Booster shots significantly restore protection against Omicron: UK

The UK government encountered an “inexplicable technical issue” preventing the online booking system from being made available online for “all theř across the network for the Green and Gold lines.”


In brief

63,000 fans watch Qatar’s historic 5-0 win over UAE in FIFA Arab Cup quarter-final

Qatar wins IMO Council membership

S everal health officials continue to urge priority groups to take appointment for the Covid-19 booster dose. This message has been issued in a series of tweets from the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH).

Boosters significantly restore protection against Omicron: UK

The US government won an appeal yesterday against a UK court ruling that it should extradite Julian Assange from Britain. The WikiLeaks founder to be sent to the US where he faces charges of espionage and publishing classified information.

Blacks protest for Assange in south Lebanon

A group of 500 black people demonstrated in southern Lebanon in support of Julian Assange, the WikiLeaks founder who is facing extradition to the US.

Doha Metro fixes ‘technical issue’

Doha Metro has won a Category C classification of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Assembly during the 123rd Session of the IMO Assembly in London.

The US wins court appeal for Assange extradition

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US wins court appeal for Assange extradition

COMMUNITY

See Pages 3, 4 & 5

Hail Cross-Country Rally: Qatar’s at Aljithy moves closer to world title

Qatar Energy expands its presence offshore Cyprus with new exploration block

Nearly 3000 patients with HIV/AIDS are on regular treatment at an MSF-supported hospital in southern Tunisia. MSF is one of the few international organisations that are involved in this field.
Armenian president ends Doha visit

President Armen Sargsyan completed his visit to Qatar after a three-day working visit. He and the accompanying delegation were seen off at Doha airport by the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Mr. Khalid bin Ahmed Al Attiyah.

Al-Sulaiti meets Saudi, Pakistani ministers

The Shura Council discussed ways to develop ties between the two countries and their continuous efforts to develop them in various fields to achieve the goals of the two countries. The meeting was attended by the President of the Shura Council, His Excellency Mr. Ali bin Ahmed al-Musallam. The Council expressed its readiness to support the suggestions and initiatives of the Saudi and Pakistani delegations in the field of trade and investments, and to take all the necessary steps to achieve this. The meeting was attended by the delegation, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Saudi Arabia, His Excellency Mr. Faisal bin Fukair al-Harbi, and the Pakistani ambassador to Qatar, His Excellency Mr. Muhammad Ali Jashanmohamed.

Sudan lauds Doha’s influential role in global peace and security

C press Affiliates of the Sudanese embassy in Qatar, Mr. Shams El Din, has expressed the hope that the President of the Republic of Sudan, His Excellency Mr. Salva Kiir, will conduct a visit to the State of Qatar in the near future, in order to meet with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, for a frank dialogue on various issues of common interest.

The Sudanese embassy in Qatar has expressed its readiness to support the efforts of the State of Qatar in the field of peace and security, including the prevention of terrorism and extremism, and to contribute to the solution of regional conflicts. The embassy has also expressed its readiness to work on enhancing economic and trade relations between the two countries, and to promote political dialogue and cooperation in the field of development.

Total Covid recoveries rise to 242,081

The Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) reported on Sunday 24 new recoveries from Covid-19 patients, bringing the total number of recoveries in Qatar to 242,081. It also recorded the death of a 67-year-old patient, who had chronic diseases and received the necessary medical care.

National Day tribute to sacrifices of ancestors

The Chairmen of Qatar’s Grand General Secretariat, Mr. Abdullah bin Ali al-Thani, and the Prime Minister of Qatar, His Excellency Mr. Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al-Thani, have expressed their appreciation and congratulations to Qatar’s leader and the people on the occasion of the National Day, which falls on December 18.

Mr. Al-Thani congratulated the people of Qatar on the occasion of the National Day, under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, and said that the occasion is a day of pride for Qatar, and a day to remember the sacrifices of those who laid the foundation of the country. He praised the dedication of Qatar’s leaders and people, who have achieved remarkable progress and stability in all sectors, which are the result of the intensive and continuous efforts of the people of Qatar.

He added that the National Day is a day of pride for Qatar, and a day to remember the sacrifices of those who laid the foundation of the country. He praised the dedication of Qatar’s leaders and people, who have achieved remarkable progress and stability in all sectors, which are the result of the intensive and continuous efforts of the people of Qatar.

Resilience of Qatari economy hailed

Shura Council opens session and approves conference

The Shura Council, in a meeting, discussed the preparations of the 73rd session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP73), and agreed to the participation of the Council in the meetings. The meeting was attended by the President of the Shura Council, His Excellency Mr. Ali bin Ahmed al-Musallam.

Al-Shaheen tells US he plans to visit Qatar

His Excellency Mr. Ahmed bin Mohamed al-Shaheen, the Ambassador of the Republic of Afghanistan to the United States, has expressed his readiness to visit Qatar in the near future, in order to strengthen diplomatic and economic relations between the two countries.

He added that the National Day is a day of pride for Qatar, and a day to remember the sacrifices of those who laid the foundation of the country. He praised the dedication of Qatar’s leaders and people, who have achieved remarkable progress and stability in all sectors, which are the result of the intensive and continuous efforts of the people of Qatar.

He also expressed his appreciation of the role of Qatar in supporting the Afghan people and the Afghan government, and in providing humanitarian aid and development assistance. He added that Qatar’s efforts in this area are highly commendable, and that the Afghan people are grateful for them.

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Prominent Indian businessman feted

Prominent Indian businessman, Salih Bekal, a native of Kerala who has made significant contributions to the Indian and Qatar business sectors, was recently honored. The event was attended by many well-known businesspersons of Qatar, including Abdullah al-Khalaf, patron of Dana Centre, and many others who were involved in the business sector.

As a successful businessman, Salih has fulfilled his dreams and has business networks spanning from Japan to the UK and from India to Qatar. The speakers at the function lauded his achievements, noting his hard work, honesty, and self-confidence. They also highlighted that his successful journey from a small village called Akkel (in India) to Qatar is an inspiration for the younger generation.

The initiative aims to promote national values, patriotism, and to celebrate Qatar National Day throughout the month. The initiative brings together QF students from various disciplines to express their love and pride for the heritage through short films that are shared with the community.

RPS wins for second consecutive year

Rajagiri Public School has won the Young Innovator Award for the second consecutive year in the Senior Category-II. The award ceremony was held at the Jaffarian Hall, Indian Cultural Centre (ICC), with the participation of more than 800 participants from over 300 entries.

Hameeda Kadar congratulated the students for their successful journey from a small village in India to Qatar. She said that the success of the students is the result of hard work and dedication. The function was attended by several dignitaries, including the Indian ambassador, Dr. Deepak Mittal, and other officials.

The Young Innovator Award competition was organized by the Indian Cultural Centre (ICC) and the Indian Consulate General (ICG), under the guidance of the Indian High Commission in Qatar. The initiative aims to promote national values, patriotism, and to celebrate Qatar National Day throughout the month.

MES duo finish second

MES Indian School students Krishnaa Sreejith and Sarang Uppara were among the top five finalists of the recent edition of the Young Innovator Award competition organized by QEERI under Hamad Bin Khalifa University.

The competition was held in two stages – the preliminary round that included an online submission of a 500-800 word abstract, and the final round, which was a virtual presentation of the research project, followed by a question-answer session.

It aims to promote national values, patriotism and to celebrate Qatar National Day throughout the month.

QU-YSC launches second December Aadaam initiative

The Qatar University Young Scientists Center (QU-YSC) has launched the second edition of December Aadaam (Youth) initiatives in continuation of the success of the first edition last year.

The initiatives bring together QF students from various disciplines to express their love and pride for the heritage through short films that are shared with the community. The initiatives highlight the connections between modern studies and past heritage and how to preserve the heritage and to preserve the heritage of the ancestors, which carries with it a valuable lesson for the younger generation.

The initiatives also showcase a spotlight on several other topics such as the use of local desert plants, traditional social activities, and the significance of research and research-based projects.

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GU-Q filmmaker puts Qatar on Academy Award nomination ballot

A brand new and visionary production at the co-hosted filming location in Texas, USA, the recently opened 12000 ft² director's suite, QATAR 2018, has paved the way for local filmmakers to showcase their work on an international platform. The film, 'Al-Sit', directed by the dynamic duo of Abdul Razzak Al-Nasser and Abdul Samad Al-Hasani, has been nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. This achievement marks a significant milestone for the Qatari film industry, highlighting the country's growing cultural and artistic influence on an international scale.

The film, 'Al-Sit', is a poignant tale about the life of a young woman who, against all odds, strives to follow her dreams and break free from the societal norms that bind her. The film explores themes of resilience, determination, and the pursuit of one's passion, resonating with audiences across the globe.

The nomination comes as part of a broader initiative by Qatar Foundation (QF) to support and promote local film projects. QF has been at the forefront of fostering a vibrant film industry in Qatar, offering resources, platforms, and networks to filmmakers. The foundation's efforts have not only contributed to the growth of the local film industry but have also provided opportunities for international collaboration, such as the recent partnership with Texas State University-San Marcos.

QF's commitment to the arts is exemplified through its support of initiatives like the Al-Sit Film Festival, the Qatari Film Festival, and the annual Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Memorial Elocution Competition. These events, along with others, provide a platform for local talents to showcase their work and gain recognition on the global stage.

The successful nomination of 'Al-Sit' for the Academy Award underscores the progress made by Qatari filmmakers and the potential for further growth in the country's cinematic landscape. It is a testament to the tireless effort and dedication of the team behind the film, as well as the broader community of filmmakers and supporters who have contributed to this achievement.

The journey from concept to reality is a testament to the power of perseverance and the importance of support systems for creators. As 'Al-Sit' continues its journey at the Academy Awards, it shines a spotlight on the potential of Qatari cinema and serves as an inspiration for future generations of filmmakers in Qatar and beyond.
**Super Cryptic Clues**

**Across**
1. A single male part backed by composer (8)
2. Experts playing cards (4)
3. Why endlessly consume grain? (5)
4. A new winner in the next race (5)
5. 26 Read Pip's novel to be discarded (4)
6. A farmer's plot (5)
7. First not out for the county (7)
8. 19 Weight formerly revealed count? (4,2)
9. Artist is non-starter in game (5)
10. Jazz group formed by band leader in Italian resort (5)
11. German city and French relative (6)
12. Money, we hear, in hidden country (7)
13. Sad face, false appearances (7)
14. 1 A single male part backed by composer (8)
15. German city and French relative (6)
16. Where tools may be kept or store (5)
17. Second not out for the county (7)
18. Bird with new or old coin race (5)
19. Where tools may be kept or store (5)
20. 26 Read Pip's novel to be discarded (4)
21. Where tools may be kept or store (5)
22. 26 Read Pip's novel to be discarded (4)

**Down**
1. Companions for game (5)
2. She is involved with Alex somewhere in London (7)
3. More take part in the next race (5)
4. The prize point is available (8,6)
5. Prisoner on leave in African prison (8)
6. Hardening placing pen on catalogue (4)
7. Jazz group formed by band leader in Italian resort (5)
8. Jazz group formed by band leader in Italian resort (5)
9. Some assurance in Japan (5)
10. Beginners burned out by bad weather (9)
11. Second not out for the county (7)
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**Answers**

**Codeword**

Every letter of the alphabet is used in each cross-number. Use the same letter to form words in adjacent boxes. Work out which number represents which letter.

**Colouring**

Informed (8)

**Sudoku**

**Solution**

**Horoscope**

**Gemini**
If you’ve been working towards manifesting extra money in your life, Gemini, you will probably see it happen today. Copious physical and emotional energy gives you a boost of power and strength, so work on something you’re passionate about. You’re likely to feel reinvigorated all the same. Powerful people could prove to be a valuable help to you. As a result, you should be going very well right now. Make the most of it.

**Virgo**
Whatever goals you’ve been trying to reach may finally become reality today, Virgo. Everything’s going to go in your favor. Anything you’ve been working towards for some time might come together today, seemingly of their own accord. This might include ideas or projects that you’ve been working on for a long time, or maybe even something you’ve been wanting in finance and other matters. Professional interests should go well as well, as your personal projects.

**Pisces**
Today you’re likely to feel like the powerfulIncluded in the Pisces August 23 — September 22

**Sagittarius**
Your inner power is probably at an all-time high, Sagittarius. You should feel especially confident. You might have to have a stronger influence on others than usual. You could exercise the power of inner conviction. You could aim at something only to have it happen at some point during this day. Today you should guard your thoughts and words carefully, as you will need to be very watchful.

**Scorpio**
Your energy is probably high today, almost to the point where you feel you might be able to do something you’ve been trying to do but haven’t been able to. This could be your chance. You might be able to get things going at last. Expecting or participating in new sports could also be appealing. You might direct some of your energy into creative projects. Take care not to overdo it. You could still get too involved.

**Leo**
Your energy is probably high today, almost to the point where you feel you might be able to do something you’ve been trying to do but haven’t been able to. This could be your chance. You might be able to get things going at last. Expecting or participating in new sports could also be appealing. You might direct some of your energy into creative projects. Take care not to overdo it. You could still get too involved.

**Libra**
Your intellect is sharp, so if you indulge in any kind of learning process, you will benefit greatly. Your creative energy is also high, so it’s a good day to work on artistic projects.

**Aquarius**
Your career and financial goals should be within your grasp. Arrange your physical energy and inner power are operating at their peak, making this an ideal time to make their plans. Also, if you’ve been working to improve your health, you might see some substantial results. It’s not an easy day to start a new health and exercise regimen. Go for it!

**Capricorn**
Some fascinating conversations with friends, relations, and other close people should help clear the air today, bring new light your way. Capricorn is both the physical energy and the inner power to make things happen, so you should make the most of it. Capricorn considers your needs and aspirations and forms a plan of action that makes them reality.

**Taurus**
Your immediate goals and wishes might suddenly appear to come together today, seemingly of their own accord. The result might be change, Sarah, and perhaps split-lightning. Your inner power is probably strong enough to meet this challenge. You will probably feel better about something you’ve worked on long and hard to achieve. At times like this, it’s important to remember those who helped you along the way.

**Aries**
Your energy is probably high today, almost to the point where you feel you might be able to do something you’ve been trying to do but haven’t been able to. This could be your chance. You might be able to get things going at last. Expecting or participating in new sports could also be appealing. You might direct some of your energy into creative projects. Take care not to overdo it. You could still get too involved.

**Cancer**
A lot of activity could occur tomorrow, Leo. Perhaps you will have visitors or do some work on the house. Your intuition will probably be most in tune with your family. Take care to guard your personal energy and inner power. The result might be change, Sarah, and perhaps split-lightning. Your inner power is probably strong enough to meet this challenge. You will probably feel better about something you’ve worked on long and hard to achieve. At times like this, it’s important to remember those who helped you along the way.

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Kenyan politician Odinga to make fifth run for president

Kenyan politician Odinga is set to make his fifth attempt to become Kenya’s president, according to The Nation, a newspaper in Kenya. Odinga is expected to announce his candidacy on Monday, January 31, according to the report.

The move comes after Odinga’s previous attempts to become president failed. He lost the 2017 election to Uhuru Kenyatta, who has been in power since 2013. Odinga challenged the result, but the Supreme Court upheld Kenyatta’s victory.

Odinga also ran in the 2022 elections, but lost again. He has been a key figure in Kenyan politics for decades and has been a strong supporter of the opposition.

He has previously run for president in 2007, 2013, 2017, and 2022. In each of those elections, he has faced strong opposition from Kenyatta and his allies.

Odinga is expected to face a tough campaign, with Kenyatta and his allies likely to use their financial and political resources to try to ensure his defeat. However, Odinga has a large following in Kenya and is expected to draw support from those who are dissatisfied with the current government.

The election is set to be held in August 2023, and will be the culmination of a long struggle for power in Kenya. Odinga has been a strong advocate for democratic change in Kenya, and has been a vocal critic of the current government.

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US actor found guilty in staged racist hate crime case

US Washington

A jury in Chicago has found US actor Jussie Smollett guilty of staging a racist and homophobic attack to boost his career.

The jury deliberated for just under two hours before finding Smollett, 37, guilty on all six counts of felony disorderly conduct.

Smollett played the role of Jamal Lyon on the TV series Empire.

The jury found that Smollett conspired with two men to stage a false attack and then filed a police report to make it look real.

The attack, which Smollett had alleged was carried out by two men wearing hoods and with screens painted with a double noose, had received widespread media attention.

Theater producer Lin-Manuel Miranda, whom Smollett had called "one of the most influential persons in his life," tweeted that he was "absolutely devastated by the verdict.

Smollett's lawyers had argued that the attack was staged as part of a publicity stunt.

The case has drawn attention to issues of hate crimes and police accountability.

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Trudeau opens fight to legalise Quebec law that cost teacher her job

Canada

Trudeau's government has been embroiled in a controversy after a Quebec Superior Court judge ordered the government to pay damages to a teacher who lost her job because she refused to teach a lesson on LGBTQ+ issues.

The teacher, Julie Dupuis, was charged with teaching a lesson that could be considered homosexual or bromance education.

The government had appealed the decision, but the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in favor of Dupuis.

The government had argued that the lesson was part of a broader curriculum on diversity and inclusion.

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Munaf & Associates

The US Supreme Court has allowed abortion providers to protest legal restrictions on abortion services in Texas, but the state's constitution requires a buffer zone to prevent them from coming too close to reproductive health facilities.

The Munaf & Associates law firm represents several of the providers.

They argue that the restrictions violate the First Amendment's freedom of speech and assembly rights.

The case, Munaf v. Colette, has been closely watched as a test of the Supreme Court's approach to abortion rights.

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Public health experts say the spread of the Omicron variant is slowing across the United States, but concerns about its transmissibility and potential for disruption remain.

The variant, first identified in South Africa, has been detected in 103 countries and territories, with more than 120 dead and over 1,500 infections reported so far.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has warned that the variant poses a significant public health threat.

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The New York City Council has passed legislation allowing non-citizens to vote in municipal elections.

The law would allow non-citizens to vote in local elections, including those for mayor, city council, and school board.

The measure was introduced by Council Members Carl Heastie and Ydanis Rodriguez and was supported by a majority of the council.

The legislation still needs to be signed by the mayor before becoming law.

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Most reported US Omicron cases have hit the fully vaccinated: CDC

Most US states have reported an increase in cases of the Omicron variant in recent weeks, with the fully vaccinated accounting for a higher proportion of cases in some areas.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has said that the variant appears to be spreading quickly, but it is not clear yet whether it will lead to more severe disease.

The CDC has urged people to continue to wear masks, get vaccinated, and stay home if they are sick.

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The appeals court agreed with the lower court ruling that President Joe Biden and the Biden administration had committed a legal violation.

The appeals court ruled that the government had failed to follow the proper legal procedures when it detained migrants.

The case has brought attention to the US-Mexico border and the ongoing debate over immigration policy.

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President Trump said he would not oppose it.

Trump, who was controversially reelected in 2020, had supported the bill but had not committed to signing it.

The bill was introduced by Republican Senator Lindsey Graham and Democrat Dick Durbin and would allow people to register to vote in federal elections.

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The appeals court agreed with the lower court ruling that President Joe Biden and the Biden administration had committed a legal violation.

The appeals court ruled that the government had failed to follow the proper legal procedures when it detained migrants.

The case has brought attention to the US-Mexico border and the ongoing debate over immigration policy.
China, Nicaragua re-establishes in blow to US and Taiwan

Reuters

China and Nicaragua re-established diplomatic relations yesterday after a period of tension, according to a statement from the Chinese foreign ministry, an indirect signal that the Biden administration and its Chinese counterpart may have resolved an impasse over the island of Taiwan.

Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen said yesterday that the decision to resume ties was a “calculated decision, definitely not a barrier on the resumption in ties.”

China’s foreign ministry, meanwhile, said it would take steps to “protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China” and to “exist in a friendly and harmonious environment.”

The United States, which has recognized Taiwan as an independent country, was not immediately available for comment.

US imposes sanctions on China, Myanmar, N Korea

By Ben Blanchard and Matthew涉

The US imposed sanctions on China, Myanmar and North Korea yesterday, including travel bans and asset freezes, in response to alleged human rights abuses and war crimes.

The move comes as US President Joe Biden is facing pressure to take a tougher stance on China, following a series of exchanges at the United Nations General Assembly last week.

Biden’s administration has been keen to demonstrate that it will prioritize human rights and democracy in its foreign policy, but has also sought to avoid confrontations that could escalate into larger conflicts.

New Zealand smoking ban overlooks youth-vaping

The New Zealand government yesterday announced a comprehensive ban on all forms of tobacco, including electronic cigarettes, in an effort to reduce smoking and vaping rates.

The ban, which comes into effect in 2024, will make New Zealand the first country in the world to ban electronic cigarettes outright.

The government said that the ban would help to protect public health and reduce the burden on the health system.

Social media firms fueling ‘toxic sludge’: Nobel winner

COLOMBIA

1,000 Rohingya shops demolished in Bangladesh

Bangladesh authorities demolished about 1,000 shops belonging to Rohingya refugees yesterday, citing a rights violation by shops and landlords.

At least 450 shops were destroyed in the operation, which was carried out by the Bangladesh police and Border Guards Bangladesh.

A spokesperson for the government said that the shops were being demolished to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to improve living conditions for the refugees.

US forces in Afghanistan raise concerns

The US military has raised concerns about the lack of support from the Afghan government in the fight against the Taliban, according to a report from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction.

The report said that the Afghan government had failed to provide adequate resources and support to US forces in their fight against the Taliban.

Social media giants are fuelling the so-called “toxic sludge” of misinformation and disinformation, Nobel laureate Dmitry Muratov said yesterday.

Muratov, who won the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize for his work to combat fake news, said that social media companies were profiting from the spread of false information.

“Social media firms are not just amplifying the noise of the political world, they are generating it,” Muratov said.

The report comes as social media companies are facing renewed scrutiny for their role in spreading misinformation and disinformation.

US bans Huawei in national security concern

The US Department of Commerce has banned Huawei and its affiliates from doing business with US companies, citing national security concerns.

The ban, which was announced yesterday, affects a broad range of companies and entities, including suppliers, distributors and dealers.

A US executive order, which was signed by President Donald Trump, said that the ban was necessary to protect national security.

China and Taiwan

China said on Wednesday that it had received “positive” news from Beijing about the resumption of trade talks with Taiwan.

China’s foreign ministry said that the resumption of trade talks was a “positive development” and that it was ready to work with Taiwan to maintain economic and trade relations.

US officials also said that they were “cautiously optimistic” about the resumption of trade talks.

US National Security Council

The US National Security Council held a meeting yesterday to discuss the ongoing situation in Xinjiang.

The meeting was attended by US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan and other senior officials.

The meeting discussed the US government’s concerns about the human rights situation in Xinjiang, including allegations of forced labor and other abuses.

China phủed for junta crimes against humanity

The UN Human Rights Council yesterday announced that it would hold a special session to discuss the situation in Myanmar.

The session will be held on Monday and will focus on the human rights situation in the country, following the military coup earlier this month.

The council has already passed a resolution condemning the military coup and calling for an end to the violence.

Taiwan referendum

Taiwan’s constitutional court yesterday ruled that a referendum on the island’s status could go ahead.

The court’s decision was a key victory for Taiwan’s government, which had sought to hold a referendum on the island’s status.

The referendum was seen as a key test of the island’s ability to exercise its right to self-determination.

Australian Foreign Minister

The Australian government yesterday announced a new travel policy for citizens returning from areas with COVID-19 outbreaks.

The policy, which comes into effect on Friday, will require all returning travelers to undergo a 14-day quarantine period, regardless of their vaccination status.

The announcement was made as Australia reported a further 23 new cases of COVID-19, bringing the total number of infections in the country to 11,500.

Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife, who are visiting Taiwan, are expected to attend the opening ceremony of the event.

Australia is expected to use the visit as an opportunity to discuss trade and investment opportunities with the island.

Taiwan has said that it welcomes the visit and is looking forward to increased cooperation between the two countries.

Australia has long been a key supporter of Taiwan and has maintained close ties with the island.

The visit comes as China has intensified its diplomatic efforts to win over other countries in the region.

China has been particularly active in winning support among countries in the Pacific region, where it has sought to undermine Australia’s influence.

Australia has been critical of China’s human rights record, particularly in relation to the treatment of Uighurs in Xinjiang.

The visit is also significant because Taiwan is the only country in the world that recognizes the Chinese government as the legitimate government of China.

The visit is expected to further strain relations between Australia and China, which have been tense in recent years due to trade disputes and other issues.

Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne said yesterday that the visit was a “symbolic and positive step” in the relationship between the two countries.

She said that the visit would help to strengthen ties and support the island’s efforts to maintain its status as a separate and independent country.

Australia has been a key supporter of Taiwan and has repeatedly spoken out in support of its self-determination.

Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen said yesterday that the visit was a “historic moment” and that it would help to strengthen ties and support the island’s efforts to maintain its status as a separate and independent country.

She said that the visit was a “symbolic and positive step” in the relationship between the two countries and that it would help to strengthen ties and support the island’s efforts to maintain its status as a separate and independent country.
Omicron cases mild, vaccine boosters not priority: India

Scottish government orders further lockdown for 10 days due to omicron surge

The Scottish government has ordered a general lockdown for 10 days in a bid to stem the spread of omicron and avoid an “untold moral and economic cost.” The lockdown will come into effect on Thursday and run until January 6, 2022. The government has said that it is making this move “not because we believe we are completely powerless, but because we have a moral duty to act.”

The measure will include a ban on indoor gatherings, the closure of schools, and the prohibition of non-essential travel. People will be required to work from home where possible, and face coverings will be mandatory in all public places.

UK economy grows at fastest pace in almost a year

The UK economy grew at its fastest pace in almost a year in the three months to November, official data showed on Tuesday. Gross domestic product (GDP) expanded by 1.5% during the period compared with the previous three months, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said, exceeding the market forecast of a 1.0% rise.

The data showed that consumer spending continued to drive growth, with retail sales and restaurants expanding. Investment in the business sector also contributed to the overall increase.

India's top general laid to rest with full military honours

India’s top general, General Bipin Rawat, was laid to rest with full military honours on Tuesday, following his helicopter crash that killed him and 12 others. The funeral was held at Pune, the city where he had been based, and was attended by top military and political leaders.

Rawat had served as India’s Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) for almost four years and had led the country’s armed forces during a period of growing tension with China. The ceremony included a 21-gun salute and a flypast by the Indian Air Force’s Alpha Plus aerobatic team.

UK not planning new rules despite Omicron growth

Britain’s Prime Minister Boris Johnson is not planning to impose new restrictions on Christmas despite a rise in Omicron cases in the country. Johnson has repeatedly said that any new measures would be kept to a minimum and that he wants to ensure that Christmas can go ahead.

However, the government has announced that it will be increasing the number of rapid lateral flow tests available to the public, with 50 million tests expected to be distributed over the next two weeks. The government has also said that it will be increasing the number of contact tracing cases.

India’s top general, Bipin Rawat, was buried in a national ceremony in New Delhi on Tuesday, following his death in a helicopter crash on Monday. Rawat, 64, was India’s first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), a post he had held since 2016. He was killed along with 12 others when a military helicopter crashed in Tamil Nadu this week.

Rawat was a retired four-star general who had served in multiple wars and was a vocal advocate for India’s military modernization. He leaves behind him a legacy of service and dedication to his country.

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Managing energy crises in an age of climate disruption

By Jorge Hess and Luis Felipe

A recent report by Goldman Sachs has called for a reshaping of energy strategies. One of the key drivers behind this call has been the increasing cost of fossil fuels due to investments in new carbon-intensive technologies such as oil and gas. As the world comes to terms with the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has become clear that rising energy costs will have significant implications for global economies.

In 2021, many countries saw energy prices rise sharply, leading to increased costs for consumers and businesses. This trend is expected to continue in 2022, with forecasts predicting further price hikes. The reasons behind this are multifaceted, including geopolitical tensions, supply chain disruptions, and increased demand for energy commodities.

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), global energy consumption reached a record high in 2021, driven by economic recovery and increased demand for electricity, gas, and coal. The report highlights that the cost of energy has become a significant barrier to economic growth, particularly for developing countries.

The report also notes that the shift towards renewable energy sources is gaining momentum, with countries around the world committing to ambitious climate targets. However, the transition to a low-carbon economy is not without challenges, as the cost of new technologies and infrastructure remains a barrier to widespread adoption.

In conclusion, the energy crisis is a complex issue that requires a multifaceted approach. Countries must accelerate the transition to renewable energy sources, while also addressing the challenges associated with the high cost of energy. This will require significant investments in research and development, as well as policy interventions to support the rollout of new technologies and infrastructure.

The IEA calls for a coordinated global approach to address the energy crisis, including increased investment in renewable energy, enhanced cooperation on energy security, and the promotion of energy efficiency. By working together, countries can mitigate the impacts of the energy crisis and ensure a sustainable future for all.

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**Gulf Times**

Higher fertiliser costs raise food security risks

Kas, crops from Brazilian to Maldivian dietary staples, are at risk after right supply glitches and fluctuating prices of fertiliser have caused farmers to resort to costly crop nutrients, adding to global food security and inflation fears.

Fertiliser costs soared this year amid rising input and lower supply as record natural gas and coal prices triggered output cuts in the already seeing disruptions in fertiliser procurements and lower growers are bracing for higher output costs with industry players of a fertiliser shortage next year that is predicted to slow soy, corn and cotton farm expansions.

But the World Bank and other organisations are not the only ones worried about the impact of rising energy prices on food security. The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) food price index in its highest since 2011—when high food prices helped fuel the “Arab Spring” overturning the world’s leaders—is already under strain because of rising fuel costs with analysts say fertiliser supply disruption could be felt in 2022.

Expensive fertiliser will add on to global inflation and cost pressures

European, North American and North Asian farmers all need to step up to reduce the risk to their crops of weather conditions, disease, pests and water supply also well-irrigated crops.

“Growing the same production systems of high-yielding crops should not be allowed to continue,” said the environmental group Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance. “They are just the tip of the iceberg in their coverage and involvement, and that’s why we are calling for a global transformation of the global food system,” said the 2015 Paris climate agreement.

The FAO report said an article 5 of that treaty that the main focus of the conference is the capital market is for only the oil, gas, coal, food, fields, and transport and agriculture.

Unfortunately, some progress on the global transition to clean energy has been lacking. “We need to do more to reduce carbon costs and demand for oil, gas and coal,” said the environmental group.

Moreover, the current international climate change negotiations have resulted in a demand for energy, while energy-intensive industries like cement, steel, and solar panel manufacturers are now secured, meaning that chemical companies are producing more.

In Europe, the energy market for Europe is expected to increase by 41% in 2023.

So far, high crop prices have cushioned the blow for many growers, but as the supply of fertiliser imported from China, India and some can switch from nitrogen-hungry wheat and corn to winter-planted crops.

In India, 95% of its fertiliser supply. Production of fruits and vegetables, including durian, will be worse than that of beans, as it requires higher quality taro. – Dubai

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Turkey and neighbours promise to clean up the Mediterranean

**Turkey demands NATO to break promise to Ukraine, Georgia**

Ruscians have demanded that the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) rapidly help to establish a 2009 commitment from the Alliance to the five Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to join the Nato and Georgia to end war in eastern Ukraine.

Nato’s member states have rejected calls from Turkey and neighbors to accelerate the process of sending combat troops into the region overnight, leading to evacuations of Turkey’s eastern coastal cities and the Black Sea.

Western Pakistani city of Quetta, where collector Gul Karim said he would be unable to respond to the tide of public uncertainty if the Nato promised to accelerate sending combat troops into the eastern Ukraine.

The IS-K claimed responsibility for an October 15 suicide bomb in a school in Dasht-e-Barchi, a neighborhood in the outskirts of Kabul, according to authorities.

At least 115,000 nurses have been trained in the UK and Germany as examples of the nurses who continue to work.

“I almost think that governments should be putting to the forefront of their policies the need to invest in their nurses,” a senior TTP commander told The Gulf Times.

In a statement, the TTP acknowledged responsibility for attacks in the vicinity of the Kabul University, a university campus, and a police station.

The IS-K claimed responsibility for an October 15 suicide bomb in a school in Dasht-e-Barchi, a neighborhood in the outskirts of Kabul, according to authorities.

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The 11th edition of the Katara International Dhow Festival, taking place at the Katara Beach esplanade until the Qatar National Day on December 18, is akin to a journey back in time. Continuing to attract a good number of visitors to Katara – the Cultural Village, the event puts a spotlight on the region’s history, culture and maritime tradition.

Dhow making, deep-sea and pearl diving, the livelihood it generated in the olden days, the tools used in the past and their importance, and the various trades in the Gulf region, are highlighted.

Plenty of fun at balloon fest
Live music, shows and entertainment, such as the centrepiece stage on the second day of the Qatar Balloon Festival 2021 at Aspire Park yesterday, attracted a large number of visitors, residents and expatriate families to take in the fun and games, which has a wide range of games serves as another major attraction for both adults and young visitors. Running until December 18, the festival features 35 hot air balloons.

Qatar Charity (QC) has recently distributed coronavirus (Covid-19) protective supplies to several commercial complexes, shops and restaurants, as part of its continued efforts to limit the spread of coronavirus. The move aims to protect the visitors and customers of the commercial places from the virus.

Some 1,170 cartons of hand sanitisers and face masks were distributed to several commercial complexes and malls, including eight outlets of LuLu Hypermarkets, Al Khor Mall, Tameer Mall, Vick’s Hypermarket, Hamad Hypermarket in Al Khor, Saudia Hypermarket in Al Khor, Safari Hypermarket in Al Khor, in addition to Al Khor Club and Nafeeseh Sweets.

“QC has distributed hand sanitizers and face masks to several commercial complexes and malls in the country,” he said.

"This also reflects the member states’ trust in the work that Qatar is doing with regard to maritime navigation’s safety and security, and marine environment protection and which receive a close attention and unlimited support from HE the Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al Thani, the minister said.

HE al-Sulaiti voiced his appreciation for brotherly and friendly member states’ trust and backing of Qatar’s candidacy. He also praised the big efforts made by the work team to achieve this success, which reflected the indivisibility and interdependence between the government and private sectors to raise the name of Qatar at international forums, among them the Ministry of Foreign Affairs represented by HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, the maritime authority, Qatar’s commercial, industrial and tourist ports, and the private sector’s sea-time transport companies.

HE al-Sulaiti thanked brotherly and friendly member states, HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, the maritime authority, Qatar’s commercial, industrial and tourist ports, and the private sector’s maritime transport companies for their support.

Qatar wins IMO Council membership
Qatar’s presence in the IMO Council, HE al-Sulaiti said, will enhance efforts that aim at contributing to supporting the country’s preventing measures and plans to control the coronavirus, said Ahmed Omar AlSherawi, head of Relations and Community Responsibility section.

Shanavas Padiyath, regional manager of LuLu Hypermarket Qatar, thanked the QC for implementing the initiative.

He added that LuLu strives to play a significant role, in cooperation with the QC, in supporting the community service.