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HE the Minister of Transport and Communications Jassim Seif Ahmed al-Sulaiti, Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive HE Akbar al-Baker, HIA's chief operating officer Badr al-Meer and others pose with the Skytrax awards.

Qatar Airways wins 'Best Airline' award for a record fifth time

Qatar Airways has won four prestigious awards at the 2019 Skytrax World Airline Awards, including the coveted 'Best Airline of the Year' for a record fifth time.

Qatar's national carrier the only airline in the competition's history to win it five times - in 2011, 2012, 2015, 2017 and 2019.

Qatar Airways has also been named 'Best Airline in the Middle East' for a third successive year, while its 'World's Best Business Class' accolade is the fourth year in succession that it has won that award.

In retaining its 'World's Best Business Class Seat' award for its patented Qsuite product, the airline beat strong competition from all over the world.

HE the Minister of Transport and Communications Jassim Seif Ahmed al-Sulaiti, who attended the Skytrax Awards ceremony, said: "This is a great day for the State of Qatar, and I am delighted to have been here today to witness Qatar Airways being recognised as the 'Best Airline of the Year' for the fifth time".

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive HE Akbar al-Baker, who was accompanied by chief operating officer of Hamad International Airport Badr al-Meer, said: "The Skytrax awards are widely recognised as the most prestigious in the airline industry, so to have won so many prizes at the 2019 ceremony is a truly memorable experience for Qatar Airways.

"We are thrilled to be globally recognised by our customers by win-

ning these four prestigious awards. Being the first airline to be named 'Airline of the Year' for the fifth time is a landmark achievement and, combined with three other major Skytrax awards, is testament to the tireless efforts of the entire Qatar Airways team. It is a proud moment for the airline as our constant innovation and service standards set the benchmark in our industry."

"The fact that the Skytrax awards are voted for by travellers makes them especially meaningful for all of us in the industry. Aviation is a competitive business, and to have received such recognition will spur us all at Qatar Airways to even greater heights and we look forward to delivering our world-class product to millions of passengers in the coming years." **To Page 24**

Mursi hailed as 'a martyr killed deliberately over six years of abuse'

● Calls mount for transparent, independent international inquiry into death of Egypt's first democratically elected head of state

Reuters
Doha

The death of Mohamed Mursi, modern Egypt's first democratically elected head of state, while on trial in a Cairo court, has brought an outpouring of condolences around the Middle East and calls for an investigation into his conditions.

The 67-year-old Islamist, a leading figure in the Muslim Brotherhood, was deposed by the army and jailed in 2013 after barely a year in power.

As his body was buried yesterday, many condemned harsh prison conditions as a likely cause of his heart attack and blamed current president Abdel Fattah al-Sisi.

The UN human rights office called for an "independent inquiry" into Mursi's death while in state custody.

"Any sudden death in custody must be followed by a prompt, impartial, thorough and transparent investigation carried out by an independent body to clarify the cause of death," said Rupert Colville, spokesman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Mursi was buried in a small family ceremony, a day after suffering a fatal heart attack in court at a Cairo prison, his sons said.

The Islamist ex-president's death after six years in jail under the military-backed establishment stoked anger among his supporters in Egypt and abroad.

His Muslim Brotherhood, now banned in Egypt, described it as "full-fledged murder" and called for mass gatherings. Egyptian officials denied accusations that Mursi's health had been neglected.

Witnesses in Mursi's home province of Sharqiya said hundreds of residents in the village where he was born had performed prayers for Mursi amid tight security yesterday, and afterwards chanted "Down with military rule!". A number of residents were detained, a security source said.



People flash Rabia signs as they hold a picture of former Egyptian president Mohamed Mursi during a symbolic funeral prayer at the courtyard of Fath Mosque in Istanbul.

Life appeared normal in the capital, where authorities have cracked down on Islamists and other activists since Mursi's overthrow. Thousands of Muslim Brotherhood members in Turkey took to the streets of Ankara and Istanbul, some of them blaming Egyptian authorities for the death.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan attended an Istanbul prayer service for Mursi at the historic Fath mosque and called the Islamist leader a "martyr".

Here are some of the reactions: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani - "We received with deep sorrow the news of the sudden death of former President Dr Mohamed Mursi. I extend to his family and to the brotherly Egyptian people the deepest condolences."

Rights lawyer Khalid Ali - "Medical negligence and policies of slow death through solitary confinement in prison are all tools to kill."

"Agree or disagree as you wish with Dr Mohamed Mursi, but what he was subjected to as a human being since

his arrest and the conditions he was placed under that ended in his death are crimes that deserve trial and punishment!"

Conservative British MP Crispin Blunt, who led a review last year of the detention of Mursi said there should be an independent international probe into his death.

"Dr Mursi's death in custody is representative of Egypt's inability to treat prisoners in accordance with both Egyptian and international law," he said.

He said Cairo "has a duty to explain his unfortunate death and there must be proper accountability for his treatment in custody".

Arab Network for Human Rights Information - "He was not the first victim of human rights violations, but he must be the last."

Ayman Nour, Opposition liberal politician, called Mursi "a martyr who was killed deliberately, slowly, over six years, during which he faced all kinds of abuse and hardship ... Sisi and his regime are fully responsible for the result!" **To Page 9**

QR750mn allocated for beautification projects

The Ministry of Municipality and Environment (MME), represented by the Public Parks Department, has announced new beautification projects, including the allocation of about QR750mn for beautification and landscaping projects. The ministry noted that the projects would be implemented in two packages in the coming years. **Page 24**

UK leadership race narrows to five

The UK leadership race narrowed to five yesterday as Brexit figurehead Boris Johnson prepared to defend his runaway favourite status in his first television debate. Johnson expanded his lead over his remaining rivals in a second secret ballot held by 313 lawmakers from the ruling Conservative party in the lower House of Commons. The former foreign minister and London mayor picked up 126 votes while former Brexit minister Dominic Raab got knocked out. **Page 14**

QF launches new funding initiative for private sector

QNA
Doha

Qatar Foundation Research, Development, and Innovation (QF RDI) has marked the launch of its new funding initiative, 'Innovation Coupon', by signing an agreement with its first beneficiary, ADGS, a local private sector SME that sells a suite of products that utilise artificial intelligence (AI), behavioural biometrics, and emergent behaviour.

Innovation Coupon is aimed at Qatar-based SMEs or startups in all sectors and industries that are engaged in the development of new technology-rich products and services. The fund is designed to benefit companies that have the needed capacity and technical knowledge to develop their product or service but require more support to resolve a specific technical or business problem. The fund may award up to



Hassan al-Ansari, Christophe Billiotet, Dr Richard O'Kennedy and Dr Salvino Salvaggio, Senior Director, Implementation and RDI Office Management, QF RDI, at the funding agreement signing ceremony.

50% of the problem-solving costs for a period of up to six months. The funds were awarded after a rigorous assessment process where applicants are required to specify how the money will be spent, and the major milestones to be met.

Beneficiaries must use at least 25% of the awarded amount to cover the contracting costs of a local research institute such as QF research institutes and QF partner universities or other local expert company or individual, thereby taking advantage of the local innovation ecosystem in developing new products and services.

After the completion of the funding cycle, beneficiaries are expected to report on the progress of the innovation for a certain number of years to allow QF RDI to assess the impact of the funding provided.

Innovation Coupon will support its first recipient, ADGS, by supplementing their capacity to further

develop their cyber-security product, STROKK. The software adds an organic security layer on any system, in any language, and renders stolen passwords useless to hackers by learning the way an individual types to clearly recognise the user. STROKK is currently being purchased by customers in highly cyber security sensitive industries, such as finance, banking, defence, the armed forces, and intelligence services in several countries.

Vice President for Research, Development, and Innovation at QF Dr Richard O'Kennedy said: "The development of the Innovation Coupon highlights our commitment to foster local product innovation and support the development of SMEs in Qatar. The initiative will support startup businesses to overcome many of the growth challenges they face and the fund can help them improve vital aspects of their business." **To Page 6**