuous efforts and investments to provide organisations in Qatar, especially in regulated industries, with the most compliant and trusted cloud solutions," Khalaf said.

Last year, Microsoft became the first global cloud provider in Qatar to receive the NIA Certification. The feat confirmed Microsoft cloud's compliance with the Information Security Management System (ISMS) standards, supporting the adoption of a secure cloud and accelerating the country's digital transformation agenda.

To support growing local businesses, Microsoft and its partner ecosystem will spend about $1bn in the datacentre region for services and products in local economies. "Microsoft Cloud stands as the most trusted, comprehensive, and integrated cloud in the world, with over 100 global compliance offerings and certifications," Khalaf added. ➔P4



NCSA President Eng Abdulrahman bin Ali Al Farahid Al Malki presents the NCSA certification to Microsoft's Lana Khalaf.

EDITORIAL ↘09

Significant step forward

IN A landmark ceremony yesterday, Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani laid the foundation stone of the North Field expansion project.

BUSINESS ↘ 13

'Qatar-Kazakh Business Forum' bolsters investment opportunities

SPORT ↘ 18

Alcaraz exits China Open as Sinner reaches final



The largest LNG project of its kind in the world

A Historic Achievement

Congratulations to the State of Qatar and QatarEnergy for the ground-breaking of the North Field Expansion project. We are committed to maximising the value of the LNG expansion for the State of Qatar and continue to be a trusted and long-term partner in Qatar's continued progress.

قطر للطاقة
QatarEnergy

Amir lays foundation stone of North Field Expansion Project





Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani laying the foundation stone of the North Field Expansion Project in Ras Laffan yesterday.

FROM PAGE 1

The Minister of State for Energy Affairs, the President and CEO of QatarEnergy, said: "There is no doubt that these additional quantities of natural gas are of great importance as they will play a prominent role in enhancing energy security, supporting a practical and realistic energy transition, and ensuring fair and equitable access to cleaner energy for a sustainable growth and a better future for all." Al Kaabi concluded his remarks by thanking QatarEnergy's partners, and the working teams of Qatar Energy and QatarEnergy LNG, and the contractors working to implement this project with the highest quality and safety standards.

"I am honoured to extend ample thanks and gratitude to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani for honoring us with his presence and patronage of this celebration, and for his unlimited support and guidance to us in the Energy Sector," he said.

In a statement, Patrick Pouyanne, Chairman and CEO of TotalEnergies said: "TotalEnergies is honored to be part of today's North Field expansion, reinforcing Qatar's status as the world's leading LNG producer with a capacity of 126 million tonnes.

"Thanks to innovation, the Northfield Expansion is a flagship project for industry to which TotalEnergies is proud to contribute through its expertise and engineers. This project is set to spearhead efforts in slashing greenhouse gas emissions, emphasising the key role of LNG and natural gas in the energy transition."

QatarEnergy is partnered in this global project by TotalEnergies, Shell, ConocoPhillips, ExxonMobil, Eni, Sinopec, and CNPC, whose contributions will play a pivotal role in ensuring the project's success and achieving its goals by producing LNG that is the best in the world in terms of safety, reliability, and carbon footprint.

In addition to LNG, the project will produce 6,500 tonnes per day of ethane gas, which will be used as a feedstock in the local petrochemical industries. The project will also produce about 200,000 barrels per day of liquefied petroleum gas (propane and butane), and about 450,000 barrels per day of condensates, in addition to large quantities of helium and pure sulfur.

Amir meets CEOs of global energy firms

QNA — DOHA

Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani met with a number of chief executive officers of global energy companies who participated in the North Field Expansion Project ceremony in Ras Laffan Industrial City yesterday.

The Amir met separately with Chairman and CEO of TotalEnergies Patrick Pouyanne; Chairman and CEO of ExxonMobil Darren Woods; CEO of Shell Wael Sawan; Chairman and CEO of ConocoPhillips Ryan Lance; and CEO of the Italian oil company Eni Claudio Descalzi, who called on the Amir on the occasion of their participation in the foundation stone laying ceremony for the North Field Expansion Project in Ras Laffan Industrial City yesterday.





Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani meeting CEO of Shell Wael Sawan (left) and Chairman and CEO of TotalEnergies Patrick Pouyanne yesterday.

The meetings discussed ways to promote cooperation between Qatar and energy companies to achieve common interests, in addition to a number of gas-related developments, and other relevant issues.

Eighth edition of Qatar Sustainability Week to take place on Nov 4-11

THE PENINSULA — DOHA

Earthna Center for a Sustainable Future, a member of Qatar Foundation, is calling upon environmentally conscious businesses, organisations, and other members of the Qatar community to be part of Qatar Sustainability Week (QSW) 2023.

A national campaign that encourages everyone in Qatar to match passion with action by organising or taking part in sustainability-focused activities, QSW 2023 will be held from November 4-11 in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC).

Over 65 organisations have already registered a variety of activities for this year's event, which include tree-planting workshops, beach clean-ups, and interactive lectures designed to encourage more sustainable lifestyles.

Those interested in participating in QSW 2023 can register their own activity — or find others to get involved with — at www.qatarsustainabilityweek.com, and by following QSW on social media.

This year, QSW will welcome strategic partners including the 2023 International Horticultural Exposition (Expo 2023), United Development Company (UDC), Katara Hospitality, Qatar Rail, Kahramaa's Tarsheed, Msheireb Properties, British Council Qatar, the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, Qatar Museums, GWC Logistics and Al Wakra Municipality.

QSW activities include tree-planting workshops, beach clean-ups, and interactive lectures designed to encourage more sustainable lifestyles.





Prime Minister honours graduates of Shafallah Center affiliates

Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani and Minister of Social Development and Family H E Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser Al Misnad with officials and students of the Shafallah Center for Children with Special Needs at the centre's graduation ceremony yesterday. RIGHT: The event was also attended by Minister of Public Health H E Dr. Hanan Mohamed Al Kuwari, Minister of Education and Higher Education H E Buthaina bint Ali Al Jabr Al Nuaimi, Minister of Labour H E Dr. Ali bin Smaikh Al Marri, Qatar Airways Group CEO H E Akbar Al Baker, and several other officials, and parents of the graduates.

OFFICIAL NEWS

Amir congratulates German President

QNA -DOHA: Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, and Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Thani sent yesterday cables of congratulations to President of Germany H E Frank-Walter Steinmeier on the occasion of the German Unity Day. Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani also sent a cable of congratulations to German Chancellor H E Olaf Scholz.

Amir congratulates President of Iraq

QNA -DOHA: Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, and Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Thani sent yesterday cables of congratulations to President of Iraq H E Dr. Abdul Latif Jamal Rashid on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani also sent a cable of congratulations to Prime Minister of Iraq H E Mohammed Shia' Al Sudani.

New licensing procedure for electricians and plumbers

FROM PAGE 1

Aligned with this resolution, Kahramaa emphasised the mandate for all customers and property owners to exclusively engage with contractors or individual technicians who have been approved and accredited by the Corporation for their electrical connections and water installations.

This is to ensure that customers receive a higher level of reliability and quality service in line with Kahramaa's standards.

In addition, this resolution has granted all customers and property owners the ability to verify the licensing status of professionals and workers involved in electrical and water installation services, including contractors and their technical staff, as well as individual electricians and plumbers.

This verification process can be conveniently conducted by scanning the QR code present on the licence card issued by Kahramaa. This effective measure instils a deep sense of trust and transparency, ensuring that customers' needs are met with the utmost expertise and reliability.

The resolution outlines a range of legal and professional obligations for contractors, as well as obligations for property owners. Contractors are required to fulfil various requirements, including providing accurate data and documents during the licence application process, and adhering to the approved security, safety, electrical, and water installation regulations established by Kahramaa.

On the other hand, property owners are obliged to engage a licensed contractor accredited by Kahramaa. They are also expected to provide accurate data, information, and documents to ensure smooth service delivery. Additionally, property owners must have the designated engineer or foreman present during any technical discussions with Kahramaa representatives. These obligations ensure compliance, efficiency, and effective communication between all involved parties.

President of Kahramaa Eng Essa bin Hilal Al Kuwari has underscored the importance of this pivotal decision, which wields comprehensive control over the progress of all sorts of endeavours within the energy and water sectors across Qatar.

Al Kuwari said, "Our departments are dedicating significant efforts towards designing technical training programmes for our personnel and authorised external workforce. These endeavours are carried out in close collaboration with the Ministry. On a relevant note, the Corporation has clarified its preparedness to collaborate with fellow contractors and individuals, providing assistance and addressing inquiries or concerns pertaining to the aforementioned resolution. This encompasses various areas such as the licensing process, certification, requirements, and the privileges afforded to those who successfully pass the mandatory tests and obtain the licence.

Sheikha Moza meets Tanzanian President



Chairperson of the Education Above All Foundation (EAA) H H Sheikha Moza bint Nasser met yesterday with President of the United Republic of Tanzania H E Samia Suluhu Hassan. The meeting discussed the efforts of the Education Above All Foundation to reduce the number of out-of-school children in Tanzania.

Qatar Airways Cargo launches freighters to Warsaw

THE PENINSULA — DOHA

Qatar Airways Cargo has commenced freighter operations to Warsaw, Poland, effective October 1, 2023. Operating once a week to the capital of Poland, Qatar Airways Cargo offers 100 tonnes of weekly cargo capacity on its dedicated freighter, each way.

Warsaw is currently the only station served by the airline in Poland with ten weekly passenger services. The addition of a dedicated freighter service from Warsaw will increase the total weekly cargo capacity to more than 200 tonnes. With the launch of freighters, businesses in Poland benefit from direct main deck freighter capacity for their imports and exports. The majority of the imports and exports consist of general cargo, and perishables.

Elisabeth Oudkerk, SVP Cargo Sales and Network Planning said, "Qatar Airways Cargo has been serving Eastern Europe for many years and is very pleased to announce freighters to Warsaw which will complement the passenger flights to this important city. The launch of this service will provide consistent and reliable freighter operations between Poland and Qatar". Qatar Airways Cargo has a large footprint in Eastern Europe and currently serves 7 destinations in the region, offering both passenger and freighter services. In addition to Warsaw, Qatar Airways Cargo provides structural cargo capacity to and from Budapest, Prague, Bucharest, Zagreb, Belgrade, and Sofia. A customer welcome event was held to celebrate the freighter arrival which was attended by Qatar Airways Cargo management, Warsaw airport officials, and customers.

Warsaw is currently the only station served by the airline in Poland with ten weekly passenger services.

HISTORY MAKING

West Bay Beach first in Doha to implement accessibility ramp

THE PENINSULA — DOHA

West Bay Beach (WBB), a leading tourist destination owned by Qatar Tourism, is the first beach in Doha to implement an accessibility ramp, catering to the needs of individuals with mobility challenges. Designed in collaboration with experts in mobility, the ramp includes a structure that allows individuals using wheelchairs to navigate the sandy terrain and access the waterfront easily.

The initiative is part of the 'Inclusivity at WBB: Breaking Barriers, Embracing All' campaign by West Bay Beach which aims to provide a welcoming and inclusive environment for all visitors by eliminating physical barriers that limit access. The addition of the accessibility ramp ensures that everyone, regardless of their physical abilities, can now experience the joy of a beach visit.

Head of Tourism Investment Policy at Qatar Tourism, Aysha Al Mulla, said: "At Qatar Tourism, we are committed to developing and implementing policies that ensure the highest standards of service and quality across our tourism offerings. We are proud that our very own West Bay Beach is the first in Qatar to implement initiatives that cater to individuals with mobility challenges, aligning with our vision to ensure the country's tourism sector is secure, enjoyable, and accessible for all."

"WBB has always strived to create an inclusive space where everyone feels welcome and can fully enjoy their time at the beach," said Aidana Saparbaeva, Project Manager of West Bay Beach. "We are delighted to be the first beach in Doha to implement an accessibility ramp, allowing individuals with mobility challenges to easily access the beach and experience its beauty. This is an important step towards a more inclusive society, and we hope it inspires other establishments." In addition to the accessibility ramp, West Bay Beach is investing in a range of enhancements, including dedicated parking spaces, accessible restroom facilities, and a team of trained professionals ready to offer assistance to individuals with disabilities.

Qatar Tourism is actively working towards becoming one of the first organisations in Qatar to attain ISO 21902:2021 certification, an international recognition on best practices that are implemented to promote accessible tourism. To gain this, Qatar Tourism is engaged in various aspects including policy development, strategy formulation, infrastructure enhancement, product and service improvement, to ensure that people of all ages and abilities can enjoy the country's tourism offering.



A view of the West Bay Beach with the accessibility ramp.

Katara to hold book fair on Oct 13

QNA — DOHA

The Cultural Village Foundation- Katara announced holding its first book fair within the 9th Edition of Katara Festival for Arabic Novel, which is scheduled to be held from October 13 to 20.

All Qatari publishing houses participate in the Katara Book Fair, in addition to major local libraries.

The exhibition aims to facilitate readers' access to Qatari publishing houses, keep up with their new publications, and contribute to spreading the culture of reading among the public in general.

Katara Book Fair focuses on books of Arabic literature in all its arts, poetry, fiction and criticism, to keep pace with the Arab Novel Week, along with books from various specialties. The Katara Book Fair is scheduled to be organized annually in conjunction with Novel Week. Katara has experience in organizing book fairs, as the Cultural Village previously held an open book fair in early 2021, in cooperation with the Qatari Publishers and Distributors Forum.

Katara Art Studios resumes QatART Market and workshops

Meanwhile, Katara Art Studios will resume on Friday a new season of QatART Makers Market and workshops from 4 pm to 9 pm with the participation of a variety of craftspeople and artists.

The market offers the public various exhibits including antiques, jewellery, paintings and drawings, as well as cultural clothing, home decorations, and photography. The market seeks to provide marketing opportunities and introduce participants' products.

Qatar announces $2m grant for IOFS programmes

FROM PAGE 1

The next food security strategy coincides with Qatar Vision 2030 as it seeks to build a flexible and sustainable food system capable of dealing with any changes, crises or disasters.

The Minister stressed the importance of joint work, cooperation and unifying efforts to achieve sustainable development in the field of agriculture and food security.

"Qatar hosted the 6th IOFS General Assembly to consolidate the bonds of brotherhood, solidarity, consultation and exchange of ideas among the member states of the organization," said the Minister.

Minister of Agriculture, Water Resources and Fisheries of Tunisia H E Abdelmonem Belati thanked Qatar for its hosting of 6th IOFS General Assembly as well as the second high-level forum on food security and for its good reception and generous hospitality.

"This confirms the sincere will of Qatar in its commitment to food security issues in the countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and outside it," said Belati.

He stressed Tunisia's keenness on the necessity of devoting the principle of cooperation, solidarity and partnership among OIC member countries to serve the basic right to adequate and safe food for every individual.

The next food security strategy coincides with Qatar Vision 2030 as it seeks to build a flexible and sustainable food system capable of dealing with any changes, crises or disasters.

Assistant Secretary General for Economic Affairs at the OIC, H E Dr. Ahmad Kawesa Sengedo stressed the need to enhance cooperation and synergy among the OIC member states, especially in the field of capacity building, cooperative research programmes and effective management of resources to increase production and productivity in agriculture.

He said that strong research supports in harnessing the potential of modern science, encourage innovations in technology generation, and provide enabling policies and investment support are also needed.

Sengedo also stressed the need to support the development of agricultural commodities that are considered essential for food security and poverty alleviation in a number of member countries of the organisation, especially the least developed countries.

'NCSA certifications reflects efforts to provide trusted cloud services'

FROM PAGE 1

"And we are committed to continually raising the bar in ensuring the security and compliance of our cloud services," Khalaf added.

In 2022, Microsoft launched its datacentre region alongside Azure and Microsoft 365, giving organisations access to hundreds of scalable, highly available and resilient cloud services from Qatar. An International Data Corporation (IDC) report stated that over the next four years after its launch, Microsoft, its ecosystem, and cloud customers could generate approximately $18bn in new revenue and add over 35,000 direct and indirect jobs to the Qatar economy.

Microsoft, its ecosystem, and IT departments in customer companies will add 8,100 new skilled IT jobs into the economy over the same period. The extent to which appropriate skills are available is critical to the local economy capitalising on this employment opportunity.

QS holds training programme

QNA — DOHA

In cooperation with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), the Qatar General Organization for Standards and Metrology (QS) is organizing training programem on 'Standard Specifications' for employees of the consumer sector in the Ministry during the period from October 1 to 5.

Within the framework of cooperation between the QS and the MoCI, the programme aims at contributing to building and developing the human cadre capabilities and skills and raising their technical level. A number of experts and specialists will give lecture during the program which seeks to familiarize trainees with the impact of standards on society and the environment as well as introduce international and Gulf standards, standardization to protect consumers, among others.

قطر للطاقة QatarEnergy LNG

QatarEnergy LNG

Tender Invitation

No.	TENDER NUMBER / DESCRIPTION	TENDER ISSUE PERIOD	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER CLOSING DATE
1	LTC/C/MNT/6355/23 Provision of Cleaning of Equipment on call off basis	02/10/2023 to 09/10/2023	0	170,000	30/10/2023

Scope of Work:
Contractor to provide equipment and skilled manpower for supporting Maintenance/Cleaning and Inspection of various equipment (Current and Future Installations) in the Company's facilities, on call off basis. Equipment can be classified broadly as Shell and Tube Heat exchangers, Vessels, Columns, Tanks, Air Cooled Heat exchangers, Filters etc. The duration of the awarded Contract shall be five (05) years starting tentatively from 1Q2024 with a sole option for Company to extend it further for up to two (02) years.

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

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

Note: Effective from 1st July 2023, bids received from Local Companies (established under the Laws of State of Qatar with local Commercial Registration) who are not in possession of an ICV score in the ICV portal by Bid Closing Date (or commercial bid submission date if separately mentioned/notified) will not be accepted. Local Company that have been established for less than 2 years and insurance companies are exempted from this requirement. For further details please visit ICV Digital Portal:- https://icv.qa/US

مؤسسة قطر Qatar Foundation

INVITATION TO TENDER

Tender Reference	Description	Tender Fee (QAR)	Tender Bond Value (QAR)	Bid Closing Date
QNL-RFQ-1-3	Supply, Installation, Testing, Training and Maintenance of A0 Map & Book Scanner including High Performance CPU Workstation and Eizo Monitor	500.00	N/A	25 October 2023
CO-RFQ-81	Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Air Conditioning Units to QF	1,000.00	N/A	31 October 2023

Qatar Foundation (QF) Procurement & Program Management Directorate is inviting companies to participate in the above listed public tenders. To receive the tender documents, please follow the below steps:

1) **Supplier Registration** It is mandatory to be registered as a supplier with QF in order to participate in the above tender(s). Only QF registered suppliers will be allowed to pay the tender fees online. Therefore, please visit QF website at https://www.qf.org.qa/supplier-registration to complete the Supplier Registration process.

   Tender Fee: Interested bidders can Sign in by visiting this link https://suppliers.qf.org.qa/abstract and pay the respective non-refundable and non-transferrable tender fee online.

   All Tender Fees are to be paid using credit cards only.

   Tender Fee Payment Dates: Payment of Tender Fee online will be from **4th October** until **11th October 2023**.

2) All bidders, who are registered and have paid the required tender fees online to QF, will then be granted access to download the Tender Document.

3) Technical and commercial bids need to be submitted and attached online in QF Supplier Portal as per instructions provided in the "Supplier Portal" work instruction.

- The commercial bid must be valid for **120 days** from Bid Closing Date.
- The commercial bid must be accompanied by a bank guarantee (tender bond) issued by a local bank in Qatar and should be valid for **120 days** from the bid closing date (where applicable as per the Tender documents).
- The successful tenderer will be required to submit a performance bond as prescribed in each of the above tender documents.
- Qatar Foundation special qualifications, terms and conditions shall apply as stipulated in the tender document.

Note: All work instructions for Supplier registration and Supplier portal can be found in below link: https://www.qf.org.qa/supplier-registration

PM discusses strengthening action in Islamic world with OIC Secretary-General



Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani met yesterday at his office with Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) H E Hussein Ibrahim Taha, who is visiting the Country. During the meeting, relations between the State of Qatar and the OIC were discussed. H E the Prime Minister stressed, during the meeting, on the need to strengthen multilateral action in the Islamic world, in a way that contributes to confronting the challenges facing Islamic countries and achieving the aspirations of their people. HE the OIC Secretary-General expressed his appreciation to the State of Qatar for its active role and support for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.



PM and Deputy PM of Kazakhstan hold talks on boosting bilateral ties

Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani met yesterday at his office with Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan H E Serik Zhumangarin, who is visiting the Country. Cooperation between the two countries and means of boosting and strengthening them were discussed during the meeting.



PM meets Advisor to French President

Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani met at his office yesterday with the Advisor to French President on North Africa and the Middle East H E Patrick Durel, who is visiting the country. During the meeting, they discussed the relations between the two countries and ways to support and enhance them. They also discussed the latest developments in the negotiations to return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the developments in the Palestinian cause, and the current crisis in Lebanon.



PM hosts Lord Mayor of London

Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani met yesterday at his office with Lord Mayor of the City of London Nicholas Lyons, who is visiting the country. During the meeting, they discussed investment and trade relations between the two countries.

NHRC signs MoU with NCHR of Uzbekistan

QNA — DOHA



NHRC officials with officials from Uzbekistan's NCHR during the event.

National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) of Uzbekistan, with the aim of intensifying cooperation in advancing human rights systems, strategies, and action plans, benefiting from the technical and institutional expertise of both sides.

NHRC said in a statement on Monday that the MoU comes in the framework of developing the protection mechanisms of human rights and fundamental freedoms, in addition to strengthening democratic institutions and the rule of law in the two countries.

The MoU includes cooperation plans to disseminate progressive and humanitarian ideas, initiatives, and practices. It also aims to promote and protect human rights in the two countries, guided by the globally recognized rules and principles of public international law, international human rights law, and national legislations, in addition to the "Paris Principles" relating to the Status of National Institutions, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993.

During a consultative meeting preceding the signing of the MoU, the Qatari and Uzbek sides stressed that their coordination, partnership, mutual assistance, and exchange of expertise will be of mutual benefit, promoting and protecting human rights in the two countries in accordance with their respective laws and regulations. They also noted that the MoU would further consolidate their ties in the areas of promoting the culture of human rights and human rights and freedoms' protection on the basis of equality, mutual respect, and mutual benefit.

Both sides discussed strengthening cooperation regarding compliance with the rules, regulations and directives in force in the two countries, in order to enhance the national legislative framework in accordance with international agreements, as well as cooperating in training programs on human rights, conducting joint research, and carrying out joint media and awareness-campaigns and activities. Furthermore, the two sides agreed on increasing coordination to aid both sides in fulfilling their international human rights obligations.

ACTA organises training on right to access information

QNA — DOHA

The Administrative Control and Transparency Authority (ACTA) is organizing a training programme on the law regulating the right to access information from Oct. 2-5 to enhance the capabilities of public officials, raise their efficiency, and provide them with knowledge that enhances their scientific and practical capabilities in the areas of integrity and transparency.

The training programme addressed the definition of the concept of the right to obtain information and talked briefly about the law on the right to access information, which includes 27 articles distributed over eight chapters, including many provisions on issues related to regulating the right to access information, including procedures for requesting information, the deadline for submitting information, and cases of accepting or rejecting applications.

The programme also addressed legal penalties, which include fines and imprisonment, and obligations on entities subject to the law in terms of automatically publishing information or providing information to the information requester, dealing with requests by acceptance and rejection, the grievance mechanism, and learning about relevant local laws and policies, as well as international practices in this field and practical training for application.

The law regulating the right to access information aims to achieve the maximum benefit from public services provided by various agencies, contribute to employment procedures, enhance transparency in the performance of the relevant agencies, enhance economic participation and encourage economic investment, assist the media, and combat rumours and misleading information, in addition to contributing to scientific researches.

SUSTAINABILITY CAMPAIGN

Safari 'Go Green Grow Green' promotion launched at outlets

THE PENINSULA — DOHA

Safari has created an exciting opportunity for its customers to win prize of 6 kg of gold through the Safari Shop and Shine mega promotion.



Safari Group Chairman Hamad Dafar Al Ahbabi and other officials during the launch of the promotion.

On October 2nd, the "Go Green Grow Green" promotion was officially launched at Safari, leading hypermarket Group in Doha. The central message of this promotion is to promote organic farming and advocate for a harmonious coexistence with nature.

The inauguration was carried out by Safari Group Chairman Hamad Dafar Al Ahbabi, Safari Group Director & General Manager Sainul Abideen, and Safari Group Managing Director Shaheen Backer, with the presence of several other key management representatives. Under this exciting promotion, Safari is offering a wide range of products and items to its customers. This includes seedlings of various vegetables such as oranges, lemons, papayas, aloe vera, bananas, moringa, basil, curry leaves, coconut seedlings, and asparagus, available in diverse colors and suitable for both indoor and outdoor planting.

Additionally, an extensive selection of ornamental plants, comprising Anthurium, Bonsai Plants, Cacti, Bamboo Sticks, various Hanging Plants (including both imported and non-imported varieties), as well as a comprehensive assortment of vegetables, ornamental plants, and seeds are being made available.

In support of gardening enthusiasts, Safari has also ensured the availability of various gardening essentials, ranging from plant pots, grow bags, watering cans, garden benches, grass mats, garden hoses, a variety of garden tools, fertilizers, potting soil, and other related materials.

The "Go Green Grow Green" promotion underscores Safari Group's steadfast commitment to environmental protection and the promotion of sustainable organic farming practices. As part of this initiative, Safari aims to provide essential seeds, vegetables, tree seedlings, and related materials to the public at highly affordable prices.

Starting from October 2nd, this promotion will be available at all Safari outlets in Doha.

Furthermore, Safari has created an exciting opportunity for its customers to win prize of 6 kg of gold through the Safari Shop and Shine mega promotion. To participate, simply obtain a raffle coupon with a minimum purchase of QR50 from any of Safari's outlets.

QU College of Pharmacy holds outreach event on patient safety day

THE PENINSULA – DOHA

The College of Pharmacy at Qatar University (QU) recently hosted a dynamic outreach event in commemoration of World Patient Safety Day (WPSD) as part of its commitment to contribute to public health promotion based on this year's theme, "Engaging Patients for Patient Safety."

Under the banner of "Pharmacists Elevating the Voice of Patients," the event saw enthusiastic participation from both students and faculty members, emphasising the critical role of pharmacists in ensuring patient safety.

The event, organised in collaboration with the Qatar Pharmacy Undergraduate Students Society (QPhUS) and the QU Students Representative Board (QUSRB), had a series of engaging activities and interactive games designed to raise awareness on patient safety.

The activities were conducted by the talented and passionate student volunteers, who brought a fresh perspective to the importance of involving patients in their own healthcare journey.

Students, faculty, and staff were welcomed to pass by the campaign booths, where volunteers presented informative brochures, posters, and interactive cards highlighting the WHO's global objectives for Patient Safety Day and the role of patients as well as pharmacists in ensuring the safety of patients in healthcare settings. The activities and educational material featured in this event emphasised the enormous benefit of patients' own awareness of their health and treatment choices and their active participation in clinical decision-making in reducing the magnitude of the global impact of healthcare-related harm to patients and their families.

Professor Derek Stewart, an internationally renowned educator and researcher and a faculty member of the College of Pharmacy at QU, emphasised the importance of actively involving patients in healthcare decisions.

He stated, "Healthcare systems are dynamic, fast-paced, and ever-changing, aiming to provide efficient, effective, and person-centred care. These key features, combined with the vast array of individuals and patient groups involved, place all at risk. We need to keep advancing the notion of the patients as the most important stakeholders and proactively seek their desires, views, and experiences to constantly reflect, revise, and refocus care to minimize risk and enhance safety."



Qatar, Grenada ink Air Services Agreement

Qatar signed an air services agreement with Grenada yesterday. The agreement was initialled by Minister of Transport H E Jassim Saif Ahmed Al Sulaiti and Prime Minister, Minister for Civil Aviation, Infrastructure, and Transportation of Grenada H E Dickon Mitchell. As per the agreement, the national carriers of both countries can operate an unlimited number of passenger and cargo flights, with full transportation rights. The pact, which brings the number of Qatar's air transportation agreements with other countries to 176, comes within the framework of connecting Qatar with more air services pacts to allow its national carrier to fly to more global destinations. Following the signing ceremony, the two officials discussed Qatar-Grenada relations in the fields of transportation, civil aviation, ports, and ways to further enhance them.

QRCS, KRCS reach out to 94,000 people in Afghanistan



People receive healthcare under a QRCS-KRCS project in Afghanistan.

THE PENINSULA – DOHA

Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) and Kuwaiti Red Crescent Society (KRCS) have concluded a project of response to the emergency and health needs of vulnerable people in Afghanistan, under a bilateral agreement to alleviate the suffering of people most affected by conflict in the country. The purpose of the project was to improve the health and living conditions of 93,950 beneficiaries displaced by disasters and conflicts. The $548,000 project was co-funded by QRCS and KRCS and implemented in cooperation with the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS).

As part of component of the project, 112 categories of medicines and medical supplies were provided for 17 primary healthcare centres and mental health hospitals, to serve a population of 77,150 people in 13 provinces: Kabul, Zabul, Lugar, Kandahar, Farah, Nimroz, Herat, Jawzjan, Balkh, Kunduz, Baghlan, Laghman, and Nangarhar.

Food parcels were distributed to 2,400 families in Kunar, Takhar, and Zabul, each containing 46 kg of food staples like flour, rice, vegetable oil, lentils, red beans, sugar, and tea.

Personal hygiene kits were distributed to 2,400 families in Kunar, Takhar, and Zabul, meeting the standards approved by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

The project had a significant impact on the target communities, by enhancing the resilience of displaced and affected families, improving their nutrition by providing vital food items, reducing morbidity rates through better hygiene, and backing health facilities to continue providing medical services for patients.

Sheikh Hamad Award for Translation holds symposium on International Translation Day

QNA – DOHA

Sheikh Hamad Award for Translation and International Understanding organised an online symposium on the occasion of the International Translation Day which is celebrated on September 30 every year.

Five translators from different languages attended the symposium, presenting their visions on the role of translation as a civilizing act between nations, cultures and peoples.

Held under the title "Experiences in Translation", the symposium also discussed the reality of the translation movement based on their personal experiences in this field, and touched on the difficulties and challenges they face during their work. Moderator of the symposium Dr. Imtenan Al Samadi said that the award seeks to honour translators, encourage them, and recognise their efforts by appreciating them on both the material and moral levels. She outlined the process of the award that Qatar presents to the world, its philosophy, goals, objectives, categories, and the eligibility criteria.

Wafa Abu Hatab, Professor of Linguistics at Zarqa University in Jordan, spoke about the importance of translation for humanity, noting that it was the will of Allah Almighty to create different tongues and languages so people can learn and get to know each other, and translation is a means for communication between nations.

She explained that translation is a cultural act in which the translator wanders between two different cultures to convey the meaning; pointing to the translator as an ambassador of culture between nations, and a mediator between two cultures.

Prof. Abu Hatab pointed to the challenges faced by translators, including the absence of the original text's author, or finding the corresponding literary text that expresses the meaning and gives the same effect, because literature is the cultural "capsule" that contains nations' customs and vision of life, and is full of proverbs and expressions linked to one culture and not another.

Dr. Nedelya Kitaeva, who teaches Arabic language and literature at the New Bulgarian University, spoke about her first encounter with translation from Arabic during her university study. She was hesitant to choose a specific author for her master's thesis, but she read the poetic works of Adonis and decided to translate some of his poems.

Kitaeva explained that she was certain that she couldn't write about a poet without immersing herself in his works. Initially, she understood only a little from his poetry; the words had mysterious meanings. However, she sensed the depth of this poetry and his latent potential, and found a description of this feeling in Adonis's words when he spoke of a language beyond language, an image beyond the image, and knowledge beyond knowledge, she said, expressing belief that these words provide the most precise definition of Arab culture and its literature in general. That was the first challenge she faced in the field of Arabic translation, she added.



The event highlighted the opportunities and challenges facing translators in today's world.

Egyptian translator Dr. Salah Helal, the Professor of German Literature and Philosophy at Ain Shams University's Faculty of Education, noted in his remarks the need for concerted efforts in translation in the form of a huge Arab project that includes specialists from all countries and is oriented to the translation work in the Arab world. This requires political and cultural will and financial support.

Dr. Salah Helal highlighted the problem of scarcity of funding, which prevents the translator from devoting himself to his project. "If translators devoted themselves to translation activity, they would enrich the Arab library with the books we need to bring about a cultural renaissance," he added.

Kuwaiti translator Abdul Wahab Suleiman said that blogs and social media represent a suitable medium for publishing houses to discover translation talents. There are online translator communities and hashtags to serve translators and these media are good for the translator, even though they are linked to individual and non-institutional efforts.

Abdul Wahab Suleiman said that there are difficulties facing the translator, most prominently in dealing with academic terminology. There is no unified formula for these terms and there is no translation institution that unifies the terms. Another difficulty that academic books and scientific research translators have is that scientific sources and books are not available to anyone who wants to read them for free at a time when they are indispensable for the translator to understand the context of the work. He expressed his hope for the development of artificial intelligence to be at the service of the translator and to save them effort and time.



HMC highlights important role of pharmacists in healthcare

THE PENINSULA – DOHA

The executive office of Corporate Pharmacy at Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) marked World Pharmacists Day under the theme: "Pharmacists Strengthening Health Systems", to promote and celebrate the role of pharmacists in healthcare systems worldwide and to also highlight the important contributions that pharmacists make to the health and well-being of people in their communities.

World Pharmacists Day is an annual event that is celebrated on September 25 each year. It was established by the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) to acknowledge and celebrate the important contributions of pharmacists to healthcare systems and to promote their role in improving patient outcomes and public health. It provides an opportunity for pharmacists to engage with the public and their peers and to continue advocating for the profession's growth and development.

The occasion provided pharmacists with an opportunity to engage with the public and their peers, as well as to continue advocating for the growth and development of their profession. Some of the key objectives for marking the day were to recognize and appreciate pharmacists, to raise awareness about the roles and responsibilities of pharmacists and about safe and effective medication use as well as to promote the pharmacy profession.



Participants during an activity to mark World Pharmacists Day.

Activities highlighting the day at HMC featured educational campaigns, continuous professional development programs, social media campaigns as well as networking and collaboration. World Pharmacists Day aims to reach a diverse audience, including pharmacists, pharmacy students and trainees, patients, the public, healthcare professionals, policy makers, pharmacy organizations, and the global community.

"Pharmacists have long been esteemed as integral pillars of the healthcare system. They are medication experts, patient advocates, trusted advisors, and the first point of contact for many individuals seeking healthcare. Beyond dispensing medications, educating patients about prescriptions, and ensuring medication adherence, pharmacists collaborate with other healthcare professionals to deliver comprehensive, evidence-based patient care," noted Dr. Moza Al Hail, Executive Director of Pharmacy.

Dr. Al Hail added that pharmacists play an integral role in HMC as they fulfill a wide range of roles and responsibilities from dispensary, medication preparation to comprehensive medication management.

She expressed her appreciation to all corporate pharmacy staff.



Environment Minister meets with Director-General of Arab Organisation for Agricultural Development

Minister of Environment and Climate Change H E Sheikh Dr. Faleh bin Nasser bin Ahmed bin Ali Al Thani met yesterday with Director-General of the Arab Organisation for Agricultural Development, Professor Ibrahim Adam Ahmed, on the sidelines of the meeting of the Sixth General Assembly of the Islamic Organisation for Food Security. The meeting discussed a number of common topics, the most important of which was ways to enhance joint cooperation between the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change and the organisation. The Minister of Environment also met yesterday with Director-General of the Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Drylands (ACSAD) Dr. Nasr Edin Obaid. During the meeting, they discussed cooperation between the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change and the ACSAD.

ENVIRONMENT

QEERI-AMPP workshop advances Qatar's corrosion studies, solutions

THE PENINSULA — DOHA

In line with its mission to address national corrosion challenges, the Qatar Environment and Energy Research Institute (QEERI) at Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) recently hosted the Association for Materials Protection and Performance (AMPP) for a collaborative workshop.

Held September 6, the event represented a significant milestone in advancing corrosion studies and materials solutions within Qatar.

The workshop, which took place at HBKU's Researchery, brought together 45 corrosion experts representing diverse industries, who collectively highlighted the critical importance of Corrosion Impact studies for Qatar, particularly as they apply to the country's economy, industrial processes, and safety measures. Participants included professionals from Qatar's Industry as well as Alain Thomas, CEO, AMPP. Over the course of proceedings, QEERI's Corrosion Center and AMPP explored collaboration opportunities, including the establishment of an AMPP chapter in Qatar. It is anticipated that future cooperation between both organizations will enrich research efforts, facilitate training and certification programmes, and knowledge exchange within the corrosion field, ultimately contributing to the economic sustainability and safety of the region.

Dr. Marc Vermeersch, Executive Director of QEERI, emphasised the significance of such collaborations: "The partnership between QEERI Corrosion Center and AMPP represents a pivotal step in our commitment to addressing national corrosion challenges. Through such collaborations and workshops, we aim to create innovative, practical solutions tailored to Qatar's unique environmental conditions."

Speaking after the workshop, Dr. Hanan Farhat, Senior Research Director of the Corrosion Center, said: "This workshop is a testament to our dedication to advancing corrosion and materials research and knowledge in Qatar. We are honored to collaborate with AMPP and leverage their expertise in training and research to further our mission in ensuring the sustainability of Qatar's industrial and urban infrastructure, and preventing the impact of corrosion related leaks on the environment. The visit by AMPP CEO Alain Thomas and the accompanying workshop marks a chapter in our journey towards achieving excellence in corrosion studies, benefiting both industry and society."

"Establishing an AMPP chapter in Qatar is not just an opportunity; it's a strategic imperative," said AMPP CEO Alan Thomas. "With the amazing effort of Dr. Hanan and the incredible dedication of the area's leaders to create a chapter, we are poised to produce an impactful presence in the heart of the Middle East. This new chapter will foster collaboration and knowledge sharing and symbolise our commitment to advancing corrosion control and materials protection on a global scale.

QU's SESRI, UN-ESCWA hold workshop on improving project design and policy

THE PENINSULA — DOHA

Qatar University's (QU) Social and Economic Survey Research Institute (SESRI) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA) conducted a workshop on 'Project Design for Policy Influence.'

The workshop was attended by more than 40 participants from academia, government, and the private sector, who discussed means to improve the design of projects and government interventions to influence policy changes in countries.

Director of SESRI, Prof. Kaltham Al Ghanim, said: "This training workshop strives to provide a hands-on training and guide to policy researchers and entrepreneurs on the step-by-step process of designing and implementing a policy intervention to influence policy action. Particularly, this training course aims to illustrate best practice approach to designing policy interventions, using results-based management principles with best behavioural science insights."

Several participants expressed the significance ofthe workshop, including Dr. Mariam Al Hammadi, from the Department of Humanities at QU. She emphasized the workshop's significance in policy-making and addressing gaps during the development of various projects. She stressed the importance of using appropriate policy applications, both for existing policies and those intended by policy-makers, and persuading stakeholders of the importance of development in various projects.

Dr. Tahra El Obeid, from the College of Health Sciences at QU, stated that the workshop equipped participants with both theoretical and practical tools for designing policies for various projects and applying them in the practical field of teaching. The workshop also addressed various challenges in project management and provided suitable strategies for overcoming those issues.

Meanwhile, Dr. Hassan Husain, from the Food Security Department at the Ministry of Municipality, said the workshop is important in planning projects related to food security with its focus on using more precise and modern mechanisms in dealing with the various project managements.



Ahmed Bin Mohammed Military College hosts 8th edition of ISOMA 2023

Ahmed Bin Mohammed Military College organised the 8th edition of the International Symposium of Military Academies (ISOMA) 2023, in the presence of Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces H E Staff Lieutenant General (Pilot) Salem bin Hamad bin Aqeel Al Nabit. At the conclusion of the symposium, the Chief of Staff expressed his interest in the symposium and the topics it discussed, looking forward to organising more symposiums in this field.

CHARITY

Lulu Hypermarket joins hands with QCS in support of 'Blossom Campaign' for breast cancer awareness

Lulu Hypermarket will allocate a portion of the sales proceeds from over 900 products throughout the month of October to support QCS awareness programmes.

THE PENINSULA — DOHA

In a noble effort to raise awareness about breast cancer during Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Lulu Hypermarket has pledged its support to the 'Blossom Campaign' launched by the Qatar Cancer Society (QCS) on October 1, 2023.

Under the banner of 'Shop and Donate,' Lulu Hypermarket will allocate a portion of the sales proceeds from over 900 products throughout the month of October to support QCS awareness programmes.

This initiative is not only a testament to Lulu Hypermarket's commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) but also aligns with Qatar's National Vision 2030, which envisions an advanced society capable of sustaining development and ensuring a high standard of living for its people.

October, globally recognized as Breast Cancer Awareness Month, serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of early detection and awareness.

As part of their campaign, Lulu Hypermarket's showroom staff have adorned the iconic pink ribbon, a symbol of hope and awareness. The aim is to inspire customers and staff alike to embrace healthy lifestyles and proactive measures in preventing cancer.



Volunteers during a breast cancer awareness campaign at a Lulu Hypermarket.

Mona Ashkanani, Director General of the Qatar Cancer Society, expressed her gratitude, stating, "Lulu's staff wearing the pink ribbon in support of QCS' efforts is not a first-time occurrence. This initiative exemplifies Lulu Hypermarket's dedication to realizing QCS' vision, transforming Qatar into a leader in cancer prevention and burden control. We strive to educate the community, support cancer patients, empower individuals, and advocate for advancements in cancer research."

She added, "We are immensely thankful to the management and staff of Lulu Hypermarket for their unwavering support of QCS' cancer awareness initiatives and for extending a helping hand to cancer patients who may not have access to treatment. We encourage all state institutions to follow this noble example and support QCS in its critical mission." Lulu Hypermarket's spokesperson expressed their commitment, stating, "We are honored to collaborate with the Qatar Cancer Society in the 'Blossom Campaign.' Lulu Hypermarket remains committed to playing an active role in the community and supporting important causes like cancer awareness. Through our 'Shop and Donate' campaign, we aim to contribute to the fight against breast cancer and inspire positive change."

ENTERTAINMENT

Entertainer No.1 makes history with spectacular debut in Qatar

THE PENINSULA — DOHA

The F1 weekend in Qatar will be transformed into a colossal celebration of entertainment and culture, bringing together the best of India's vibrant talent and Qatar's thriving hospitality and tourism sectors. Attendees can expect nothing short of a sensational entertainment extravaganza that transcends boundaries and creates a lasting impression.

Visit Qatar presents Entertainer No.1, an initiative by Jjust Live, prepares to illuminate the global entertainment stage like never before.

The event marks the debut of an Indian entertainment company in Qatar, coinciding with the exhilarating F1 weekend in Qatar, promising an unforgettable experience for fans and enthusiasts on October 6 at QNCC, Doha.

Entertainer No.1 in Qatar will showcase a mesmerising lineup of star-studded performances featuring some of India's most prominent names in the entertainment industry.

The stellar artist lineup includes Varun Dhawan, Tiger Shroff, Shahid Kapoor, Rakul Preet, Jacqueline Fernandez and Jackky Bhagnani. Adding to the grandeur, we have a heart-pounding musical performance by the reigning monarch of melodies, King.

The F1 weekend in Qatar will be transformed into a colossal celebration of entertainment and culture, bringing together the best of India's vibrant talent and Qatar's thriving hospitality and tourism sectors. Attendees can expect nothing short of a sensational entertainment extravaganza that transcends boundaries and creates a lasting impression.

Jackky Bhagnani, the visionary Founder of Jjust Group, shared his enthusiasm for this groundbreaking event, saying, "Entertainer No.1 was founded to redefine entertainment on a global scale. Our debut in Qatar marks a significant milestone in this journey.

"We are immensely proud to showcase the incredible talents of India and provide an unforgettable experience to the people of Qatar.

"This is just the beginning of a new era in entertainment, and we are excited about the future."

CEO of Jjust Group Shyam Chhabria said, "This is a monumental moment for us at Jjust Group. We are thrilled to bring the magic of Indian entertainment to the heart of Qatar in collaboration with Qatar Tourism and Qatar Airways.

"This historic event is a testament to our commitment to delivering world-class entertainment experiences. We look forward to creating memories that will resonate with the people of Qatar and fans worldwide."

Entertainer No.1 in Qatar aims to bring nations together through the universal language of entertainment. With the support of Jjust Live, Qatar Tourism, and Qatar Airways, this event is set to become a highlight of the F1 weekend, offering an unforgettable fusion of music, dance, and Bollywood glamour.

EGYPT ELECTIONS

Sisi announces run for third term to 'complete the dream'

AFP — CAIRO

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi has announced his candidacy for a third term in office, ahead of December elections he is widely expected to win.

"As I have responded to the people's call before, I heed the call now and announce my intention to run and complete the dream in a new presidential term," Sisi, 68, told a cheering crowd in Egypt's new capital — the crowning jewel of a mega-project in the desert east of Cairo.

State-aligned television showed thousands of people celebrating the announcement in ready-built stages across the country. Earlier on Monday, rallies were held in Cairo calling for Sisi to declare his candidacy. Sisi urged Egyptians to head to the polls on December 10-12 "even if not to vote for me".

If elected, Sisi's third term would be his last, according to a constitutional amendment he pushed through in 2019.

The president, whose security forces have been accused of harassing and detaining opponents, applauded other candidates and hailed "a real beginning to vibrant political life full of pluralism." A year after deposing president Mohamed Morsi, Sisi won 96 percent of the vote in 2014.

Four years later, he scored a 97-percent victory against one of his own supporters, after more prominent candidates were sidelined or arrested.

This time, as Egyptians grow increasingly frustrated with an unrelenting economic crisis, presidential hopefuls have emerged from the woodwork of an opposition decimated by Sisi's decade-long crackdown on dissent. A handful of party leaders have said they had already gathered the necessary 20 nominations from parliament. Another challenger, former parliamentarian Ahmed Al Tantawi, has been trying to rally popular support on the campaign trail.

Without parliamentary backing, the 44-year-old will need to collect 25,000 nominations from Egyptians across at least 15 governorates by October 14 to be eligible.

If elected, Sisi's third term would be his last, according to a constitutional amendment he pushed through in 2019.

It also lengthened presidential terms from four to six years. In the hours leading up to Sisi's announcement, patriotic music blared from speakers across the capital, where convoys of buses shrink-wrapped with campaign slogans blocked major streets, AFP correspondents said.

The sails of boats on the Nile river were emblazoned with Sisi's photo and slogans including "yes to stability", the correspondents added.

Presidential hopeful Tantawi has repeatedly accused the regime of harassing and detaining his supporters, preventing them from filing nominations and tapping his phone.



People walk past an election campaign bus for Egypt's President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi adorned with his image, outside the Cairo University campus in Giza, on October 2, 2023. (AFP)

Tantawi has branded himself the "rule of law" candidate, as his campaign posts videos of him accompanying supporters to registry offices.

"In the end, they will not be able to say 'sorry, you don't have enough nominations'," he told supporters Sunday.

Under Sisi, a former army chief who has overseen a crackdown jailing tens of thousands of dissidents, protests have been banned.

Sisi announced his candidacy at the end of a three-day conference entitled "Story of a Nation", where remarks he made earlier ruffled feathers among Egyptians, buckling under the weight of record-breaking 39.7-percent inflation. "If construction, development and progress come at the cost of hunger and deprivation, never say 'we would rather eat'," Sisi said Sunday. In an apparent veiled reference to China, he cited a country that became a "great power" after "25 million people died of hunger".

Turkiye launches crackdown after Ankara bombing

AP — ANKARA

Police detained almost a thousand people in raids across Turkiye yesterday, including dozens with alleged links to Kurdish militants, days after a suicide bomb attack in the Turkish capital.

Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said police carried out raids in 16 Turkish provinces, detaining 55 people suspected of being part of the "intelligence structure" of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK. At least 12 other suspected PKK members were rounded up in a separate operation in five provinces, Yerlikaya wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

The PKK claimed responsibility for the suicide attack, according to a news website close to the group. The group has led a decades-long insurgency in Turkiye and is considered a terror organisation by the United States and the European Union.

Tens of thousands of people have died since the start of the conflict in 1984.

The interior minister later said that an additional 928 people suspected of holding unlicensed firearms or being connected to firearms smuggling were arrested during the operation, but he did not immediately make it clear if the suspects arrested for illegal firearms were suspected of connections to the PKK.

He added that over 840 firearms were confiscated during the operation.

On Sunday, a suicide bomber detonated an explosive device near an entrance to the Interior Ministry hours before President Erdogan was set to address Parliament as it returned from its summer recess. A second would-be bomber was killed in a shootout with police.

Two police officers were slightly wounded in the attack. The suspects arrived at the scene inside a vehicle they seized from a veterinarian in Kayseri after shooting him in the head, officials said.

Turkish authorities identified one of the assailants as a PKK militant.

Hours later, Turkiye's Air Force carried out airstrikes on suspected PKK sites in northern Iraq, where the group's leadership is based. The Defense Ministry said a large number of PKK militants were "neutralized" in the strikes.

Yerlikaya did not clarify whether the people rounded up yesterday were suspected of direct involvement in Sunday's attack.

At least 18 die in illegal refinery blaze in Nigeria

AFP — PORT HARCOURT

At least 18 people, including a pregnant woman, died in southern Nigeria when an illegal oil refinery exploded into flames, a security official and residents said yesterday.

The blaze, late on Sunday in Rivers State, occurred when a home-made refinery ignited a nearby oil reservoir, leaving victims severely burned, a security official said.

"The fire outbreak started at a very late hour... 18 victims were burnt beyond recognition while 25 injured persons were rescued," Olufemi Ayodele, spokesman for the local Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps, said.

"Most of the victims were youths... a pregnant woman and a young lady getting ready for her marriage ceremony next month were all casualties," he said.

Local residents in Emohua district said the toll could be higher as dozens of people were at the site scooping up spilt crude oil.

Oil theft is a major problem in Nigeria, an OPEC member and one of the continent's largest petroleum producers.

'Probable' Israel strike kills six Syria fighters: Monitor

AFP — BEIRUT

A "probable Israeli air strike" on Syria killed six pro-Iranian fighters in the eastern province of Deir Ezzor near the border with Iraq, a war monitor said yesterday.

Separately, the Syrian defence ministry said an Israeli strike on army positions elsewhere in the province had wounded two soldiers late on Monday.

"Six pro-Iranian fighters were killed in a probable Israeli strike" on Monday evening, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

Israeli strikes targeted "three sites belonging to Iran-backed groups" close to the border city of Albu Kamal, the Britain-based monitor said.

Militias linked to Iran's Revolutionary Guards have a heavy presence across Syria, especially around the border with Iraq.

During more than a decade of conflict in Syria, neighbouring Israel has launched hundreds of air strikes on its territory, targeting Iran-backed forces and Hezbollah fighters as well as Syrian army positions.

Separately, the Syrian defence ministry said that shortly before midnight (2100 GMT) on Monday, an Israeli air strike had wounded two soldiers near the city of Deir Ezzor.

"The Israeli enemy carried out air strikes on some of our armed forces' positions near the city of Deir Ezzor," leaving "two soldiers wounded," a ministry statement said.

Last month, Israeli air strikes killed two soldiers on Syria's Mediterranean coast, state media said. In March, US strikes on Iran-linked groups in eastern Syria killed 19 people, including both Iran-backed fighters and Syrian soldiers, the Observatory said. The war in Syria has killed more than half a million people since it broke out in 2011, following the bloody repression of pro-democracy protests.

It quickly escalated into a broader conflict.

Niger junta says militants kill 29 soldiers

AP — ABUJA

At least 29 Nigerien soldiers have been killed by militants near the country's border with Mali, Niger's junta said, as they struggle to end a spate of attacks.

More than 100 extremists used homemade explosives to target the West African nation's security forces who were deployed at the border area on a clearance operation, Niger Defense Minister Lt. Gen. Salifou Mody said in a statement late Monday. It's the second such attack against Nigerien soldiers in a week.

During the month after Niger's military seized power, violence primarily linked to extremists soared by more than 40%, according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project. Militant attacks targeting civilians quadrupled in August compared with the month before, and attacks against security forces spiked in the Tillaberi region, killing at least 40 soldiers, the project reported.

"This attack unfortunately caused the loss of several of our valiant soldiers," Mody said Monday. "The provisional assessment of this attack is as follows: on the friendly side, 29 soldiers fell. ... On the enemy side, several dozen terrorists were neutralized, fifteen motorcycles destroyed, a large quantity of weapons and ammunition seized." The junta, which took over power after a July coup against Niger's democratically elected government, declared a three-day national mourning period for the dead.

It repeated claims made in the past that "destabilization operations" were being carried out by "certain foreign powers with the complicity of Nigerien traitors," without further details or proof.

Under growing pressure since the coup against Nigerien President Mohamed Bazoum, which the military said was carried out because of Niger's security challenges, the junta promised that "all efforts will be made to guarantee the security of people and their property throughout the national territory." Niger has battled an insurgency linked to Al Qaida and the Islamic State group for years. And the junta's capacity to improve Niger's security has increasingly been questioned recently as attacks have increased since mutinous soldiers toppled in July.

Niger was seen as one of the last democratic countries in Africa's Sahel region that Western nations could partner with to beat back the insurgency in the vast expanse below the Sahara Desert.


Ghanaian protesters clash with police officers as they march to protest against the deteriorating economic conditions in the country, in Accra, yesterday. (AFP)

Ghana opposition rallies over economic crisis

AFP — ACCRA

Several hundred opposition protesters rallied in Ghana's capital Accra yesterday to denounce the country's lingering economic crisis, blaming it on the central bank governor's policies.

Dressed in red and black and banging drums, the protesters waved placards decrying the government's management in Ghana, which is going through its worst economic troubles in years.

Ghana's economic outlook will be a major theme as the country heads to elections next year with President Nana Akufo-Addo stepping down after his two terms allowed by the constitution.

Dubbed "OccupyBoG-Protest", the opposition leadership says the Bank of Ghana governor Ernest Addison must resign for overseeing an economy where inflation has hit 40 percent.

"We are going through a lot in Ghana. People cannot pay the school fees of their wards. My church members come to me daily to ask for money," said Reverend Kingsley Asante, a pastor taking part in the rally.

"We voted for better lives and not worst conditions." Led by the opposition National Democratic Congress or NDC Minority Leader Cassiel Ato Forson, protesters chanted patriotic songs while others blew vuvuzeles, drummed and danced near ranks of heavily armed police.

"I have been unemployed since I completed school in 2017. A lot of my colleagues are still home because there are no jobs," said Genevieve Forson, a 28-year-old university graduate.

"I voted for this government in 2016 hoping that things will get better but I regret that decision."

Last year, Ghana entered into a $3bn loan agreement with the International Monetary Fund as a way to shore up its public finances.

Six years on, South Sudan to probe killing of US journalist

AFP — JUBA

After years of international pressure, South Sudan said it plans to investigate the death of journalist Christopher Allen who was killed in 2017 while covering the country's bloody civil war.

Minister of Cabinet Affairs Martin Elia Lomuro announced in a statement issued late Monday that a committee had been established "to investigate the circumstances of the death of journalist Christopher Allen".

The United States and Britain as well as media campaign groups and Allen's family have long called for a probe into his killing on August 26, 2017. The 26-year-old freelance reporter, a dual American-British national, was shot in the head during a battle between the South Sudanese army and rebels in the south-western town of Kawa.

Allen had been embedded with rebels from the Sudan People's Liberation Army In Opposition (SPLA-IO) to report on the conflict that erupted just two years after the country declared independence.

The 2013-2018 war between forces loyal to two sworn enemies, President Salva Kiir and his now deputy Riek Machar, claimed the lives of almost 400,000 people.

After Allen's death, the government denied reports that its soldiers had deliberately killed him.

"The killing of Christopher Allen was not targeted," Information Minister Michael Makuei said at the time. "But anybody on that side is usually a target." Makuei had previously described Allen as a "white rebel" and claimed he had been in the country illegally.

In August, the United States and Britain issued a statement on the sixth anniversary of Allen's killing calling for South Sudan to conduct a "credible investigation".

Reporters Without Borders, known by its French acronym RSF, has also been urging the United States to lead a probe into his death because of Juba's "failure to hold anyone accountable".

"Available information demonstrates that war crimes were committed in the deliberate targeting of Allen and the treatment of his body after his death, including trophy-style photos," it said in a statement in August. South Sudan ranks 118th out of 180 countries on RSF's 2023 World Press Freedom Index and the group says at least nine journalists have been killed in the world's youngest country since 2014.

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Local focus, Global vision
Established in 1996

CHAIRMAN
DR. KHALID BIN THANI AL THANI

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
DR. KHALID MUBARAK AL-SHAFI
editorinchief@pen.com.qa

MANAGING EDITOR
MOHAMMED OSMAN ALI
osman@pen.com.qa

EDITORIAL

Significant step forward

IN a landmark ceremony yesterday, Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani laid the foundation stone of the North Field expansion project. This pioneering expansion will raise the State of Qatar's LNG production capacity from the current 77 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) to 126 MTPA by 2026.

The substantial boost in production due to the North Field expansion project is anticipated to make a substantial contribution to bolstering economic diversification and reaffirm Qatar's status as the world's leading exporter of LNG.

The ground-breaking ceremony at Ras Laffan Industrial City, attended by the Minister of State for Energy Affairs H E Saad Sherida Al Kaabi, is a significant step in the global stage as gas, which is a source of clean energy, plays a very important role in the energy sector in its transition to a cleaner source.

The project includes six mega trains, each with a production capacity of eight MTPA of LNG, four of which are part of the North Field East expansion project, and two are part of the North Field South expansion project, contributing a total of 48 MTPA to the global LNG supplies.

Stressing the role Qatar plays in ensuring energy security in the world by supplying the much-needed natural gas to its partners when the world is facing uncertainties causing disruptions which could adversely affect many nations and their millions of inhabitants, the Minister of State for Energy Affairs said: "There is no doubt that these additional quantities of natural gas are of great importance as they will play a prominent role in enhancing energy security, supporting a practical and realistic energy transition, and ensuring fair and equitable access to cleaner energy for a sustainable growth and a better future for all."

The North Field LNG is the world's largest gas field, containing 50.97 trillion cubic meters of gas. The area of the field is around 9,700 sqkm, of which 6,000 are in Qatar's territorial waters. The field was discovered in 1971, and production began in 1989.

The North Field Expansion project stands out as one of the most substantial investments in the energy sector in recent years and is the largest and most competitive LNG endeavour to date. Furthermore, this project plays a pivotal role in fortifying Qatar's national economy. Additionally, the construction and related activities associated with the project will significantly boost economic activity across various sectors. The project also boasts numerous distinctive environmental benefits.

The North Field expansion project serves as a cornerstone in realizing Qatar's economic vision and will also bolster the global energy infrastructure.

The Peninsula
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D-RING ROAD, POST BOX: 3488, DOHA - QATAR
EMAIL: EDITOR@PEN.COM.QA

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OFFICE
TEL: 4455 7741 / 767
FAX: +974 4455 7758
MANAGING EDITOR
TEL: 4455 7769
DEPUTY MANAGING EDITOR
TEL: 4462 7505
LOCAL NEWS SECTION
TEL: 4455 7743
BUSINESS NEWS SECTION
TEL: 4462 7535
SPORT NEWS SECTION
TEL: 4455 7745
EDITORIAL SECTION
TEL: 4455 7636
ONLINE SECTION
TEL: 4462 7501 email: info@pen.com.qa
PUBLIC RELATIONS
TEL: 4455 7613 email: pr@pen.com.qa
MARKETING
TEL: 4455 7657 email: marketing@pen.com.qa

ADVERTISING
TEL: 4455 7837 / 857
FAX: 4455 7870, email: adv@pen.com.qa
CLASSIFIED
TEL: 4455 7857 email: adv@pen.com.qa
SUBSCRIPTION & DISTRIBUTION
TEL: 66766718
WhatsApp: 66766718, email: info@tawseelqatar.com
www.thepeninsula.qa

All editorial related correspondences should be directed to Editor-in-Chief office.
e-mail: editorinchief@pen.com.qa
Post box: 3488, Doha - Qatar

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/THEPENINSULANEWSPAPER
+974 66986188 / 55698797

Expanding North Field brings Qatar's energy sector into new historical phase

QNA

The features of the North Field Gas Expansion project began to materialize on the ground after Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani laid its foundation stone yesterday so that the energy sector in the country entered another phase of its long history and culminated in a stage that began with announcing an increase in the volume of gas production of the State of Qatar from 77 million tons annually to 110 million tons in 2026 as a first stage, and to 126 million tons in 2027. In September 2018, QatarEnergy announced an increase in its production of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from 77 million tons to 110 million tons annually by establishing a fourth production line in addition to the three production lines announced in July 2017, so that the new lines will enter a production phase in 2026.

The capacity of one LNG production line is estimated at 8 million tons per year, making the total capacity of the production lines that will be established is estimated at 32 million tons. A first phase, followed by a second phase revealed in 2019 to increase production from 110 million tons to 126 million tons, which will enter production in 2027 through two new production lines with a capacity of 16 million tons, bringing the new production capacity to around 48 million tons per year.

The expansion project of the world's largest LNG project in Qatar is divided into two main parts, eastern and southern, with both parts of the project being built and production starting at its full new capacity by 2027.

The North Field LNG is the world's largest gas field, containing 50.97 trillion cubic meters of gas. The area of the field is around 9,700 square kilometers, of which 6,000 are in Qatar's territorial waters. The field was discovered in 1971, and production began in 1989.

According to the aforementioned figures, the State of Qatar intends to increase its production capacity of LNG by more than 63 percent to reach 126 million tons annually in the second half of the current decade by developing the North Field East, which is scheduled to enter production in 2026, and the North Field South, which will be ready to deliver its first shipment in 2027.



Minister of State for Energy Affairs H E Eng. Saad bin Sherida Al Kaabi speaking at North Field Gas Expansion project foundation stone laying ceremony, yesterday.

The project will save 10.7 million cubic meters of water annually by recycling and reusing 75 percent of industrial wastewater. Nitrogen Oxides emissions will be reduced by 40 percent through the application of improved Dry Low NOx technology.

TotalEnergies, ExxonMobil, ConocoPhillips, Eni, Shell, and Sinopec had previously won contracts to develop the North Field East in partnership with QatarEnergy, with total investments that reached around USD 28.75 billion. TotalEnergies, Shell, and ConocoPhillips won contracts to develop the North Field South in partnership with QatarEnergy.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) confirms that the field contains an estimated 51 trillion cubic meters of natural gas and around 50 billion barrels (7.9 billion cubic meters) of natural gas condensate. According to a statement by Minister of State for Energy Affairs H E Eng. Saad bin Sherida Al Kaabi, Qatar's increase in the volume of its production of LNG is a significant achievement towards ensuring more future supplies of LNG to meet the increasing global demand as people need energy. Therefore, gas must be viewed as the targeted fuel, not just as a transitional fuel.

His Excellency also stressed the need for serious action by some consuming countries to establish LNG receiving stations, highlighting the need to make additional efforts to develop infrastructure within consuming countries to improve access to this environmentally cleaner fuel. Minister of State for Energy Affairs said that the LNG industry is costly, requires the ability to make investment decisions, and requires long-term financial commitment by consuming countries to secure long-term contracts and supplies.

The North Field Expansion project is one of the largest investments in the energy industry during the past few years, as well as being the largest and most competitive LNG project ever. The project also contributes to strengthening Qatar's national economy with huge financial returns over decades. Construction work and other activities related to project implementation will also have a significant impact on stimulating economic activity in various local sectors.

The project contains several environmental components that support the State of Qatar's strong commitment to achieving the highest environmental standards and providing reliable solutions in transforming to low-carbon energy.

The carbon capture and injection system is seen as one of the most environmental elements of the project as it forms part of the integrated constructions to capture CO2 and inject it in Ras Laffan, which will become - when fully operational - the largest of its kind in the LNG industry, and one of the largest facilities of its kind that has ever been developed anywhere in the world. In addition to the facilities for capturing and injecting CO2, the project will include several positive and unique environmental advantages, including providing a large portion of the project's electricity needs from the national electricity network in Qatar, as QatarEnergy seeks to secure these needs from the power station project Al Kharsaah Solar Energy, which has a capacity of 800 megawatts, in addition to about 800 other megawatts from the solar energy station, which QatarEnergy will soon establish as part of its portfolio plan of solar energy projects, which aims to reach more than 4,000 megawatts before 2030. The project includes a system to recover evaporated gas during shipping, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by approximately one million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent annually.

The project will save 10.7 million cubic meters of water annually by recycling and reusing 75 percent of industrial wastewater. Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) emissions will be reduced by 40 percent through the application of improved Dry Low NOx technology.

Inauguration of Horticultural Expo 2023 Doha receives broad media coverage

QNA

Arab and international media outlets have shown great interest in the Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani's inauguration of the "International Horticultural Expo 2023 Doha" under the theme "Green Desert, Better Environment," with broad Arab and international participation.

The Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported on the opening of the exhibition in an article titled "Qatar's Amir Inaugurates Horticultural Expo 2023 Doha." The report highlighted the speech of Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani, who stated that Qatar's hosting of Horticultural Expo 2023 Doha aligns with its commitments to sustainable development, both nationally and internationally. He emphasized that these initiatives are carried out under the guidance of H H the Amir of the State of Qatar, as part of Qatar National Vision 2030, within the framework of achieving a balance between his countrys development needs and protecting its natural resources on land, sea and air, to achieve Qatar National Vision 2030, one of its pillars is the development of a comprehensive environmental strategy, with a primary focus on preserving the environment for future generations.

In a separate SPA report, the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) H E Jassem Mohammad Al Bedaiwi highlighted the significance of Horticultural Expo 2023 Doha. He noted that it convenes at a crucial time for the international community to discuss optimal ways of preserving the Earth's environment, ensuring the sustainability of the natural ecosystem, and addressing the numerous challenges posed to sustainability. Al Bedaiwi pointed out that the exhibition combines innovations in horticulture, sustainable design, and environmental conservation, aiming to raise awareness about the importance of preserving nature and promoting sustainability in horticulture and agriculture. He also expressed pride in Qatar's hosting of the exhibition, considering it a testament to the international community's confidence in Qatar's exceptional capabilities, which brings pride and honor to the Gulf region. Furthermore, the Emirates News Agency (WAM) noted that Horticultural Expo 2023 Doha is the world's first horticultural expo held in a desert climate. It encompasses four main themes: modern agriculture, technology and innovation, environmental awareness, and sustainability. The exhibition covers an extensive area of approximately 7 million square meters of green spaces, including the international pavilions, which serve as centers for gardens, exhibitions, and international events. Additionally, the exhibition features two areas for various activities, events, and experiments, along with a "Family Zone" and a "Cultural Zone." The Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) covered the exhibition's opening, emphasizing Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani's call for enhanced international cooperation to achieve a balanced environmental world characterized by human respect for one another and sustainable respect for nature.

The exhibition covers an extensive area of approximately 7 million square meters of green spaces, including the international pavilions, which serve as centers for gardens, exhibitions, and international events.

KUNA also reported, under the headline "Qatar Calls for Strengthening International Cooperation to Achieve a Balanced Environmental World," that His Excellency called for more environmentally friendly solutions and innovations across all aspects of life. These solutions should adopt a realistic approach that prioritizes comprehensive economic development, and environmental protection, and ensures equitable access to energy for all.

In a separate report titled "Expo Doha Building Enters Guinness World Records for the Largest Green Surface in the World," KUNA highlighted the announcement by the Public Works Authority that the main building of Horticultural Expo 2023 Doha has entered the Guinness World Records for having the largest green surface area in the world, spanning approximately 4,031 square meters.

Meanwhile, the Jordan News Agency (Petra) published a report about the commencement of the activities of Horticultural Expo 2023 Doha, emphasizing that the exhibition offers an opportunity for exchanging experiences, sharing innovations, and showcasing smart agricultural and food systems in a desert climate. It also serves as an invitation to explore the food and agricultural products of participating countries, along with their cultural and scientific heritage.

The Oman News Agency (ONA) highlighted the exhibition's focus on several key areas, including sustainability, environmental awareness, technology and innovation, and modern agriculture.

In a report titled "Qatar's Amir Inaugurates Horticultural Expo 2023 Doha," with the presence of a Lebanese delegation, the Lebanese National News Agency (NNA) noted that H E the Prime Minister reaffirmed Qatar's call for more environmentally friendly solutions across various aspects of life.

The German Press Agency (DPA) reported in an article titled "Qatar's Amir Inaugurates Horticultural Expo 2023 Doha with Arab and International Participation" that the exhibition, held under the theme "Green Desert, Better Environment," is taking place at the Bidder Park location and features participation from both Arab and international contributors. The report included excerpts from the speech by Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani on this occasion. He noted that Qatar's hosting of Horticultural Expo 2023 Doha aligns with its commitments to sustainable development, both nationally and internationally, and constitutes a qualitative addition to Qatar's diverse initiatives aimed at ensuring a safer and more stable future for all people on Earth.

SHOOTING RAMPAGE

Two dead in Bangkok mall shooting, teenager arrested

AFP — BANGKOK

A 14-year-old boy was arrested yesterday after a shooting at a packed Bangkok mall that left two people dead and five wounded, and sent hundreds of panicked shoppers running in terror into the streets.

Witnesses told AFP of chaotic scenes as shots rang out at the upmarket Siam Paragon mall in the heart of the Thai capital around 4:30 pm (0930 GMT). The shooting comes just days before the first anniversary of the deadliest massacre in modern Thai history, when an ex-policeman armed with a gun and knife attacked a nursery in the country's north, murdering 24 children and 12 adults.

National Police Chief Torsak Sukwimol told reporters that two women — one Chinese, one from Myanmar — were killed in the mall shooting, and five other people wounded.

He said the 14-year-old suspect was in custody but was too confused to undergo questioning.



Thai police officers and rescue workers are seen outside Siam Paragon shopping centre in Bangkok yesterday following a shooting incident in the mall. (AFP)

"He is a mental patient at Rajavithi hospital and he has not been taking his medication," Torsak said. "He said it was like there was another him telling him who to shoot." Video footage showed a long-haired boy wearing a black shirt, glasses and a cap with a US flag motif being taken into custody by police. Yuthana Srettanan, director of the Erawan Emergency Centre, told reporters that all but one of those who were shot were women.

Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin offered condolences to the victims' families and said he was monitoring the situation closely. "What I care about most right now is the safety of all citizens," he wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

"I ask all workers to monitor the situation, and may everyone be safe." A private school called The Essence, just metres from Siam Paragon, confirmed the suspect was one of their students and offered condolences to the victims' families.

National Police Chief Torsak Sukwimol told reporters that two women — one Chinese, one from Myanmar — were killed in the mall shooting.

"We will collaborate with the authorities and investigators for the benefit of those involved," Wiwat Catithammanit, director of the $4,000-a-term school said in a statement. Witnesses described scenes of panic as the attack unfolded at Siam Paragon, one of Bangkok's top shopping destinations, hugely popular with tourists and Thais alike.

"At around 4:30 pm, I heard loud gun noises, continuously, about 10 times," Thanpawasit Singthongkham, 31, who works at a Japanese restaurant in the mall, told AFP.

"Then the department store announced that there was a shooting. The emergency sign was turned on and everyone ran to get out." In footage shared with AFP, he recorded a scrum of terrified shoppers scrabbling under metal security gates blocking shop entrances, before they fled down emergency stairwells as sirens blared.

In another video, shared on Facebook and verified by AFP, scores of people can be seen in the mall's basement car park being directed by loudspeakers. Dozens of police vehicles and a number of ambulances could be seen outside one of the shopping centre's main entrances in the wake of the shooting. "I heard multiple gunshots — about three times — and saw people running around towards the exits," Nattanon Dungsunenarn, who was shopping in a branch of Boots pharmacy, told AFP.

"It was very chaotic and seemed like many people didn't know what exactly was going on." - 'Terrified' -"We didn't know what was happening, then staff from a shop asked us to go inside and said there was a shooter," Chinese tourist Xiong Ying, 41, told AFP.

Pakistan orders illegal Afghans to leave or face deportation

AFP — ISLAMABAD

Hundreds of thousands of Afghans living illegally in Pakistan have been given until November 1 to leave voluntarily or face deportation, the interior minister said yesterday, a crackdown Kabul's embassy in Islamabad called "harassment".

The order comes as Pakistan grapples with a rise in attacks the government blames on militants operating from Afghanistan, a charge Kabul routinely denies.

Around 1.3 million Afghans are registered refugees in Pakistan and 880,000 more have legal status to remain, according to the latest United Nations figures.

But caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti said a further 1.7 million Afghans were in Pakistan illegally. All will have to return home in the coming months, according to a report by the state-run news agency APP. "The illegal immigrants and illegal foreign nationals who are living in Pakistan are given a deadline of November 1," Bugti told reporters in Islamabad.

"If they do not go... then all the law enforcement agencies in the provinces or federal government will be utilised to deport them." APP went further, citing government sources as saying the government wanted all Afghans to leave.

"In the first phase, illegal residents, in the second phase, those with Afghan citizenship, and in the third phase those with proof of residence cards will be expelled," it said.

In a statement posted on X Tuesday, Afghanistan's embassy said more than 1,000 Afghans have been detained in the past two weeks -- half of them despite having a legal right to to be in Pakistan.

"Despite the repeated promises of the Pakistan authorities, the arrest and harassment of Afghan refugees by the police in Pakistan continues," it said.

Bugti said also that from November 1, Pakistan would only allow entry to Afghans with valid passports and visas.

For years, Afghans entering Pakistan through land borders have been allowed to use their national identity cards as a travel document. There is a huge waiting list in Afghanistan for nationals seeking to get passports, and obtaining a Pakistan visa can take months.

Bugti also warned of a crackdown on property and businesses owned by Afghans in Pakistan.

"A task force has been formed for that purpose at the interior ministry. All the properties and businesses of those living here illegally are out of our tax net," he said.

"Our intelligence agencies will search them out and their business will be confiscated by the government." Afghans have poured into Pakistan in their millions during decades of successive wars, many living in refugee camps with restricted access to education, healthcare and employment.

An estimated 600,000 have arrived since the Taliban seized power in Kabul in August 2021 and imposed their austere version of Islamic law.

Many are seeking asylum in third countries.

Japan slams MP's surprise visit to Russia

AFP — TOKYO

Tokyo yesterday condemned a surprise visit to Moscow by a Japanese lawmaker who met with Russia's deputy foreign minister.

Muneo Suzuki's trip, the first known visit by a Japanese lawmaker since Russia invaded Ukraine last year, comes after Japan joined Western allies in sanctioning Moscow over the conflict.

"The government wasn't briefed by Suzuki on the Russia visit this time, before or after," spokesman Hirokazu Matsuno said.

"We're issuing a warning... of cancelling travels to Russia and no matter what the purpose is, we're urging all citizens to refrain from travelling to Russia," Matsuno told reporters. Russia's foreign ministry said Suzuki met with deputy foreign minister Andrey Rudenko on Monday.

"The Russian side noted a significant contribution by the Japanese MP to the development of the bilateral ties," the ministry statement said yesterday. "We regretfully state that the legacy of two countries' cooperation, accumulated over decades, is being purposefully destroyed by the sanctions policy implemented by Tokyo in order to please the United States and the anti-Russian course of the 'collective West,'" it said.

Suzuki, a member of the centre-right opposition Japan Innovation Party, is a longtime advocate of close Japan-Russia ties.

He was deeply involved in the foreign ministry's programmes aimed at solving territorial disputes with Russia after World War II.

The upper house member departed for Moscow on Sunday "for an inspection tour", his secretary Shinji Akamatsu told AFP.

Maldives president-elect to eject Indian troops

AFP — MALÉ

The president-elect of the Maldives, Mohamed Muizzu, has marked his victory with a pledge to end the foreign military presence in his small but strategically placed atoll nation. Muizzu, 45, addressing his first public rally after winning Saturday's runoff election stopped short of naming India, the only foreign power with a military deployment in the archipelago.

He won an "India-out" campaign after New Delhi placed a small unit of security personnel to operate four reconnaissance aircraft gifted to the Maldives to patrol its vast maritime territory. "We will be sending back military forces based in the Maldives according to law, and for sure we will do that accordingly," Muizzu said at the rally in the capital Male on Monday night. "The people who brought... military forces don't want to send them back, but the people of the Maldives decided," he said.

Outgoing President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih had realigned the nation's relations with traditional benefactor India, after his predecessor Abdulla Yameen moved the Maldives into Beijing's orbit, borrowing heavily from China for infrastructure projects.

Muizzu is a proxy of Yameen who was barred from last month's election because of his criminal conviction for corruption. Within hours of his victory, Muizzu secured the release of Yameen, who was serving an 11-year jail sentence at the high-security Maafushi prison, and transferred him to house arrest in Male.

Muizzu, who is also the current Mayor of Male, brushed aside media descriptions of him as a pro-China leader and said he will be "pro-Maldives". "My top priority will be the Maldives and its situation," Muizzu said. "We will be choosing to be pro-Maldives. Any country who respects and obeys our pro-Maldives policy is considered a close friend of the Maldives." India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi was among the first leaders to congratulate Muizzu on Sunday.

IN BRIEF

Singapore defends reputation as $2bn graft case widens

AFP—SINGAPORE: SINGAPORE defended its reputation as a global financial hub yesterday after a massive money laundering case crossed $2bn in seized and frozen assets, with a senior minister saying it was likely among the world's biggest.

The scale of the investigation has exposed potential loopholes in the city-state's anti-money laundering laws that crime syndicates could exploit, prompting questions in parliament on why it was not detected sooner.

"This case is a reminder that even the most stringent preventive measures can be circumvented by determined criminals," Second Home Affairs Minister Josephine Teo said in a speech to lawmakers in parliament. Authorities have seized and frozen assets now worth more than Sg$2.8bn ($2.04bn) in a series of raids since August against the suspected international money laundering ring, said Teo.

Vote on Indigenous rights opens in much of Australia

AFP—SYDNEY: EARLY voting opened yesterday across a swathe of Australia on a reform that would recognise Indigenous people in the 1901 constitution for the first time.

The proposal -- which would also give First Nations people the right to be consulted on policies that affect them — has only minority support after slumping in the polls.

"We're fighting to keep an extra layer of bureaucracy out of our constitution," said 60-year-old "no" campaigner Dee Duchesne as early voting began in Sydney.

People who are unavailable to vote on the October 14 referendum day can opt to cast a ballot early. Polling stations opened yesterday across New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. They opened the previous day in the rest of the country. Outside a polling station in central Sydney, campaigners for both sides handed out pamphlets.

PRESS FREEDOM UNDER THREAT

India police ransack journalists' homes, offices in country's latest raids on media

Indian authorities registered a case against the site and its journalists on August 17.

AP — NEW DELHI


Indian police personnel stand guard near the Golden Temple in Amritsar on May 11, 2023. (AFP)

Indian police raided the offices of a news website that's under investigation for allegedly receiving funds from China, as well as the homes of several of its journalists, in what critics described as an attack on one of India's few remaining independent news outlets. The raids came months after Indian authorities searched the *BBC's* New Delhi and Mumbai offices over accusations of tax evasion in February.

NewsClick, founded in 2009, is known as a rare Indian news outlet willing to criticize Prime Minister Narendra Modi. A number of other news organizations have been investigated for financial impropriety under Modi's Hindu nationalist government, as international monitors warn that press freedom is eroding in India.

Indian authorities registered a case against the site and its journalists on August 17, weeks after a *New York Times* report alleged that the website had received funds from an American millionaire who, the *Times* wrote, has funded the spread of "Chinese propaganda." *NewsClick* has denied the charges.

The case was filed under a wide-ranging anti-terrorism law that allows charges for "anti-national activities" and has been used against activists, journalists and critics of Modi, some of whom have spent years in jail before going to trial. No one has been arrested in connection with *NewsClick* so far.

Two people, including *NewsClick's* editor in chief, were detained during the raids, and police carried away boxes of documents.

At least two journalists whose houses were raided by Delhi police said their devices were seized.

"Delhi police landed at my home. Taking away my laptop and phone," journalist Abhisar Sharma wrote on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter. Delhi police did not immediately respond for a comment, but India's junior minister for information and broadcasting, Anurag Thakur, told reporters that "if anyone has committed anything wrong, search agencies are free to carry out investigations against them."

Indonesian city closes schools over peatland fire haze

AFP — JAMBI, INDONESIA

An Indonesian city with a population of hundreds of thousands has shut schools for three days because of haze caused by large peatland fires, its mayor said yesterday.

A prolonged dry season has caused higher risks of wildfires on the archipelago nation's major islands, stoking fears of repeat haze-belching forest fires that have also affected neighbouring Malaysia and Singapore in recent years.

The city of Jambi on the western island of Sumatra, which has a population of around 600,000, has forced students to online learning from home over the toxic smog. "The thick smog made us lay off students from preschool to junior high school," the city's mayor Syarif Fasha told reporters at Jambi city hall. The school ban was from Monday to Wednesday, but would be extended if the haze continued, he said. Authorities said the haze was caused by fires elsewhere, without specifying.

POLITICS

Spain king tasks Sanchez with forming govt

AFP — MADRID

If Sanchez is to be reinstated as premier, he will need to pass a key parliamentary vote.

Spain's King Felipe VI yesterday tasked outgoing Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez with forming the next government, the parliamentary speaker said.

If Sanchez is to be reinstated as premier, he will need to pass a key parliamentary vote for which he will need the backing of a hardline Catalan separatist party cast in the role of kingmaker. The move comes just four days after right-wing opposition leader Alberto Nunez-Feijoo failed in his own bid to win parliamentary support to be inaugurated as prime minister.

After talks with Spain's political parties, the king has "informed me of his decision to put forward Pedro Sanchez as the candidate for prime minister", speaker Francina Armengol announced.

Sanchez will now have to seek support from at least 176 lawmakers within the 350-seat parliament in the vote which must take place before November 27.

If he fails, Spain will automatically be forced to hold new elections, most likely in mid-January.

Sanchez said he accepted the king's offer and would start talks with the different parliamentary groups today.

"I will meet with all the different parliamentary parties except the far-right Vox, obviously," he said.

"I will work to form a progressive coalition government comprising the Socialist Party and (the radical left) Sumar as soon as possible with enough support to guarantee the stability Spain needs to continue promoting progressive policies and coexistence," he said.

In power since 2018, Sanchez has proved to be a tenacious political survivor and is confident he will be returned to power with the backing of Sumar along with Basque and Catalan regional parties. But crucially, he will need the votes of seven JxCat lawmakers, who have demanded an amnesty for those facing legal action over the failed 2017 Catalan separatist bid.



King Felipe VI welcomes Spain's acting PM Pedro Sanchez (right) before their meeting as part of consultations with political representatives before proposing a new candidate for the investiture, at La Zarzuela Palace in Madrid, yesterday. (AFP)

Poland, Austria, Czechs start Slovak border checks to curb migration

AFP — PRAGUE

Poland, the Czech Republic and Austria said yesterday they were introducing checks on borders with Slovakia to curb illegal migration, but Bratislava called for a "European solution".

"Starting midnight, we are reintroducing border controls at the border with Slovakia," Poland's Interior Minister Mariusz Kaminski told reporters. Working "in coordination with neighbours", Prague will follow suit, said the Czech interior ministry.

Later yesterday, Austria's interior ministry also announced it would reintroduce checks at its eleven border posts with Slovakia before smugglers could "change their routes".

In all three countries, the checks are expected to last ten days initially.

"The number of illegal migrants into the EU is beginning to grow again. We are not taking this lightly," Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala said on X, formerly Twitter. Slovakia has recently seen an uptick in migrants coming largely from Serbia via Hungary.

Following the moves by Warsaw and Prague, outgoing Slovak Prime Minister Ludovit Odor said "migration needs a European solution at the external borders."

"Once a country boosts the protection of its own border, it creates a cascading effect, we will all pay money for it, and the result will be very unclear," Odor said in a statement.

Macron party plans bill to squash France bedbug 'scourge'

AFP — PARIS

The party of French President Emmanuel Macron yesterday said it would this year put forward a bill to combat surging numbers of reported bedbug cases, which are being increasingly seen as a major potential public health problem.

Bedbugs have in recent weeks gone from being a subject of potential derision to a contentious political issue in France, with aghast citizens reporting seeing the creatures in locations including trains and cinemas.

The head of Macron's Renaissance party in the French National Assembly, Sylvain Maillard, said a cross-party text would be ready "at the beginning of December" to combat the "scourge" of bedbugs.

He said the president's party and its allies had decided to make the subject a "priority" and urged the right-wing and hard-left opposition to come up with suggestions for a cross-party text.

Health Minister Aurelien Rousseau insisted on France Inter radio there was no "general panic" over the issue.

"What concerns me is that people do not get cheated by firms that make them pay € 2,000 or € 3,000 ($2,100 or $3,100)" to rid their houses of bedbugs, he added, denouncing "abuses" in the pest control sector.

– 'Question of public health' -Bedbugs, which had largely disappeared from daily life by the 1950s, have made a resurgence in recent decades, mostly due to high population densities and more mass transit.

One-tenth of all French households are believed to have had a bedbug problem over the past few years, usually requiring a pest control operation costing several hundreds of euros that often needs to be repeated.

The blood-sucking insects have been spotted in the Paris metro, high-speed trains and at Paris's Charles De Gaulle Airport.

EU demands answers from Poland about visa fraud

AP — BRUSSELS

Poland must clarify allegations that its consulates in Africa and Asia sold temporary work visas to migrants for thousands of dollars each in a scheme that could undermine free travel in Europe, a senior European Union official said yesterday.

European Commission Vice-President Margaritis Schinas said that travel within the 27-nation ID-check free travel zone known as the Schengen area relies on trust between the members, which include most EU countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

"What happens in a Schengen state affects the functioning of all Schengen countries. That is why the alleged cases of fraud and corruption in the Polish visa system are extremely worrying," Schinas told EU lawmakers in Strasbourg, France.

"If third-country nationals have been allowed the right of free movement within Schengen, without respecting the appropriate conditions and procedures, this would amount to a violation of EU law, in particular the EU visa code," he said.

Schinas's remarks come just as Poland's right-wing ruling party campaigns for October 15 elections. Migration is a hot election topic and the governing Law and Justice is facing questions about the alleged scheme just as it seeks a third term in office.

Polish authorities, including the ruling party leader, insist there is no scandal. They say that seven people have been arrested in the ongoing investigation and that there were fewer than 300 cases of irregularities.

But Poland's main opposition leader, Donald Tusk, has accused Law and Justice of hypocrisy for allegedly admitting large numbers of foreign workers despite its anti-migrant rhetoric and a new border wall.

Tusk - a former prime minister and once a top EU official himself - and Polish media allege that the government admitted about 130,000 Muslim migrants last year through the supposed scheme despite heated statements aimed chiefly at non-Christians.

Poland's Interior Ministry said that "less than 30,000 workers from Muslim countries came last year."

The European Commission is the EU's executive branch, and it polices the application of the bloc's laws. Schinas said the commission is seeking answers to several questions. "We want to have clarity, for instance on the numbers and types of visas and consular posts affected, as well as the whereabouts of the visa holders," he said.

SCIENCE

Three scientists win Nobel Prize in physics for work on electrons

AP — STOCKHOLM

Three scientists won the Nobel Prize in physics yesterday for their work on how electrons move around the atom during the tiniest fractions of seconds, a field that could one day lead to better electronics or disease diagnoses.

Pierre Agostini of The Ohio State University in the US; Ferenc Krausz of the Max Planck Institute of Quantum Optics and Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich in Germany; and Anne L'Huillier of Lund University in Sweden won the award.

Their experiments "have given humanity new tools for exploring the world of electrons inside atoms and molecules," according to the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, which announced the prize in Stockholm. They "have demonstrated a way to create extremely short pulses of light that can be used to measure the rapid processes in which electrons move or change energy." At the moment, this science is about understanding our universe, but the hope is that it will eventually have many practical applications.

L'Huillier, who is only the fifth woman to receive a Nobel in physics, said she was teaching when she got the call that she had won. She joked that it was hard to finish the lesson.

"This is the most prestigious and I am so happy to get this prize. It's incredible," she told the news conference announcing the prize. "As you know there are not so many women who got this prize so it's very special."

The Nobel Prizes carry a cash award of 11 million Swedish kronor ($1m). The money comes from a bequest left by the prize's creator, Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel, who died in 1896.

Last year, three scientists jointly won the physics prize for proving that tiny particles could retain a connection with each other even when separated. The phenomenon was once doubted but is now being explored for potential real-world applications such as encrypting information.

The physics prize comes a day after Hungarian-American Katalin Karikó and American Drew Weissman won the Nobel Prize in medicine for discoveries that enabled the creation of mRNA vaccines against COVID-19.

Nobel announcements will continue with the chemistry prize on Wednesday and the literature prize on Thursday. The Nobel Peace Prize will be announced on Friday and the economics award on October 9.



One of the three winners of 2023 Nobel Prize for physics Hungarian-Austrian physicist Ferenc Krausz (right) reacts with faculty director Ralf Bender at the Max-Planck Institute in Garching, yesterday. (AFP)

UK's high-speed rail row derails Tory party conference

AFP — MANCHESTER

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak yesterday dodged questions over the future of the UK's second high-speed train line, as the issue overshadowed his Conservative party's annual conference.

Sunak's finance minister Jeremy Hunt fuelled speculation about the fate of the northern section of the HS2 line last month when he warned costs were "getting totally out of control". Several British newspapers and other media outlets reported yesterday that the decision had been made to abandon the leg between Birmingham and Manchester.

The increasingly controversial infrastructure project was originally intended to link London with Birmingham in central England and other northern cities.

It would be only the UK's second high-speed railway after the one leading to the Channel Tunnel, linking England's southeast with northern France. HS2 has already been pared back, with an eastern extension towards Nottingham and Leeds ditched it 2021.

Estimated at £37.5bn ($46 billion) in 2013, the cost has since soared to around £100 billion or possibly more. Refusing to be candid about the fate of the section in a series of broadcast interviews, Sunak insisted to Sky News he had not made a final call.

"It's right that I'm not going to get forced into making premature decisions, not on something that's so important that costs this country tens of billions of pounds," he added.

Work on HS2's first section between London and Birmingham began in 2020, with the first trains due to run between 2029 and 2033.

In his interviews, Sunak faced accusations the annual four-day gathering of grassroots Tories in Manchester which started on Sunday has been chaotically eclipsed by the HS2 furore.

He is trying to unify the party heading into a general election expected next year which it is on track to lose. Reports about the project's northern leg have dominated coverage and exposed internal splits in the Tories.

At an impromptu press conference Monday, the Birmingham region's Conservative mayor Andy Street implored Sunak not to cancel it. "You will be turning your back on an opportunity to level up — a once-in-a-generation opportunity," he told reporters.

"You will indeed be damaging your international reputation as a place to invest," he said, adding he did not rule out resigning over the issue. Scrapping the section could leave Sunak's government open to accusations of abandoning the Conservatives' much-touted "levelling up" policy.

It aims to reduce economic inequalities across the country, including between the north and the more prosperous London-centred south.

IN BRIEF

Organiser behind shootout with Kosovo police detained

AP—BELGRADE: SERBIAN police yesterday detained an ethnic Serb leader from Kosovo who was the alleged organizer behind a recent shootout with Kosovo police that left four people dead and sent tensions soaring in the region.

Police said they searched the apartment and other property in Serbia belonging to Milan Radoičić, a politician and wealthy businessman with close ties to Serbia's ruling populist party and President Aleksandar Vučić.

Police gave no other details. A statement said Radoičić was ordered to remain in custody for 48 hours. The move comes amid an international outcry over the September 24 violence in which around 30 heavily armed Serb men set up barricades in northern Kosovo before launching an hours-long gunbattle with Kosovo police.

EU lawmakers vote to bolster protections for journalists

AFP—STRASBOURG: EU lawmakers yesterday backed proposals to boost journalistic independence, but stopped short of pushing for a blanket ban on governments spying on reporters.

The EU's Media Freedom Act was proposed by Brussels last year in the face of increased pressure facing journalists in countries such as Hungary and Poland. The legislation is aimed at protecting reporters from political interference, allowing them to keep sources secret and ensuring media pluralism across the bloc.

The MEPs' vote stakes out the parliament's position on the draft law ahead of negotiations with the EU's 27 member states. Among the most controversial issues are exemptions foreseen for using spyware against journalists.

Portugal to end tax scheme for foreigners from 2024

AFP—LISBON: PORTUGAL will stop providing income tax exemptions to foreigners living part-time in the country from 2024 to fight against a housing affordability crisis, the government has said.

The rules created in 2009 to attract foreign capital to Portugal, badly hit by the 2008 financial crisis, offered a total and later a partial exemption from taxes. About 10,000 people mainly from France, the UK and Italy, who settled in Lisbon and the southern Algarve region, benefited from the tax break.

The rules applied to foreigners living at least half the year in Portugal and until 2020 meant their income was exempt, though later it offered a reduced tax rate. But the measure has contributed to soaring house prices over the last decade, leading Prime Minister Antonio Costa to label the exemption "fiscal injustice" and to end it from next year.

Between 2012 and 2021, housing prices increased by 78 percent in Portugal compared to 35 percent in the European Union as a whole.

FEDERAL CHARGES

Hunter Biden pleads not guilty to gun charges

AP — WILMINGTON

Hunter Biden pleaded not guilty yesterday to three federal firearms charges filed after his earlier deal imploded, setting the case on a track toward a possible trial in 2024 while his father is campaigning for reelection.

President Joe Biden's son has been charged with lying about his drug use in October 2018 on a form to buy a gun that he kept for about 11 days. He could face up to 25 years in prison if convicted. When asked by Magistrate Judge Christopher Burke if he understood the charges against him, he said, "Yes, Your Honor." His lawyer Abbe Lowell said in court he plans to file a motion to dismiss the charges, challenging their constitutionality.

"Mr. Biden pleads not guilty to the three counts that have been brought against him," Lowell said to the judge.

Hunter Biden has acknowledged struggling with an addiction to crack cocaine during that period in 2018, but his lawyers have said he didn't break the law. Cases like this, against drug users accused of having guns, are rare, and an appeals court has found the underlying statute violates the Second Amendment under new Supreme Court standards.

In Congress, House Republicans are seeking to link Hunter Biden's dealings to his father's through an impeachment inquiry.

yesterday, the judge noted Hunter Biden had been repeatedly tested for drugs and is negative.

Hunter Biden's attorneys are suggesting that prosecutors bowed to pressure by Republicans, who have insisted the Democratic president's son got a sweetheart deal, and that the charges were the result of political pressure.

"President Trump and his MAGA allies" have forced "the Justice Department to ignore the law and deviate from its policies in cases like this one," Lowell said in a statement after the brief hearing, referring to Donald Trump's Make America Great Again slogan.

Hunter Biden left the courthouse shortly after the hearing, getting into a black SUV and pulling away. The deadline for pretrial motions in the case is Nov 3. The pretrial release conditions include no alcohol or drugs; drug testing or substance abuse counseling if needed; and continuing or seeking employment.

Earlier this summer, Hunter Biden agreed to plead guilty to misdemeanor tax charges and would have also avoided prosecution on the gun charges had he stayed out of trouble for two years. It was the culmination of a yearslong investigation by federal prosecutors into the business dealings of the president's son, and the agreement would have dispensed with criminal proceedings and spared the Bidens weeks of headlines as the election loomed.

The deal broke down after the judge who was supposed to sign off on the agreement instead raised a series of questions about the deal.

Now, a special counsel has been appointed to handle the case, and there appears no easy end in sight. Hunter Biden was indicted on the three gun charges, and no new tax charges have yet been filed – but the special counsel has indicated those charges could come in Washington or in California, where Hunter Biden lives.

Defense attorneys have argued that he remains protected by an immunity provision that was part of the scuttled agreement, but prosecutors overseen by special counsel David Weiss disagree. Weiss also serves as US attorney for Delaware and was originally appointed by Trump.

Lowell said he planned to file "a number of motions," including a push to dismiss the case based on an immunity agreement in the now-scuttled plea deal and the constitutionality of the law against drug users having guns.

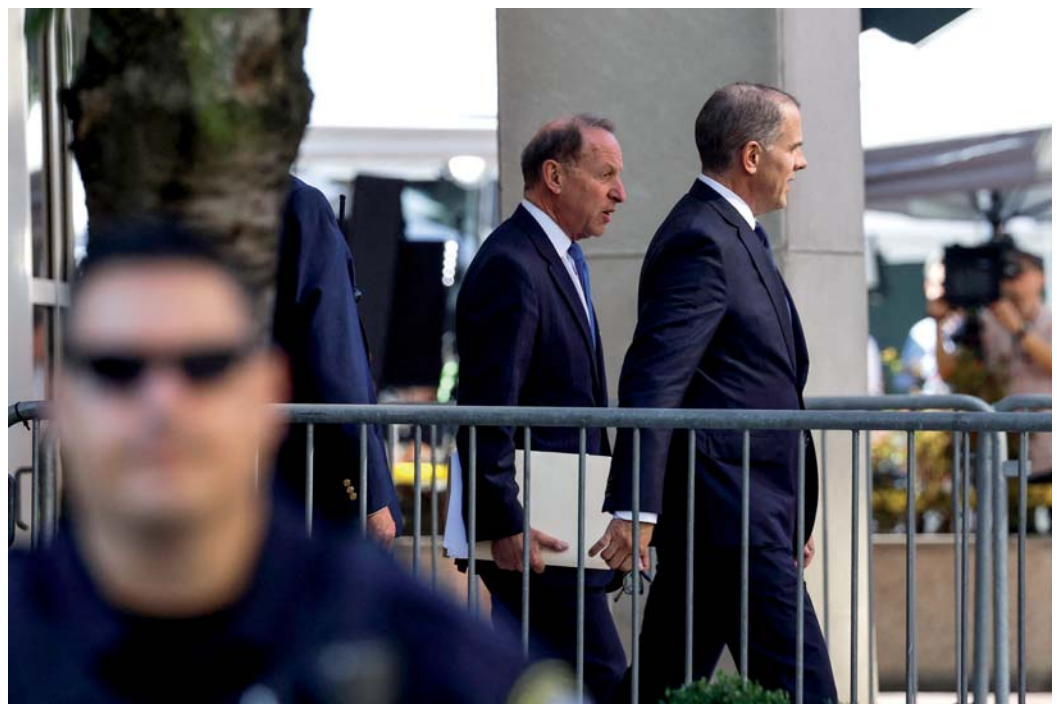
Lowell also said the defense plans to ask for an evidentiary hearing.

In Congress, House Republicans are seeking to link Hunter Biden's dealings to his father's through an impeachment inquiry. Republicans have been investigating Hunter Biden for years, since his father was Barack Obama's vice president. While questions have arisen about the ethics surrounding the Biden family's international business, no evidence has emerged so far to prove that Joe Biden, in his current or previous office, abused his role or accepted bribes.

The legal wrangling is likely to spill into 2024, with Republicans eager to divert attention from the multiple criminal indictments faced by Trump, the GOP primary front-runner, whose trials could be unfolding at the same time.

After remaining silent for years, Hunter Biden has taken a more aggressive legal stance in recent weeks, filing a series of lawsuits over the dissemination of personal information purportedly from his laptop and his tax data by whistleblower IRS agents who testified before Congress as part of the GOP probe.

Hunter Biden, who lives in the Los Angeles area, had asked for hearing to be conducted remotely over video feed, but Burke sided with prosecutors, saying there would be no "special treatment."



Hunter Biden, son of US President Joe Biden, departs from the J Caleb Boggs Federal Building in Wilmington, Delaware, yesterday. (AFP)

Donald Trump returns for second day of civil fraud trial

AFP — NEW YORK

Former US president Donald Trump began day two of his civil fraud trial yesterday, lashing out at New York's attorney general before entering the courtroom where he could be barred from doing business in the state.

Trump, who is facing legal battles on multiple fronts, called Attorney General Letitia James "very corrupt" and "grossly incompetent" in his trademark combativeness, ahead of the day's proceedings.

James is seeking $250m in penalties and the removal of Trump and two of his sons from management of the family empire.

Trump, who leads the field of Republican primary candidates ahead of the 2024 election by substantial margins, was not required to attend the first two days in court but chose to do so, taking a seat at the defense table flanked by his lawyers.

The civil trial comes after New York Judge Arthur Engoron already ruled that Trump and his sons Eric and Don Jr committed fraud by inflating the value of the real estate and financial assets of the Trump Organization for years.

The ruling stated that the three Trumps and other Trump Organization executives lied to tax collectors, lenders and insurers for years in a scheme that exaggerated the value of their properties by $812m to $2.2bn between 2014 and 2021.

The judge revoked the business licenses that allowed the Trump Organization to operate some of its New York properties, a move known as the "corporate death penalty." In the civil trial that began this week there is no jury, meaning Trump's fate is entirely in Engoron's hands — which has not dissuaded the former president from branding him a "rogue" Democratic judge who should be "disbarred." Also in the courtroom yesterday were Don Jr and Eric, as well as Attorney General James.

On Monday, Trump denounced the case as a "sham" intended to torpedo his bid to recapture the White House next year and called James, who is African American, "racist." The 77-year-old ex-leader -- who made his reputation and fortune as a real estate mogul in the 1980s -- could lose control over many of his company's flagship properties, such as Trump Tower on Manhattan's iconic 5th Avenue.

The New York case is the first of a number of upcoming trials for the former president.

Trump is scheduled to appear before a federal judge in Washington on March 4, 2024 on charges of trying to overthrow the results of the 2020 presidential election won by Democrat Joe Biden.

Trump will then be back in New York state court, this time on charges of paying hush money to a porn star, and later in a federal court in Florida, where he is accused of mishandling classified documents after leaving office.

Finally, he will also have to answer to state charges in Georgia, where prosecutors say Trump illegally tried to get the southern state's 2020 election results changed in his favour.



Former President Donald Trump speaks as he returns from a short break during the second day of his civil fraud trial at New York State Supreme Court in New York City, yesterday. (AFP)

UN approves Haiti force after a year of pleas

AFP — UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations Security Council on Monday approved a Kenyan-led mission aiming to bring stability to Haiti, a year after leaders in the violence-ravaged Caribbean nation first pleaded for help.

The Western Hemisphere's poorest nation has been in turmoil, with armed gangs taking over parts of the country and unleashing brutal violence, and the economy and public health system also in tatters.

Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres have been calling since late 2022 for international support to back the police force, but much of the global community had been jaded by the failure of earlier interventions in Haiti.

Monday's resolution passed with 13 votes in favor, with China and Russia abstaining. It was hailed by Haitian foreign minister Jean Victor Geneus as bringing a "glimmer of hope for people who have been suffering the consequences of a difficult political, socio-economic, security and humanitarian situation for too long." A breakthrough in plans for the force came in July, when Kenya volunteered to lead it and send 1,000 personnel.

"We must not fail the people of Haiti," Kenyan President William Ruto declared in a statement, saying they had "borne the brunt of colonial plunder and repression." "This mandate is not only about peace and security, but also about the rebuilding of Haiti -- its politics, its economic development, and social stability," Foreign Minister Alfred Mutua said separately.

P IN BRIEF

Nova Scotia may be hit with second tropical storm

BLOOMBERG—NOVA SCOTIA:TROPICAL Storm Philippe, which continues to continues to spin across the Caribbean, could reach Nova Scotia some time next week. This would be the second strike on the Canadian Maritime province this year.

In the Pacific, Typhoon Koinu is on a collision course with Taiwan. The storm's top winds will only be about 92 miles per hour when it makes landfall somewhere near Taitung on October 4, according to the US Joint Typhoon Warning Centre. It is then forecast to weaken and drop to tropical-storm strength as it crosses the South China Sea before making landfall a second time somewhere near Shantou in China.

In the eastern Pacific, Tropical Storm Lidia formed off Mexico's west coast. The storm will strengthen into a hurricane but so far is forecast to remain far from land and not be a threat.

US Congressman is victim of carjacking in Washington

BLOOMBERG—WASHINGTON: REPRESENTATIVE Henry Cuellar, a veteran Texas Democrat, was the victim of a carjacking in Washington on Monday night, according to his chief of staff, who added that he was not injured.

Cuellar, 68, had been parking his car when "three armed assailants" approached and stole the vehicle, the chief of staff, Jacob Hochberg, said in a statement.

The vehicle was later recovered by police, Hochberg said. The robbery occurred in the city's Navy Yard neighborhood, according to the District of Columbia's Metropolitan Police. First elected to Congress in 2004, Cuellar represents a South Texas district that extends from the eastern outskirts of San Antonio extending to Laredo and the Mexican border.

As in many urban areas, crime in the nation's capital has risen sharply, generating concern and alarm among the city's residents.

Protesters block Guatemala's highways after president-elect warns of 'coup'

BLOOMBERG — GUATEMALA

Protesters blocked highways and marched in Guatemala's main cities on Monday after president-elect Bernardo Arévalo denounced a "coup" plot to keep him out of power.

Arévalo called on supporters to take to the streets to defend democracy after the Attorney General's office raided the electoral authority on Friday. The raid was the fifth since the August 20 vote, and prosecutors confiscated tally sheets and other documents in a case against Arévalo's Semilla party.

"It's our civil duty to protest these attacks on the rule of law and attempts to break constitutional order," Arévalo said, in a statement posted on social media.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke with Arévalo by video call on Monday. Guatemalans face "continued efforts to impede a democratic transfer of power," the State Department later said in a statement.

The US and the Organization of American States have joined Arévalo in denouncing Attorney General Consuelo Porras's actions. Arévalo won the election pledging a crackdown on graft, and accuses Porras, prosecutor Rafael Curruchiche and court judge Fredy Orellana of trying to sabotage his victory.

The Attorney General's office says it had a warrant from a judge to conduct the raids, that its actions are grounded in the constitution, and that they have a duty to respond to criminal complaints.

The nation's highway authority said that at least 17 routes were blocked, in an alert sent at 9.20am local time. Local media showed groups of Arévalo supporters marching, some holding signs demanding the Attorney General's resignation.

The US State Department said Sunday that it is "gravely concerned" about attempts to undermine a peaceful transition of power. The Organization of American States said Friday that the raids violate Guatemala's constitution.

The nation's dollar bonds maturing in 2033 fell 0.46 cent to 76.6 cents at 10am local time. Despite the political instability, the nation last week had no difficulty in selling $565m of nine-year bonds to yield 7.05%.

"The raids evidence the extent to which parts of the ruling pact are intent on preventing Arévalo from taking office in January," Eurasia Group analyst Risa Grais-Targow said, in response to written questions.

"This will probably lead to more social unrest." Last month, Arévalo's party was suspended pending an investigation by prosecutors into whether rules were breached during its formation in 2018.

Over 100 dolphins found dead in Amazon as temperatures soar

AP — SAO PAULO

More than 100 dolphins have died in the Brazilian Amazon rainforest in the past week as the region grapples with a severe drought, and many more could die soon if water temperatures remain high, experts say.

The Mamiraua Institute, a research group of Brazil's Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, said two more dead dolphins were found Monday in the region around Tefe Lake, which is key for mammals and fish in the area.

Video provided by the institute showed vultures picking at the dolphin carcasses beached on the lakeside. Thousands of fish have also died, local media reported.

Experts believe high water temperatures are the most likely cause of the deaths in the lakes in the region. Temperatures since last week have exceeded 39 degrees Celsius in the Tefe Lake region.

The Brazilian government's Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation, which manages conservation areas, said last week it had sent teams of veterinarians and aquatic mammal experts to investigate the deaths.

There had been some 1,400 river dolphins in Tefe Lake, said Miriam Marmontel, a researcher from the Mamiraua Institute.

"In one week we have already lost around 120 animals between the two of them, which could represent 5% to 10% of the population," said Marmontel.

Workers have recovered carcasses of dolphins since last week in a region where dry rivers have impacted impoverished riverside communities and stuck their boats in the sand.

Amazonas Gov Wilson Lima on Friday declared a state of emergency due to the drought.

Nicson Marreira, mayor of Tefe, a city of 60,000 residents. said his government was unable to deliver food directly to some isolated communities because the rivers are dry.