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Qatar, Turkey to strengthen economic ties

The proposed agreement will grant preferential treatment for Turkish goods and services in Qatar and vice-versa.

The bilateral trade volume reached QR3.9bn in 2017 while imports from Turkey increased by 30 percent compared to 2016.

MOHAMMAD SHOBH
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar and Turkey are set to ink an important partnership agreement to boost trade and economic cooperation.

The agreement will grant preferential treatment for Turkish goods and services in Qatar and vice-versa, the Minister of Economy and Commerce, H E Sheikh Ahmed bin Jassim Al Thani, announced in his address at opening of the second edition of the Qatar-Turkey Economic Forum here yesterday.

The agreements signed between Qatar and Turkey in the recent past have already led to a sharp rise in the bilateral trade volume between Qatar and Turkey, which is expected to cross over QR7bn in 2018.

"Qatar, under the leadership of Emir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, has proven its steadfastness and ability to maintain its established position as one of the

strongest regional economies and among the most promising economies in the world," said the Minister.

He hailed efforts exerted by the Qatari and Turkish private sectors to break the illegal blockade imposed on Qatar by strengthening cooperation to provide high quality alternatives to many consumer goods.

He said that the cooperation between Qatar and Turkey aims to create a strategic economic partnership that allows the opening of new markets with a size of more than 185 million people, which can be developed further to reach over 400 million people.

Commenting on the sharp rise in the volume of bilateral trade, he said that during the first half of 2017 it stood at about QR2bn, which registered significant growth over the last six months, especially after the blockade. The bilateral trade volume reached QR3.9bn in 2017.

→CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Emir meets CEO of French Thales Group



Emir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani met at Emiri Diwan yesterday with Chairman and CEO Executive Officer of French Thales Group, Patrice Caine, and his delegation, who called on the Emir to greet him on the occasion of their visit to the country.

Emir honours Ambassador of Azerbaijan

DOHA: Emir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani met at his Emiri Diwan office yesterday with Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Qatar Dr Tofiq Abdullayev, on the end of his tenure in the country. The Emir awarded Al Wajba Medal to the ambassador in recognition of his efforts and role in contributing to enhancing cooperation between the two countries.

The Emir wished the envoy success in the future duties and relations between the two countries further progress and development. For his part, the ambassador expressed thanks and appreciation to the Emir and the officials of Qatar for the cooperation accorded to him, that contributed to the success of his tour of duty in the country.

→PICTURE ON PAGE 2

Number of researchers in Qatar rises

SACHIN KUMAR
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: More researchers are joining the field of Research and Development (R&D) as Qatar witnessed 55.4 percent rise in number of R&D personnel between 2012 to 2015.

The number of R&D personnel in the country jumped from 3,038 in 2012 to 4,720 in 2015 stated the second edition of the Research & Development Survey of Qatar released yesterday.

The Gross Domestic Expenditure on Research & Development (GERD) in Qatar reached QR3.06bn in 2015 which amounted to 0.51 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Key findings from the second edition of the survey were announced yesterday at a workshop jointly hosted by Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D) and the Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics (MDPS) at Qatar National Convention Centre.

Addressing the workshop, Mohammed Al Muhannadi, Director of Population and Social Statistics Department at MDPS said that the higher education sector in Qatar received 69.8 percent of GERD in 2015. The proportion of Qataris among Qatar's total R&D personnel increased to 19.6 percent in 2015 against the 13 percent in 2012.

Qatar's domestic expenditure on research and development is reflected in its good position within the Global Competitiveness Index and Global

Innovation Index, he added. According to the survey, Qataris represented the highest increase of researchers by nationality at sectoral level, with this increase being 23.8 percent in the government sector.

Nada Al Olaqi, Business Planning and Performance Manager, QF R&D said that national resources covered R&D funding in Qatar by 98.14 percent while foreign funding declined in 2015.

→CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

New public hygiene law takes effect in February

DOHA: The Ministry of Municipalities and Environment, represented by the municipalities, will begin implementing the new public hygiene Law No. 18 of 2017 starting from February 1.

"The municipal inspectors and employees armed with judicial power from general monitoring sections will start catching violations issuing warnings and punishing according to the new law," said Safar Al Shafi, Director of General Cleanliness Department.

→FULL REPORT ON PAGE 5

Qatar, Iraq sign protocol on youth

DOHA: Minister of Culture and Sports, Salah bin Ghanem Al Ali, signed yesterday with Iraqi Minister of Youth and Sports Abdul-Hussain Abtan, a protocol of cooperation between the two ministries in the fields of youth and sports.

→FULL REPORT ON PAGE 2



Prime Minister and Interior Minister H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani, Minister of Education and Higher Education H E Dr Mohammed Abdul Wahed Al Hammadi and Minister of Public Health H E Dr Hanan Mohamed Al Kuwari (right) at the launch of second National Traffic Safety Strategy, yesterday.

Second National Traffic Safety Strategy launched

SIDI MOHAMED
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Prime Minister and Interior Minister H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani yesterday launched the second action plan of the National Traffic Safety Strategy (2018-2022).

The event was attended by a number of Their Excellencies the ministers and representatives of concerned authorities and international experts on traffic safety.

The National Traffic Safety Committee also held the fifth forum of concerned authorities related to the implementation of traffic strategy.

The two-day forum will discuss many important topics including road safety and UN sustainable development goals, achievements and challenges in road safety, major event management and importance of transport sector, traffic flow management, threats and risks management, smart transport system, traffic accidents management and the requirements of traffic safety management.

United Nations Secretary General's Special Envoy for Road Safety, Jean Todt addressed the forum through a video message.

→CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Qatar monitors investors' interest in virtual currency: QCB Governor

SATISH KANADY
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar Central Bank (QCB) is closely watching the global investors' growing interests in virtual currencies and might introduce them in the country if an opportunity arises in future, QCB Governor H E Sheikh Abdulla bin Saoud Al Thani said yesterday.

"We will think about virtual currency in case we see some opportunity in future. We don't mind to have something in digital currency," he said Q & A session after delivering the Carnegie Mellon University Qatar Dean's Lecture Series, here. To a question about Qatar's policy on Bitcoin, he said the central bank would not focus on a single virtual currency, but would look at how to set best practice for

such currencies.

"We haven't taken any big initiative in setting up regulations and policies on Bitcoin. In fact, we are not targeting one currency but we look at the virtual currencies, whether it might come some means of exchange. We are in touch with friends in other countries on how we can set best practices and rules to regulate virtual currency".

"We don't mind to have something in the digital currency. Currently, Qatar is investing a little in digital currency within Qatar to facilitate payments and e-business." He said the QCB and Qatar Development Bank (QDB) have set up committees to study and review latest developments in the fintech, including blockchain revolution. "We will work together to create framework for regulating the system", he said.

Emir meets Ambassador of Azerbaijan



Emir H H Sheik Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani met with Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Qatar, Dr Tofiq Abdullayev, on the occasion of the end of his tenure in the country. H H the Emir awarded Al Wajba Medal to the ambassador in recognition of his efforts and role in contributing to enhancing cooperation between the two countries. H H the Emir wished the ambassador success in the future duties and further progress and development in relations between the two countries. For his part, the ambassador expressed his thanks and appreciation to H H the Emir and the officials of Qatar for the cooperation accorded to him that contributed to the success of his tour of duty in the country.

Qatar, El Salvador sign MoU in education field

QNA

DOHA: The State of Qatar and the Republic of El Salvador yesterday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in fields of education.

Minister of Education and Higher Education H E Dr

Mohammed bin Abdul Wahed Ali Al Hammadi and Foreign Minister of El Salvador, Hugo Martinez signed the MoU. The MoU covered the development of mutual cooperation between the two countries, including the exchange of expertise, experiences, visits and best practices

in the field of education. Minister of Education and Higher Education held a meeting with Foreign Minister of El Salvador, where they discussed aspects of mutual cooperation between the two friendly countries in educational fields and ways to support and develop them.

Qatar, Iraq to cooperate on youth and sports

QNA

DOHA: Minister of Culture and Sports H E Salah bin Ghanem Al Ali signed yesterday with Iraqi Minister of Youth and Sports, Abdul-Hussein Abtan, a protocol of cooperation between the two ministries in the fields of youth and sports.

This came during a meeting between the two Ministers, where they reviewed ways to enhance cooperation between the two countries, especially in the fields of youth and sports.

Al Ali said that the signing of the protocol of cooperation with the Iraqi side comes within the framework of strengthening Qatar's relations with fraternal countries, stressing the depth of relations between the two countries and seeking to exchange experiences in various fields, especially in sports and youth as well as enabling the youth of Qatar and Iraq to learn more about the successful experiences in both countries.

The Minister stressed that the Qatari sport will be supportive of its counterpart in Iraq by providing all the assistance and expertise, praising the development of Iraqi sports, and calling on Iraqi youth to benefit from Josoor Institute, which was launched as one of the most important projects of the 2022 World Cup in Qatar that aims to leave a legacy for Qatar and the region by

Minister of Culture and Sports H E Salah bin Ghanem Al Ali signed a protocol of cooperation with Iraqi Minister of Youth and Sports, Abdul-Hussein Abtan, in the fields of youth and sports. The signing of the protocol of cooperation with the Iraqi side comes within the framework of strengthening Qatar's relations with fraternal countries.

enhancing the skills of Arab youth and supporting them in everything that is new in the world of sporting events so as to create a generation that is aware and capable of development, thereby benefiting not only the State of Qatar but the entire Arab region.

For his part, Abtan told Qatar News Agency that the visit comes within the framework of strong and reciprocal relations between the two countries, and at the invitation of Al Ali as they both met with a delegation of youth and sports officials in Doha and a number of sports stars and officials of the football and athletics associations,

where the prospects of cooperation in various fields were reviewed, culminating in the signing of a protocol of cooperation, especially that the State of Qatar is internationally advanced in the field of sports and specialised academies.

The State of Qatar also hosts many world championships including the Athletics Championship 2019 and the coming World Cup in 2022, making Qatar a pioneering model in this field.

The Iraqi Minister pointed out that Qatar national football team will also visit Iraq soon to participate in a four-country championship including Kuwait, Qatar, Syria and Iraq, noting that the talks between the two sides also reviewed the issue of lifting the ban on Iraqi stadiums and the role of Qatar in that.

"We are sure that the State of Qatar has an influential role in supporting Iraq at FIFA, as well as the internal support in the organisation of tournaments," he said, stressing the success of the visit in strengthening the ties between the two fraternal countries.

In response to a question about Iraq's support for hosting the 2022 World Cup, he stressed that Iraq fully supports Qatar, both at the level of attendance and participation and that they are ready to provide the required support set by the Qatari side.

FM meets El Salvador counterpart



Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister H E Sheik Mohamed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani met with Foreign Minister of the Republic of El Salvador, Hugo Martinez, who is currently visiting Doha. During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral relations and means to develop them, especially in the fields of economy and education, in addition to the latest regional and international developments.

Qatar Airways to start additional flight to Bangkok

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar Airways is continuing its expansion in Asia by adding an additional flight to Bangkok, providing its passengers even more flexibility in visiting the Thai capital.

The new service to Bangkok, which commences on March 25, is part of the award-winning airline's continued expansion in Southeast Asia, following its launch of direct service to Thailand's Chiang Mai late last year.

The airline is also preparing to launch direct service to the Thai city of Pattaya later this month, as well as service to Penang, Malaysia in February.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, Akbar Al Baker, said: "We are delighted to announce this additional

service to Bangkok, one of Southeast Asia's most popular destinations. With our recent inauguration of direct service to Chiang Mai, and our upcoming launch of direct flights to Pattaya later this month, we are pleased to now make it easier than ever for our passengers to visit the Land of Smiles."

"Thailand is one of our most popular destinations, for both leisure and business travellers alike, and we will continue our efforts to provide our passengers even more opportunity to experience this captivating country," he added.

Qatar Airways currently operates 14 times per week to Phuket, daily to Krabi and four times per week to Chiang Mai. The additional service to Bangkok will take the number of weekly flights to the Thai capital to 42.

Qatar to host regional meet on Sustainability of Peace

QNA

NEW YORK: The State of Qatar will host the Doha meeting of regional consultations on the sustainability of peace.

The meeting will be opened by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister H E Sheik Mohamed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, and HE Miroslav Lajcak, the president of the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The consultations will focus on a number of topics including the relevance of sustainable peace to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, the vital role of women and youth, equal opportunity and mediation, conflict prevention, peacemaking and peace-keeping financing. They will also seek consensus on what is meant by sustainable peace at the regional level.

The Doha meeting looks forward to making national and regional recommendations and proposals on maintaining peace to be submitted to the high-level meeting of the UN General Assembly in April 2018.

The meeting will be attended by a number of international dignitaries including UN Secretary-General's Senior Advisor on Policy Ana Maria Menendez, High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations H E Nassir Abdulaziz Al Nasser, Under-Secretary-General and Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Program Tegegnetwork Gettu, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) Dr Mohamed Al Alhakim, Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs Dr Ahmed Al Muraikeh, and Special Envoy of the Arab League Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs Hissa bint Khalifa Al Thani.

3rd Qatar Sustainability Week to be held in October

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar Green Building Council (QGBC), a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, has announced that the third edition of Qatar Sustainability Week (QSW) will be held from October 27 to November 3, 2018.

The week-long event, to be held under the patronage of Prime Minister and Interior Minister H E Sheik Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani.

QSW is designed to actively engage Qatar's public and private sector organizations in a wide range of sustainability-oriented activities.

The event also aims to promote engagement and foster a culture of environmental sustainability among residents and the wider community. The QGBC annual event is in line with achieving the global sustainability goals outlined in Qatar National Vision 2030.

QSW 2018 will kick-off with one of the week's most prominent events, the third edition of the Qatar Green Building Conference.

Taking place from October 28-29, it will be held under the patronage of H E Sheikha Hind bint Hamad Al Thani, Vice-Chairperson and CEO of Qatar Foundation.

The two-day event, which will also include the Qatar Sustainability Awards ceremony on October 28, will bring together industry leaders



and sustainability experts to address and showcase their innovative solutions to Qatar's and the region's most pressing environmental challenges.

Engineer Meshal Al Shamari, Director, QGBC, said: "We're delighted to announce QSW for the third consecutive year.

The main aim of QSW is to contribute towards our nation's environmental protection and sustainable development goals.

We're looking forward to involving the entire community in this event, and strongly encourage the active participation from all community members as well as those from public and private sector organizations.

Following the great success of QSW 2017, where more than 20,000 participants and 100 partners took part in more than 200 events, we look forward to welcoming back our existing partners, bringing new entities on board, and incorporating a variety of different events in 2018."

Al Jazeera gets 'Best TV Coverage on Kyrgyzstan' award

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Al Jazeera Arabic Channel was awarded "Best TV Coverage on Kyrgyzstan" for its coverage of the World Nomadic Games in 2017 and series of documentaries on Kyrgyz culture, heritage and history. Tarek Al Abyad, Producer at Al Jazeera Arabic Channel, who produced and directed the documentary series titled "Kyrgyzstan the Wonderland" the series was aired on Al Jazeera Arabic channel in April 2017.

Recognizing Tarek's work and the contribution he was invited by Kyrgyzstan government to receive the award in the presence of Sabbar Joma, Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan at



Tarek Al Abyad, Producer at Al Jazeera Arabic Channel, receiving the award.

a ceremony held at the Cabinet headquarters. In addition Al Jazeera Media Network was honoured by the Ministry of Culture, Media and Tourism. The Ministry has decided to translate the documentary series into many world languages and planning to use the series as part of promoting the country's tourism industry, through its diplomatic missions and screening on national Airline.

2nd traffic strategy launched

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The envoy lauded the efforts made by Qatar and concerned authorities to reduce the number of deaths due to road accidents and to achieve the sustainable development goals by 2030.

He underscored that the figures indicate Qatar has been moving in the right direction that helped Qatar to be placed at the forefront of Middle East countries in reducing the number of road accidents.

There are three major challenges identified by the United Nations facing the countries of the world: traffic safety and congestion in cities, the economy and national security. He said that the United Nations has issued its resolutions, which called on countries to reduce the number of road accident deaths by 50 percent globally by 2020 and adopt the goals of sustainable development. Todt said since the launch of the National Road Safety Strategy in January 2013, Qatar had been able to occupy a prominent position at the global level in this area.

Brigadier Muhammad Saad Al Kharji, Director General of General Directorate of Traffic said that the second action plan of national Traffic Safety Strategy included input of stakeholders and the community, as well as scientific research through the development of the global security system adopted by the United Nations to meet the requirements of fast-growing countries such as Qatar. "It ensures effectiveness by linking

Qatar ranks among developed countries in the field of traffic safety

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Minister of Public Health H E Dr Hanan Mohamed Al Kuwari (pictured) said that the achievements accomplished in the first phase of action plan for the National Traffic Safety Strategy 2013-2017 has ranked Qatar among the developed countries in the field of traffic safety.



Al Kuwari added, in a press statement, on the sideline of the event that she was very proud about that results and hoped that the second phase of the action plan would achieve more developments.

She also said that the Ministry of Public Health performs a vital role in implementing the plan by responding to accidents offering ambulances services.

road safety to the UN goals for sustainable development, economic growth and national security of the State," he said. Traffic and Transport Sectors are two complex sectors that require joint action to implement and develop the national strategy for traffic safety to build a modern state.

Brigadier Muhammad Abdullah Al Maliki, Secretary of National Traffic Safety Committee said that the conformity of security and safety of the transport of individuals and goods constitutes the backbone of the development of the society because of their relationship with the requirements of citizens and facilities of daily life. The National Traffic Safety Committee has taken the responsibility for transforming the

vision of Qatar's wise leadership into a reality that meets the aspirations of its citizens and responds to the comprehensive renaissance phase witnessed by the State in various vital sectors, especially the transport and traffic safety sectors.

In order to improve the performance and quality assurance in the implementation of the second phase of the strategy, the Prime Minister and Interior Minister, who is also the Chairman of the National Traffic Safety Committee, has entrusted the Secretariat to organise the fifth forum of coordinators with the cooperation of all concerned parties in order to learn about the positive and negative aspects of the first phase of the strategy and required improvement in the second

phase. Prof Kim Jiraw, Manager of the National Road Safety Office,

pointed out that the implementation plan for the second phase is based on a number of pillars. They include the directives of the Chairman, the recommendations of the National Committee, the decisions of the Council of Ministers and United Nations ratified by Qatar, lessons learnt from the first phase and development of the monitoring and evaluation system.

He said that in accordance with the decision of the Council of Ministers, 10 specialised working groups were established including awareness and information group, the congestion group, the accident investigation group, the speed management group, the pedestrian group, the coordinators group and the research group.



Prime Minister and Interior Minister H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani at the launch of the second action plan of the National Traffic Safety Strategy.

Results due to great effort and cooperation

DOHA: Brigadier General Dr. Mohammed Awad Al Rawas, Director General of Traffic Department, Sultanate of Oman has said that it is clear from the results achieved by Qatar that there was a great effort and cooperation between all the concerned agencies to achieve the traffic safety goals according to international standards.

Major General Fahad Al Shuwai, Assistant Undersecretary of Traffic Affairs in Kuwait, said that as a Gulf citizen, he was proud of his presence in Qatar and he emphasised the interest of the state to solve the traffic problem and its concern for the road safety for all.

He pointed out that the success of the plan in its first phase will be a motive for the success of the plan in the second phase 2018-2022, noting that the network of roads in Qatar has notably reduced traffic congestion and traffic accidents, and wished safety to Qatar and all citizens and residents.

Number of researchers in Qatar increases

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The percentage of researchers among total R&D personnel rose to 60 percent in 2015, up from 57 percent in 2012.

She said that higher education agencies which participated

in this survey produced 1980 research products, including articles (88.5 percent), and policy briefs, books, and customer reports (11.5 percent).

The number of agencies participating in the R&D Survey of



Qatar 2015 increased from the previous survey in 2012, leading to more comprehensive data being provided and an increase in quality.

Almost 100 Qatari entities and agencies involved in research

within the government, higher education, and business sectors have participated in the survey. It provides vital information and insight about Qatar's research and development inputs, including levels of investment and human

capacity. The R&D Survey of Qatar 2015 was implemented through collaboration between the MDP5 and QF R&D, which is the custodian of the Qatar National Research Strategy. The R&D

Survey of Qatar 2015 is the second of its kind, after the previous edition collated in 2012. Research agencies falling within three sectors — business, government sector, and higher education — participated in this survey.



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GOING PLACES TOGETHER

PM meets Iraqi Minister



Prime Minister and Interior Minister H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani met with Minister of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Iraq, Abdul Hussein Abtaan, and the accompanying delegation, on the occasion of their visit to the country. The meeting reviewed ties between the two countries and ways of enhancing them in various fields.

Qatar Post unveils flexible options for Business Delivery Services

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar Postal Services Company (Qatar Post) yesterday announced the introduction of more flexible options for its Business Delivery Services (BDS).

BDS is a tailored service for corporate organisations which provides them the opportunity of having mails picked up and delivered from corporate PO Box to the company premises and vice-versa at their own convenience weekly. Previously, mails are delivered at a fixed yearly rate of QR7,000 for up to six deliveries per week but with the new package, organisations can now enjoy the service with the flexibility of choosing between one, three or five deliveries per week at corresponding rates.

Business Delivery Services is a tailored service for corporate organisations which provides them the opportunity of having mails picked up and delivered from corporate PO Box to the company premises and vice-versa at their own convenience.

The BDS is available on all days except Fridays and mails are delivered by every location in Qatar.

Qatar Post COO Hamad Al Fahida said, "Qatar Post is a brand that is always ready to meet the needs and

expectations of the customers and the new Business Delivery Service (BDS) package is another way of showcasing this. With the new options for BDS, affordability and satisfaction have found a place of convergence and our corporate clients are the better for it. We will continue to roll out new services in line with our re-branding strategy of delivering modern life as we continue to take service delivery to the next level."

"We are poised to launch more packages in the nearest future for the benefits of our customers and especially our corporate clients. Qatar Post is well on its way to becoming a world-class postal operator as we embrace the digital age, a modern economy and a changing society," Fahida added.

Qatar & Turkey to ink preferential trade agreement: Minister

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The imports from Turkey have increased by 30 percent compared to 2016. The Minister also noted that Qatar has strengthened its strategic stocks of commodities and logistics in accordance with a strategic plan to increase this stock continuously and has undertaken several steps to achieve self-sufficiency in many vital sectors.

Sheikh Ahmed inaugurated the Qatar-Turkish Economic Forum at Doha Sheraton Hotel. The meeting was attended by the Turkish Minister of Customs and Trade, Bülent Tüfenkci, Chairman of Qatar Chamber Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim Al Thani, and Rifat Hisar Gekloglu, President of the Federation of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of the Republic of Turkey.

More than 150 companies representing the infrastructure, construction, medicines, medical supplies, food, agriculture, rubber, plastics, industrial equipment, electricity, logistics and security systems sectors participated in the Qatar-Turkish Economic Forum.

The Forum is an extension and culmination of what was agreed upon in the framework of the opening of

the programme prepared for the Qatar delegation in Izmir, Turkey, which witnessed a significant participation by businessmen and investors from both sides.

Sheikh Jassem also noted that this meeting reflected mutual concern between the two sides to explore wider horizons for trade and economic cooperation and open up new fields to promote joint investments.

Commenting on the unjust blockade he said that this has been an important and strong incentive for the speedy adoption and implementation of several projects and initiatives through the provision of alternative sources of import.

On the newly-opened Hamad Port, he said that the iconic port now accounts for 27 percent of the regional trade volume in the Middle East and has connection with 14 ports and 72 destinations worldwide. The Minister pointed out that Qatar has taken several initiatives to achieve self-sufficiency in many vital sectors through the implementation of projects by establishing partnership between the government and private sectors, including the launch of major projects for investors in the field of food security, logistics, sports, tourism, industrial, health, education and services.

Over 400 business leaders, senior diplomats and government officials from both sides attended the high profile event.

Sheikh Ahmed said Qatar has introduced several important economic reforms and key changes which is attracting foreign direct investments from all over the world. And the Qatar-Turkey Economic Forum, which aims at exploring and expanding new areas of economic cooperation, will help boost the bilateral trade volume in 2018 and the coming years significantly.

"We have also taken strategic decisions to boost revenues and strengthen our economy by diversifying the non-hydrocarbons sector by offering 100 percent FDI in several sectors, laws related to Investment Free Zones among others, are part of our long term strategy to achieve sustainable development. We have already made considerable progress in this regard," said the Minister.

He also said that the number of Turkish products and companies in Qatar is growing fast, and in the coming days, the strategic partnership with Turkey will bring more fruitful results for mutual interests.

On his part, Turkish Minister Bülent echoed similar views and added that the



Minister of Economy and Commerce H E Sheikh Ahmed bin Jassim Al Thani (second right), Turkish Customs and Trade Minister Bülent Tüfenkci (second left), Qatar Chamber Chairman Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim Al Thani (left) and President of The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey M Rifat Hisar Gekloglu, at the opening of the three-day Qatar-Turkey Economic Forum, yesterday. PIC: KAMMUTTY VP / THE PENINSULA

Forum will bear fruitful results in the future. "We attach great importance to our relationship with Qatar. Turkey and Qatar value and pursue similar ideas and goals. We are strong partners expanding cooperation in all walks of life, including business, trade and investment... We do not differentiate when it comes to the security and stability of Turkey and Qatar. The unfolding events in the region, such

as the unlawful blockade against Qatar, have brought us closer for higher levels of cooperation," noted Bülent.

Bülent also said the private sector from both the countries has great opportunities for business and investment both in Turkey, Qatar and elsewhere. Private sector is playing critical role to boost the trade volume between the two friendly countries.

QA extends 'Global Travel Boutique' promotion

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar Airways announced yesterday that it has extended its Global Sales Campaign for an additional three days until January 19, 2018, offering passengers amazing deals on fares across all classes to more than 150 destinations across the airline's extensive global network.

"We are delighted to extend our Global Travel Boutique promotion to meet increasing demand from our passengers who wish to take advantage of this exciting sale. Extending our offer will allow our passengers even more time to avail of great discounts on fares to many exciting destinations across the globe," said Ehab Amin, Chief Commercial

Officer, Qatar Airways.

"This extended offer will also allow passengers to double their Qmiles and to travel with their family or friends by choosing our companion offer available in First and Business Class. We look forward to welcome all of our passengers on board." Amin said.

Passengers are invited to take advantage during this limited time

promotion of special discounts up to 40 per cent off all cabin fares, and on the airline's special First and Business Class Companion Offer.

Passengers will also earn double Qmiles when booking through this offer, and can also enjoy up to 15 percent discounts on Al Maha Meet and Greet services, 10 percent discounts on RC

car rentals, as well as a 20 percent discount on up to four rides with Blacklane chauffeur services.

Qatar Airways will continue the expansion of its global network throughout 2018 by adding flights to many more exciting global destinations, including Pataya, Thailand; Penang, Malaysia and Canberra, Australia, to name just a few.

HMC surgeons successfully reattach severed foot

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Surgeons at Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) have successfully reattached the severed foot of a patient who was involved in a serious accident. Barthimill Undobu, a Cameroonian national, was injured when he was struck by a sharp object that amputated his foot from the ankle down.

Dr Amr Fares, a Senior Consultant of Vascular Surgery at the Department of Surgery in Hamad General Hospital, led the team that worked to reattach the patient's foot.

He said, "This case involved a number of complex procedures that required a high-level of expertise and skill, the success of the procedures is both a testament to the skill of our surgical team and the paramedics who attended to the patient at the scene of the accident."

"This major surgical success represents an outstanding achievement for HMC and is an example of our commitment to delivering the safest, most effective, and compassionate care to all patients," Dr Fares added.

Paramedics who responded to the emergency call took the necessary measures to preserve the amputated foot by

placing it in a temperature-controlled, sterile container. When the patient arrived at Hamad General Hospital he was met by a multi-disciplinary team of eleven highly skilled surgeons comprising vascular, orthopedic, plastics, and anesthesia specialties.

"The patient was briefed on the surgical procedure that would be performed and he was informed about the associated risks. The first part of the surgery, which took three hours to complete, was performed by orthopedic surgeons who reattached the severed bones using metal pins and rods. This was done in preparation for reconnecting the severed arteries," said Dr Mamoon Abu Samhadanah, Consultant Orthopedic Surgeon at Hamad General Hospital.

The metal pins and rods remained in the patient's foot for three months, after which time vascular surgeons performed an eight-hour operation to reconnect the severed arteries and veins using microsurgical techniques.

According to Dr. Samhadanah, upon the successful completion of the second surgery, surgeons administered skin grafting to the amputated foot to promote faster recovery, he added. Three months later the



The multi-disciplinary team with the injured patient, Barthimill Undobu.

patient underwent an additional orthopedic surgery to further connect his injured ankle to the foot and tibia bone using a metal implant and bone grafts harvested from his femur and pelvis. While successful, the complex procedure was further complicated by the insufficient amount of remaining healthy bone and blood vessels," said Dr Majid Mekhalmer, Senior Consultant Orthopedic Surgeon at Hamad General Hospital.

The patient has undergone a total

of five surgeries and now receiving physiotherapy and follow-up care at Hamad General Hospital. He has expressed his gratitude to Qatar, HMC, and the team of surgeons who operated on him for the excellent health-care and support he received. He also expressed his gratitude to the HMC's Ambulance Service whose paramedics arrived at the scene of the accident in record time.

MEC recalls Land Rover & Range Rover models of 2017

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Ministry of Economy and Commerce, in collaboration with Alfordan Premier Motors Co., dealer of Land Rover in Qatar, has announced the recall of Land Rover, Range Rover and Range Rover Sport models of 2017 because the virtual display instrument cluster (IC) has been going blank intermittently.

The Ministry said the recall campaign comes within the framework of its ongoing efforts to protect consumers and ensure that car dealers follow up on vehicle defects and repairs.

The Ministry said that it will coordinate with the dealer to follow up on the maintenance and repair works and will communicate with customers to ensure that the necessary repairs are carried out.

The Ministry urges all customers to report any violations to its Consumer Protection and Anti-Commercial Fraud Department, through its various channels such as Call Center: 16001; Email: Info@mec.gov.qa; Social media accounts: Twitter: @MEC_Qatar; Instagram: MEC_Qatar; mobile app for Android and IOS: MEC_Qatar.

New public hygiene law takes effect on February 1

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Ministry of Municipality and Environment, represented by the municipalities, will begin implementing the new public hygiene Law No. 18 of 2017 starting from February 1.

"The municipal inspectors and employees armed with judicial power from general monitoring sections will start catching violations, issuing warnings and punishing according to the new law," said Safar Al Shafi, Director of General Cleanliness Department at the Ministry in a statement.

Under the preparation for the implementation of the new law, the Minister of Municipality and Environment H E Mohamed bin Abdullah Al Rumaih issued ministerial decision No. 358 of 2017 to form a working team led by Safar Al Shafi, Director of General Cleanliness Department to prepare the legislative tools for the public hygiene law.

The team is comprised of members from the municipalities, environmental affairs section, legal affairs department of the Ministry.

The team was assigned to prepare draft executive regulations for public hygiene law in coordination with authorities concerned.

The team was also asked to prepare necessary draft ministerial decisions for the implementation of law and coordinate and communicate with municipalities and authorities concerned for implementation of the new law.

The Ministry of Municipality and Environment held workshop on "Judicial Power in the Field of Public Hygiene" from January 9 to 11.

The workshop was attended by heads of the monitoring and cleanliness departments from all municipalities. The programme aimed at educating participants about public hygiene law and to increase their skills and provide them with necessary legal knowledge in the field of general monitoring.

A number of topics were



Safar Al Shafi, Director of General Cleanliness Department.

discussed during the workshop, including draft of ministerial decisions to be issued by the Minister to implement new public hygiene law and the views of the municipalities concerned regarding the implementation of the relevant laws.

Other topics of discussions were the feasibility to invite private sector for collecting waste and recycling it and regulations for transporting waste, specifying its route and timings.

The forms for booking violations, issuing warning and undertaking were also revised to upgrade them according to the new law. The procedures for catching violations by the inspectors armed with judicial powers were revised. The inspectors were also educated about fine and reconciliation amount.

The Ministry has prepared a media campaign and a comprehensive awareness programme to educate people through print, electronic media and social networking sites in a bid to raise awareness among the public as they have important role in maintaining public hygiene in the cities and to protect the environment.

The municipalities directed the inspectors of public hygiene to upgrade the forms being used for catching violation as per the

new public hygiene law that will come into effect from February 1, 2018.

The inspectors were introduced about their roles and mechanism for catching violations as per the new law.

The inspectors were taken to field visits to work sites to teach them practically about types of violations and fine amount as per the new law.

Speaking on the implementation of new public hygiene law, the Director of General Cleanliness Department, Safar Al Shafi, said that the promulgation of Law No. 18 of 2017 on Public Hygiene and Cleaning has been enacted in a timely manner.

"There is an all-inclusive and unparalleled construction and developmental renaissance in the country which requires amending the law including public hygiene and cleaning services and environmental health," Al Shafi said.

He added that the new law has much in common with the objectives of the previous law and is even considered a complementary enactment thereof.

"Accordingly, one may say that the new law is more comprehensive and largely fulfills the developments of the current and future eras as well as the behavioral changes usually taking

place within the context of social mobility due to the demographic, economic and cultural variables and the different cultures adopted by the segments of the society in Qatar."

"The Law also assists in eliminating the additional efforts of the Public Cleanliness Department to the continuous cleaning of the wastes which are thrown away in a random, irresponsible and illegal manner," Al Shafi added.

Al Shafi pointed that the new law is strict in addressing the violations which impede the provision of public hygiene services on an round-the-clock basis.

"This is manifested in applying its provisions which range between imprisonment, levying fines or both penalties as set out in Article No. 15 of the law. There are violations where conciliation is strictly prohibited," said Al Shafi adding that with respect to the reasons for the variations of fines under the law, out that this is a natural matter in accordance with the seriousness of the violation.

He added that the new law is result of handwork and long study conducted by specialists at the Ministry of Municipality and Environment in a bid to achieve Qatar National Vision 2030 under the directive of H E Mohammad Bin Abdullah Al Rumaili, Minister of Municipality and Environment.

About the role of monitoring organizations in applying the law and the success thereof, Safar Al Shafi said that the new cleaning law has been especially promulgated to assist inspectors in their work adding that this law directly targets at realizing success with respect to the hygienic operations and achieving its objectives so that our residential areas shall reach the required level.

Penalty starts from QR300 up to QR6,000 depending on the type of violation and damage, provided that the reasons for the

Reconciliation fines		
Reconciliation table for crimes stipulated by the public hygiene Law No 18 of 2017		
1	Throwing tissue papers, garbage, empty bottle or spitting on footpath, road or public places	QR500
2	Leaving waste, garbage bags, left-over foods or papers in front of houses, roads or public places	QR300
3	Cleaning or hanging carpets, covers or clothes on windows or balcony facing road or public places	QR500
4	Throwing waste of trees or gardens on roads or public places	QR500
5	Releasing used water to public road	QR300
6	Throwing animal waste on unauthorised places	QR500
7	Occupying fields, roads, streets, thoroughfare, streets, sidewalk, passageway, public yards, public parking with abandoned vehicles, old equipment or part of it:	QR1,000
8	Throwing or leaving waste, garbage bag, empty bottle in front of commercial shops or out of garbage containers placed for this purpose	QR500
9	Throwing or leaving food waste in public places or beaches, public places or open land	QR500
10	Not covering the load on vehicles properly that may fall or leak anything from there	QR2,000
11	Releasing drainage water from suction hole, manhole or delivery pipe not fixed proper	QR1,000
12	Washing cars, machines or other transport vehicles at unauthorised places	QR300
13	Leaking any substance from vehicles while running on public road	QR3,000
14	Leaving, dumping or getting rid construction and demolition waste, solid waste from excavation at unauthorised places	QR6,000
15	Releasing drainage water at unauthorised places	QR5,000

violation shall be eliminated."

Al Shafi said that as for penalties in case no conciliation has been figured out, they include 4 procedures depending on the type of violation and pursuant to Article No. 15 of the Law: A term of up to 1 year imprisonment and penalty fines which shall not exceed twenty five thousand (QR25,000)

or one of these penalties: a term of up to six months imprisonment and penalty fine which shall not exceed ten thousand (QR10,000) or one of these penalties.

On how does the new law deal with violators, Safar Al Shafi said, the law is very clear with respect to addressing hygienic contraventions.

PHCC warns against use of dietary supplements

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) yesterday warned against the use of dietary supplements as a weight loss tool. Weight loss pills, flat tummy teas and teatoxes could lead to serious health complications, says an wellness expert.

Dr Veronica Bachiller, Wellness Coordinator, Health Promotion and Wellness Department at PHCC says that whilst it is extremely beneficial to adopt and maintain a healthy lifestyle through healthy diet and physical activity, many people are influenced to try out unhealthy quick fixes that at times, can be dangerous and cause harm to health.

"Among the various available quick fixes, some of the most popular methods are weight loss pills, flat tummy teas, teatoxes and detox diets. Most of them have taken the Internet by storm, so it is understandable some people believe these are healthy and common practiced options," she said.

According to Dr Bachiller some weight loss pills can cause dangerous conditions such as a heart attack and strokes.

"There is a huge misconception about weight loss pills. People have been convinced these are healthy treatments (or 'natural' ones). This however is not true as they suppress appetite whilst affecting blood sugar levels. Some tablets such as slim fizz and other 'fat metabolisers' contain caffeine and taurine which evidence shows, can cause heart attacks and strokes. Other serious side effects include headaches, dry mouth, anorexia, insomnia and constipation," she said.

Also flat tummy teas and teatoxes are among the highly endorsed products on the Internet with some celebrities claiming to have used it as part of their weight loss plan.

"Research shows that there are extreme side effects to this such as damage to the stomach lining, intense body pain, severe dehydration, diarrhoea and many other laxative and diuretic effects. It may also contain caffeine that could cause additional side effects in people who are sensitive to stimulants," said Dr Bachiller.

She further says that detox diets also

dangerous to health. "Ketogenic diets are very popular nowadays. Everybody wants to be involved and committed to this and other detox diets. These diets are extremely dangerous as involve a 'low carb-high fat' intake; however due to the large amount of fibre within the diet it leads to severe digestion issues. Body fat usage side effects could be loss of energy, electrolytes and consequent cramps," said Dr Bachiller.

She also advised against physical inactivity and prolonged sitting time and said that it can lead to illness. "It can cause muscle atrophy, cardiac decline, increased visceral fat, mood swings with episodes of overeating, perpetuating the cycle of sedentary lifestyle and weight gain or weight retention," she said.

Notice

Primepower ME LTD
Hereby announces that
MR. STEVEN ROBERT ALAN FORD,
holder of British Passport No. 534763189
and OJD No. 2839260076

is no longer employed as the Managing Director of Primepower ME LTD. For this, Primepower ME LTD shall not be held liable for any commitments or engagements made by this person, whether in the present or the future, starting from date of this announcement.

Contact
Tel No. 4435 0610,
Fax: 4436 6252

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH (MOPH)
ANNOUNCES THE TENDER

TENDER NO. AT THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE	TENDER TITLE		
71-2018	HEALTH CARE LAND-BASED DEALS – DEVELOPMENT OF THREE COMMUNITY GENERAL HOSPITALS ON LAND PROVIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT FOR THIS PURPOSE		
TENDER NO. AT THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH	TENDER BOND	TENDER VALIDITY PERIOD	SUBMISSION SYSTEM
MOPH/TAC/HF/003/2018	QR: 100,000.00 (One Hundred Thousand Only)	120 Days (One Hundred and Twenty Days)	QR: 1000.00 (One Thousand Only)
TENDER CLOSING DATE	TENDER BOND	TENDER VALIDITY PERIOD	SUBMISSION SYSTEM
Sunday, 17th. Of February 2018, 12:00 hrs.	QR: 100,000.00 (One Hundred Thousand Only)	120 Days (One Hundred and Twenty Days)	QR: 1000.00 (One Thousand Only)

Brief Description:

Three plots of lands have been allocated for the private sector by the government to design, build and operate three (3) new General Hospitals. The sizes and locations of the plots are as follows:

- General Hospital Plot 1 – 42,904 m2 in Abu Hamour – capacity of 150 beds (58 out of them for maternity care);
- General Hospital Plot 2 – 30,000 m2 in Abu Hamour – capacity of 40 – 60 general beds;
- General Hospital Plot 2 – 65,000 m2 in Al Shamal City - 100 general beds (including staff accommodation).

The Allocation for each plot will be based on an initial operational period of 25 years. During this period, the operator will pay a nominal rent to government of one (1) Qatari Riyal per square meter per month. At the end of the first concession period, subject to satisfactory performance, the concession may be renewed for a further 25 years.

Proposals to establish maternity and mental health inpatient facility or services will be favorably evaluated for the two hospital plots in Abu Hamour, and health and wellness services and medical tourism in Al Shamal plot.

Who should respond to this Tender:

Local, regional or international firms and companies with extensive experience and specialist skills and knowledge in design, build and operation of Hospitals.

DATE AND TIME OF ISSUE AND COLLECTION	PLACE OF ISSUE AND COLLECTION
From Tuesday, 16th. January 2018 Until Tuesday, 23rd. January 2018. (6 working days) 08:00 hrs. to 12:00 hrs.	Contracts & Procurement Dept'l, 5th Floor Ministry of Public Health -HQ Onaiza St. Next to Civil Defense Signal Light P. O. Box 42, Doha, State of Qatar. Fax: + 974 44070-861

General Conditions and Terms:

- Awarded bidder is required to submit a Performance Bond amounting 10% of the value of the Contract and shall be valid for a period not less than seven (07) calendar days after the CONTRACT SCHEDULED COMPLETION DATE
- MOPH has the right to increase or decrease the work/service in compliance with General Conditions of Contract by up to 20% of the Contract Sum.
- Validity of offers must be 120 days from the Closing Date

Interested bidders may obtain the Tender Documents for the above mentioned Tender by taking the following steps:

BASED ON THE NEW TENDER LAW NO. 24/2015 AND THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE ANNOUNCEMENT, ALL COMPANIES MUST BE REGISTERED AND CLASSIFIED IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE BEFORE BUYING ANY TENDER/PRG DOCUMENTS FROM ANY GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

- Return of a duly completed Secrecy Declaration, which is available on faxed request from the address mentioned above from the date of this advertisement. It also can be downloaded from Ministry of Public Health website (www.moph.gov.qa).
- At the time of collection representatives of interested parties must provide an original letter clearly authorizing to collect the documents on behalf of the bidders and show the identity card.
- Presentation of receipt for the non-refundable Tender Fees of QR: 1000 to be paid with a Credit/Debit card to MOPH cashier at the address mentioned above.

Any questions or concerns regarding the Tender must be received in writing by fax no later than seven (7) days prior to closing date and the responses will be circulated to all participants.

THE TENDER BOND SHALL BE ISSUED BY A BANK REGISTERED AND OPERATING IN THE STATE OF QATAR



Al Sulaiti meets Italian official

Minister of Transport and Communications H E Jassim bin Saif Al Sulaiti held talks with Stefano Dambrosio, Quaestor of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of Italy, who is also Chairman of the Qatari-Italian Parliamentary Friendship Group. The meeting discussed the bilateral relations and means of enhancing them, in addition to a number of matters of common interest. The meeting was attended by Abdulaziz bin Ahmed Al Malki, Ambassador of the State of Qatar to Italy.

GU-Q offers prospective students a glimpse into campus life

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Prospective students will have an opportunity to get an early glimpse of campus life, during an upcoming event at Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q).

From classes to campus tours and meetings with Georgetown professors, the 'Day in the Life of a Georgetown Student' event will offer a unique experience to interested applicants.

The student-centred event, which will be held today starting from 4.45pm allows visitors to learn more about student life and academic programs from alumni and current students. They can sample one of GU-Q's four majors by attending classes, and ask questions about student clubs,

studying abroad, and life beyond the classroom.

"At 'A Day in the Life of a Georgetown Student', we offer a first-hand experience of what it's really like to study at Georgetown," said Admissions Officer Mariam Lachin (SFS '15), one of the organizers of the event. "You can go to class, meet the professors and students you'll see on a daily basis, and hear how our graduates have used their Georgetown degrees to make a difference in the world."

As the event takes place ahead of GU-Q's February Application deadline, there will also be a question and answers session for interested students to find out more about the process of applying to study at the University.

GU-Q offers a unique inter-disciplinary Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service degree, using the same internationally-ranked curriculum as Georgetown's main campus in Washington, DC.

Students can major in Culture and Politics, International Economics, International History, or International Politics, and complement their education with a minor in Arabic or certificates in Arab and Regional Studies, American Studies, or Media and Politics.

The event is free and open to the public. While registration is not required, visitors are encouraged to sign up on the GU-Q website (<https://qatar.georgetown.edu>).

QU co-hosts THE World University Rankings Data Masterclass

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar University (QU) in partnership with Times Higher Education (THE) yesterday hosted the "THE World University Rankings Data Masterclass", which discussed how the World University Rankings are built and which data are collected.

The masterclass also looked at the performance data of universities in the Arab world and on how rankings and performance indicators can evolve to best meet the developmental needs of institutions in the region. THE ranking methodologies and future plans for teaching excellence was also discussed.

The event drew the participation of several presidents, faculty, experts, and researchers of universities from Qatar, Iran, Oman, South Africa, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. Attending the event were QU President Dr Hassan Al Derham, QU leadership, deans, heads of departments, program directors, faculty members, and staff.

A presentation by Trevor Barratt, Managing Director of

Times Higher Education, detailed THE's data credentials and the data for the World University Ranking — Performance Data from universities (via THE), Reputation Data from academics (via THE) and Bibliometric Data from academics (via Elsevier).

Barratt highlighted the eleven ranking subjects which include arts and humanities; social sciences, business and economics; clinical, pre-clinical and health; law; education; life sciences; physical sciences; engineering and technology; computer science, and psychology.

He noted that the academic reputation survey increased from 143,484 votes in 2016 to 144,863 votes in 2017. He also highlighted that the THE World University Rankings 2018 Scopus Dataset includes 12,431,514 total publications and 62 million citations.

The presentation also showcased the results of the THE World University Rankings 2018 and 2016-17, the characteristics of a world class university, and the Arab Ranking 2018.

Following was a session on teaching excellence metrics led



FROM LEFT: Phil Baty, Dr Hassan Al Derham and Trevor Barratt.

by Phil Baty, Editorial Director, Global Rankings, Times Higher Education.

In his presentation, Baty noted that THE World University Rankings are very heavily focused on research. It is right to focus on research for the world

university ranking, he said, adding, "but of course we recognise the importance of the teaching mission, and we recognise some universities have no mission to research, and those who do of course take their teaching role extremely

seriously. So, we forged a new partnership with the Wall Street Journal to develop a new teaching-led ranking."

On the sidelines of the masterclass, QU hosted on January 15 a gala dinner at the Ritz-Carlton, Doha. The ceremony featured the screening of a short video on QU and a presentation on "QU Overall Ranking Results" delivered by Mr Cesar Wazem, Director of QU Scholarships and Partnerships Office.

In his remarks, QU President Dr Hassan Al Derham said: "Qatar University recognizes the importance of international rankings such as the Times Higher Education rankings, which include clear and highly accurate indicators and various details related to universities' work and role."

Dr Al Derham also highlighted the negative impact of the illegal blockade imposed on Qatar on all areas including the academic field and family relations. He noted that QU has accommodated the national students who have been affected by the Qatar-Gulf crisis and that the University did not end the service

"THE World University Rankings Data Masterclass" looked at the performance data of universities in the Arab world and on how rankings and performance indicators can evolve to best meet the developmental needs of institutions in the region.

of any faculty member due to his/her nationality."

Phil Baty said: "We are a very global business and our role is to help universities improve through data analytics and through face-to-face meetings to discuss the issues that matter to institutions. We have a great relationship with Qatar University and Qatar is a very good hub to have international discussions about the needs and policy environment for universities in the Middle East region."

Importance of partnership with private schools stressed

QNA

DOHA: The Department of Private Schools in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education organised a meeting with the administrations and representatives of the private schools at the State in order to determine the progress of the educational process and the challenges faced by the private schools sector.

Under-secretary of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education H E Dr Ibrahim bin Saleh Al Nuaimi said in a speech, that the aim of the meeting is to strengthen the partnership between the Ministry and the private schools sector. He stressed the education officials' keenness

on this partnership because the educational sector is one of the most important foundations on which society is based.

He pointed out that the meeting provides an opportunity to learn about the views, observations and suggestions of private school administrations and work to address all the problems that may arise in the private schools sector. He stressed that the Ministry of Education ensures that all obstacles facing this sector are overcome and that everyone works to address the challenges and provide the best educational opportunities for students.

Dr Ibrahim bin Saleh Al Nuaimi said that the Ministry will

Under-secretary of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education pointed out that the meeting provides an opportunity to learn about the views, observations and suggestions of private school administrations and work to address all the problems that may arise in the private schools sector.

reward distinguished schools and support them to raise the

levels of their students. He called on private schools to exchange experiences between private schools on the one side and government schools on the other, and to cooperate with regard to curricula, educational experiences, teachers, educational tools and learning resources within the limits of the controls that guarantee a successful educational process.

During the meeting, Director of Planning and Quality Department at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Dr Turki Al Mahmoud affirmed the State's support for the private education sector.

He also reviewed the objectives of the education and

training sector strategy, which includes 25 educational goals, and focuses on mechanisms for selecting teachers, curricula, school environment and the level of educational services provided to students.

He pointed out that the strategy ensures developing the performance of teachers and leaders of private schools, in addition to many initiatives for education projects, most importantly, the national measurement tests, and the development of a unified electronic system between the providers of educational services for private schools.

For her part Director of Private Schools Affairs at the

Ministry of Education and Higher Education reviewed the regulations and controls governing the operation of private schools, focusing on the importance of applying the academic policy adopted by the Ministry of Education, which regulates the mechanism of teaching the three compulsory subjects (Arabic Language, Islamic Education and the History of Qatar), considering their importance for students in private schools.

She also pointed to the importance of reviewing books, curricula and educational resources in libraries and making sure that they are in line with the values, customs and traditions of Qatar.

QCS launches cervical cancer awareness drive

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar Cancer Society (QCS) has launched a month-long campaign — 'Darbeik Khadar', that aims at raising awareness about cervical cancer and emphasizing the need for early screening and encouraging women to do a Pap smear test.

As part of the campaign women can do a free Pap smear test at Al Ahli hospital and Al Emadi hospital.

To conclude the campaign, QCS will also organise a ceremony on January 28 at Ritz Carlton Hotel and have a lucky draw among women who

undergo the Pap smear test. The event also will include and interactive session with the health educators about cervical cancer.

During the campaign, QCS is holding awareness lectures and workshops involving the country's diverse sectors to raise awareness about the symptoms, risk factors and about how to prevent cervical cancer.

Dana Mansour, health educator at QCS says that cervical cancer is an abnormal growth of cervical cells. The cervix is the lower part of uterus. Cervical cancer can affect any woman and especially those between the age of 20 and 60, and it is one

of most common type of cancer among women worldwide.

Human papillomavirus (HPV) infection, smoking, recurrent cervical infections, family history of cervical cancer, having given birth to three or more children, using birth control pills for a long time and lack of screening, factors which can increase the chances of developing cervical cancer.

"Abnormal vaginal bleeding, abnormal vaginal discharge, pelvic pain, pain during intercourse are some common symptoms of cervical cancer. The disease can be diagnosed early or prevented by regular Pap test, HPV test, HPV vaccine (starting

from age of 15 years). Also adopting healthy habits lifestyle will help in preventing cervical cancer," said Mansour.

"However, cervical cancer often does not show symptoms until it is advanced, so it is important to start the early detection tests regularly even if you feel healthy. Cervical cancer can be early detected by Pap test," she added.

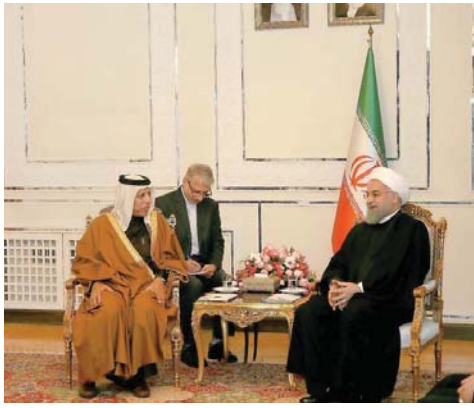
According to Mansour, the Pap test is a simple test can be done by the doctor; the best time to do it is between 10 and 14 days after the first day of the periods. The test first Pap test should be done three years of



Officials and participants during the campaign.

marriage if the woman is above 21 years or above. The test should

be repeated once in three years, until the age of 65 years.



Speaker of Advisory Council H E Ahmed bin Abdullah bin Zaid Al Mahmoud, with Iranian President Dr Hassan Rowhani.

Iranian President, Advisory Council Speaker hold talks

QNA

TEHRAN: President of Islamic Republic of Iran Dr Hassan Rowhani met here yesterday with Speaker of Qatar's Advisory Council H E Ahmed bin Abdullah bin Zaid Al Mahmoud, who is currently in Tehran heading the Qatari delegation to the 13th Conference of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States.

At the outset of the meeting, Speaker of the Advisory Council conveyed greetings of the Emir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani to President of Iran and His Highness's best wishes to him and the Iranian people further progress and prosperity.

For his part, President of Iran entrusted Speaker of the Advisory Council to convey his greetings to the

Emir along with his best wishes to him and the Qatari people further progress and prosperity.

During the meeting, they reviewed bilateral relations and ways to develop and advance them in various fields.

Ambassador of the State of Qatar to Iran Ali bin Hamad Al Sulaiti and a number of advisory Council members accompanying the Speaker, attended the meeting.

Speaker of the Advisory Council arrived in Tehran on Monday evening. The Speaker and his delegation were welcomed on arrival at Mehrabad International Airport by Member of Presidency of the Islamic Consultative Assembly of Iran Dr Abasi, Member of Islamic Consultative Assembly, Qatar's Ambassador to Iran Ali bin Hamad Al Sulaiti and mem-

bers of Qatari Embassy in Tehran.

The Speaker of the Advisory Council also met yesterday with Iran's Islamic Consultative Assembly Speaker Dr Ali Larjani on the sidelines of the 13th conference of the parliamentary union of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states.

The Speaker also met the Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan Sardar Ayaz Sadiq.

The meetings reviewed bilateral relations and means of boosting and developing them on all fronts. It also touched on a set of regional and international issues of common concern as well as topics on the agenda of the conference.

The State of Qatar's Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran attended the meeting along with a number of Advisory Council members.

QRCS to raise \$2m for Typhoon Vinta victims in Philippines

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: In response to Typhoon Vinta, which hit Mindanao, southern Philippines, Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) has issued a humanitarian appeal to raise \$2m (QR 7.3m) for a 12-month relief programme.

Under the programme, the affected people will be provided with cooked foods, shelters, nonfood items, medical supplies, health services and income generation programme and education facilities.

The plan is estimated to benefit 13,380 families comprising 66,900 members, said press a release.

A team of QRCS's mission in The Philippines visited the displaced shelter centres and host communities to examine living standards there and evaluate the urgent needs. Some 20-litre water jerry cans were also distributed.

A field assessment in the worst hit provinces showed that the much-needed services include shelter, food

and nonfood items, water, sanitation and health care.

As the first international humanitarian organisation to respond to the disaster, QRCS had allocated \$280,000 (QR1m) for early intervention.

This was commended by the President of the Philippine Red Cross in his media remarks and during meetings with diplomats and donors.

The relief programme to be conducted by QRCS's mission is coordinated with local and Movement partners. Shelters worth \$240,000 will be distributed and 1,200 beneficiaries will be trained in safe building and maintenance standards.

Income generation programme at the cost of \$380,000 will be implemented to help them improve their livelihoods. Some 1,050 poor families will initiate their own income-generating projects.

QRCS will establish four health facilities at the cost of \$354,000 to offer first aid, primary health care,

emergency care, vaccination, cholera treatment, infection prevention, environmental hygiene and health awareness. These services will be made available for 40,000 beneficiaries.

Premises of four partly damaged schools will be renovated and equipped at a cost of \$246,000 to help 82,772 students return to school. A major component of the programme is maintenance and rehabilitation of water sources, toilets, drinking water purification, personal hygiene promotion, and water-borne disease control. This programme will cost \$380,000.

In coordination with local water authorities, new water and sanitation facilities will be built in the affected areas for the benefit of 20,000 people.

Mobile catering hubs at a cost of \$400,000 will be opened to provide meals for 14,000 families (84,000 people).

Donations are raised to fund the programme, through QRCS's hotlines (66644822 / 33989898), website (www.qrcs.org.qa).



Azerbaijan envoy given farewell

Secretary-General of the Foreign Ministry, H E Dr Ahmed bin Hassan Al Hammadi, held yesterday a farewell ceremony for Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Qatar, Dr Tofig Abdullayev, on the occasion of ending his tenure in the country. Held at the Diplomatic Club, the ceremony was attended by a number of Their Excellencies heads of diplomatic missions and bureaus accredited to the country, along with Foreign Ministry department directors.

Diplomacy

Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova, Tudor Ulianoschi, met with Ambassador of the State of Qatar to Moldova, Mohammed bin Ali Al Malki. They discussed bilateral relations and ways of developing them, in addition to matters of common concern.



Qatar Chamber to participate in 'Securing Sport 2018' conference

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The US Chamber of Commerce, the International Centre for Sport Security (ICSS) and The McCain Institute will, this week, co-host Securing Sport 2018 – an annual conference exploring security and integrity issues in sport.

Securing Sport will bring together recognised leaders and international experts from the world of sport, security, technology, law enforcement, civil society and youth affairs to focus on the key issues currently affecting the security and integrity of sport.

Taking place in Washington DC today, Securing Sport 2018 will also be supported by Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry and will feature keynote speeches and panels focused on business opportunities associated with the growth of sport and World Cup 2022, the safety and security of sporting events, and financial transparency and integrity of sport.

QC's Chairman Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim Al Thani said that it is with great pride for the Chamber to participate and to provide the support for this

globally-renowned sports event which provides us a unique opportunity to promote the Qatari sports worldwide.

Commenting the privileged elite of international experts and outstanding leaders taking part in the event, he pointed out that this would significantly enrich its outcomes, noting that the forum's themes are of a very special importance to the worlds of sport and business together. Business and sports are interrelated and often intertwined, he added.

Sheikh Khalifa affirmed the QC's keenness on representing Qatar in every regional and international forum particularly that Qatar is on the point of hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup, assuring that vigorous efforts have been made at all levels to make this international tournament of a great success.

Many infrastructure projects relating to the 2022 were completed and delivered ahead of schedule, while others are in their final stages" he noted. Representing Qatar Chamber in the conference, QC's Board Member Adel Al Mannai will attend on behalf of the Chairman Sheikh Khalifa.

Huge response for Shop Qatar: QTA

RAYNOLD C RIVERA
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: As it enters 11th day, the second edition of Shop Qatar has been receiving great response from visitors, a Qatar Tourism Authority (QTA) official has said.

"We are seeing great response. The target is to top last year and hopefully it will happen because it is looking very good so far," Alshaima Alshaiikh, QTA Head of Tourism Events and Festival Organisation Section, told reporters yesterday.

Initial figures released by QTA reveal the number of raffle vouchers in the first few days of the festival has surpassed that of last year. Around 25,000 vouchers were entered in the first raffle draw last week which covered the first five days of the festival, compared to 21,000 vouchers in the first six days during the inaugural edition of the festival.

One of the reasons for the excellent response the festival enjoys was Qatar's visa facilitation measures including free transit visa as well as the visa waiver for 80 nationalities implemented last year, said Alshaiikh. More visitors from abroad are also expected to come in the coming days to enjoy the various offerings at the festival. "It's looking great because of the recent changes in visa policy. We're seeing more and expecting more visitors from abroad," she said, confirming there had been more visitors coming from Oman and Kuwait as well as other countries.

This year's festival has become exciting with more added elements weekly. Following the successful Arabian Week, last Sunday marked the start of Bollywood Week which offers a lineup of events and activities celebrating India's vibrant arts and culture such as the Bollywood Fashion Show tonight at Mondrian Doha and Indian singing sensation Sonu Nigam's concert this coming Friday at Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC).

The winners' names and coupon numbers of the week one raffle draw		
Prize	Name	Voucher number
Raffle Draw 1 QR10,000	Ericksson/Malaira	14824
Raffle Draw 2 QR10,000	Army P. Pocot	064564
Raffle Draw 3 QR10,000	Ramiera Bertrand	017786
Raffle Draw 4 QR10,000	Tony Gemayet	006545
Raffle Draw 5 QR20,000	Saed Abi	007918
Raffle Draw 6 QR30,000	Mohammad Moussafi	023180
Raffle Draw 7 QR40,000	Sabu Georges	001236
Raffle Draw 8 QR40,000	AristiTsiftoglou	065405
Raffle Draw 9 QR40,000	Deepak Kumar	011740
Raffle Draw 10 QR40,000	Suresh Sithapa	025365
Raffle Draw 11 QR50,000	Tariq Al Hamad	004121
Raffle Draw 12 QR100,000	Gowtham Kaliveli	027546
Raffle Draw 13 QR100,000	Mohammad Amjad	001256
Raffle Draw 14 BMW 520i	Fan Yang	057474
Raffle Draw 15 BMW 730 Li	Ricardo Joy Cajoles Jr.	018102

Malls participating in Shop Qatar also hosts a variety of Bollywood-themed pop-up shops including fabric embroidery pop-up shop, bangles pop-up shop, cushion embroidery pop-up shop, and footwear making Pop-up shop.

The International Week, which is the last week of the festival, will see international makeup expert Joyce Bonelli and renowned Alejandro Resta give workshops at Ritz Carlton Doha.

A major highlight of the International Week is the much awaited concert of popular American EDM pop duo The Chainsmokers on Friday next week at DECC. Doha will be the first leg of the world tour of the duo behind the Billboard hits Closer, Something

Just Like This, and Don't Let Me Down.

Visitors and residents still have a chance to win by shopping or dining at one of the festival's 13 Mall partners. For every QR200 spent at any of the participating retailers or restaurants, shoppers can enter one of the festival's three remaining raffle draws, with two BMW cars and 13 cash prizes ranging from QR10,000 to QR100,000 to be won each week.

The upcoming draws will be held at 8:30pm on January 18 and 25 at Hyatt Plaza and Tower Mall respectively. The final draw will take place at the closing ceremony at Doha Festival City on February 8 which will feature a special performance by Lebanese singer Ramy Ayach.

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EDITORIAL

Towards safer tomorrow

Qatar has accomplished remarkable achievement regarding road safety in the first phase of National Traffic Safety Strategy and the whole world is recognizing the efforts made so far by the country to achieve this UN sustainable development goal.

Prime Minister and Interior Minister H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani unveiled the action plan for the second phase of National Traffic Safety Strategy (2018-2022).

Qatar with its dedicated commitment has already achieved a lot in this regard. The first phase of National Traffic Safety Strategy has contributed to decreasing the number of deaths from 235 deaths (average of 14 deaths per 100,000) in 2013, to 178 deaths (average of 6.93 deaths per 100,000) in 2016.

This has led to making the State of Qatar one of the countries with a distinguished position in traffic safety. Qatar holds an average much lower road accident deaths than the world and according to the first UN report of 2016, it ranked 49th globally and the first among Arab countries in achieving the UN development goals.

Through a video message during the launch of the second action plan of the National Traffic Safety Strategy 2018-2022, United Nations Secretary General's Special Envoy for Road Safety, Jean Todt lauded the efforts made by Qatar and concerned authorities to

reduce the number of deaths due to road accidents and to achieve the sustainable development by 2030.

He also said the indexes indicate Qatar has been moving towards the right direction that helped Qatar to be placed at the forefront of Middle East countries in reducing the number of road accidents.



Prime Minister and Interior Minister H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani unveiled the action plan for the second phase of National Traffic Safety Strategy (2018-2022).

road and transport networks, adopt a non-traditional planning system and reduce congestion by 5 percent annually.

In addition, it aims to reduce pedestrian deaths to 17 percent out of total deaths by 2022, which was 32 percent in 2016.

To make the plan more result-oriented, the implementation of the second action plan has been assigned to more than 35 government bodies compared to 13 in the first phase, as well as increased to more than 350 plans compared to 198 in the first phase.

Director General of Traffic Brigadier Muhammad Saad Al Kharji, the Second Deputy Chairman of the National Traffic Safety Committee, said that Qatar has been able to hold a prestigious position in the field of traffic safety since the launch of the first national traffic safety strategy in January 2013.



Brigadier Al Kharji underlines Qatar's global leadership in traffic safety

QNA

DIRECTOR General of Traffic Brigadier Muhammad Saad Al Kharji, the Second Deputy Chairman of the National Traffic Safety Committee, said that Qatar has been able to hold a prestigious position in the field of traffic safety since the launch of the first national traffic safety strategy in January 2013.

In a speech at the launching ceremony of the second executive plan of the National Traffic Safety Strategy (2018-2022), Brigadier Al Kharji added that the State of Qatar has added a new international experience among the fast-growing countries and third world countries, including the adoption of successful international experiences related to the establishment of the National Committee for Traffic Safety as a leading national institution in the State.

Qatar's national and global status in traffic safety was strengthened also by providing advice to decision makers and stakeholders, developing the system of evaluation and monitoring through the



The National Traffic Safety Committee has taken the responsibility for transforming the vision of Qatar's high leadership into a reality that meets the aspirations of its citizens and responds to the comprehensive renaissance phase witnessed by the State in various vital sectors, especially the transport and traffic safety sectors.

implementation plan, although it was the first experience in the country to implement a national strategy of this type and caliber. The Strategy has also been able to reduce the mortality rate to 6.93 cases compared to 14 cases per 100,000 people in 2013.

He stressed the importance of joint action for the continuous implementation and development of the National Traffic Safety Strategy, that Transport Sectors are two complex sectors that require joint action to implement and develop the national strategy for traffic safety to build the modern state.

Secretary of National Traffic Safety Committee Brigadier Muhammad Abdullah Al Maliki said that the conformity of security and safety of the transport of individuals and goods constitutes the backbone of the development of society because of their relationship with the requirements of citizens and facilities of daily life.

The progress of States has been measured by the level of efficiency of their transport system and the extent to which they meet the requirements of economic and social growth. Strategic planning has become the basis for the development of countries through a far-sighted vision that takes into account all the requirements and factors of development and progress. The National Traffic Safety Committee

has taken the responsibility for transforming the vision of Qatar's high leadership into a reality that meets the aspirations of its citizens and responds to the comprehensive renaissance phase witnessed by the State in various vital sectors, especially the transport and traffic safety sectors, he added.

He pointed out that the implementation of the second action plan has been assigned to more than 35 government bodies compared to 13 in the first phase, as well as increased to more than 350 plans compared to 198 in the first phase.

In order to improve the performance and quality assurance in the implementation of the second phase of the strategy, H E Prime Minister and the Minister of Interior, who is also the Chairman of the National Traffic Safety Committee, has entrusted the Secretariat to organise the fifth forum of coordinators with the cooperation of all concerned parties, in order to learn about the positive and negative aspects of the first phase of the strategy and required improvement in the second phase.

For his part Manager of the National Road Safety Office Prof. Kim Jiraj pointed out that the implementation plan for the second phase is based on a number of pillars. They include the directives of H E the Chairman, the recommendations of the National Committee, the decisions of the Council of Ministers and United Nations ratified by the State of Qatar, lessons learned from the first phase and development of the monitoring and evaluation system.

He pointed to the development of the role of the National Road Safety Office, which provides monthly reports to the Office of the Prime Minister and Minister of Interior on the progress of the concerned bodies.

He said that in accordance with the decision of the Council of Ministers, ten specialised working groups were established including awareness and information group, the congestion group, the accident investigation group, the speed management group, the pedestrian group, the coordinators group and the research group.

In remarks to reporters, Minister of Public Health H E Dr Hanan Mohammed Al Kuwari confirmed that the achievements made in the first executive



The Fifth Forum of coordinators of concerned authorities, which started today on the occasion of the launch of the second operational plan of the road safety strategy, discusses a number of important topics and themes with the participation of representatives of the concerned authorities in the country and a group of international experts.

plan of the national strategy for traffic safety have placed Qatar among the developed country in the field of traffic safety.

She added that Qatar is proud of the excellent results achieved by the first phase of the traffic safety strategy and hopes that the second operational plan will achieve further development and make other distinctive results.

Her Excellency pointed out that the Ministry of Public Health, a member of the team preparing the national strategy for traffic safety, is one of the main partners and actors in achieving the desired results of the strategy and the implementation of its projects.

H E Minister of Public Health said that the ministry plays an active and strong role in implementing the plans of response to traffic accidents and provide ambulance services, emergency and medical personnel, in addition to its role in the fields of awareness and prevention as well as providing technical information in the framework of the implementation of the strategy. The Fifth Forum of coordinators of concerned authorities, which started today on the occasion of the launch of the second operational plan of the road safety strategy, discusses a number of important topics and themes with the participation of representatives of the concerned authorities in the country and a group of international experts.

QUOTE OF THE DAY



We must increase the costs of the regime's behaviour to the point that North Korea must come to the table for credible negotiations.

Rex Tillerson
US Secretary of State



'Muslims face dangers targeting their existence'

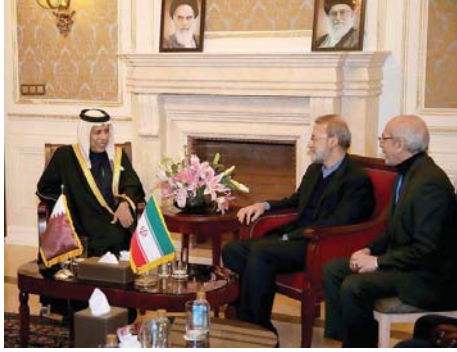
QNA

ADVISORY Council Speaker H E Ahmed bin Abdullah bin Zaid Al Mahmoud said yesterday that the Islamic world today is full of all kinds of oppression and injustice, and that Muslims face serious risks that target their existence and survival as a nation and peoples.

The speaker made the remarks as he gave a speech today at the 13th conference of the parliamentary union of OIC member states, currently being held in the Iranian capital of Tehran, which he started by thanking the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the event and also expressed his sincere condolences concerning the Iranian oil tanker incident which burned off the coast of China. Al Mahmoud said that the attacks against Muslims today and their rights



Al Mahmoud said that the attacks against Muslims today and their rights have become permissible even by the most vulnerable nations and peoples. They have underestimated Muslims and attacked them in Palestine, Myanmar and other countries, while on the other hand, he said, Muslims have become opponents of each other as they fight each other or make accusations against each other.



have become permissible even by the most vulnerable nations and peoples. They have underestimated Muslims and attacked them in Palestine, Myanmar and other countries, while on the other hand, he said, Muslims have become opponents of each other as they fight each other or make accusations against each other.

He added that Muslims were lost when they wasted Islam and heavenly orders, which call for unity and solidarity, pointing out that, on the contrary, Muslims at the moment differed and dispersed and wasted their efforts and energies in non-useful matters, but in what leads to weakening and diminishing their position among the nations.

In this regard, he cited the unjust siege imposed on the State of Qatar, saying that the unjust siege imposed on the State of Qatar, about which the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights said in an official report that the measures taken by the

siege countries against the State of Qatar exceeded the limits of diplomatic procedures, and that it is not just a boycott because it affected the humanitarian, economic, rights sides, adding that the report referred to these actions as economic war.

H E the Advisory Council Speaker pointed out that this conference for all Islamic countries, considering it representative of the will of the Muslim peoples belonging to this union, adding that he would like to address the Islamic nation, which carries the message of peace, tolerance and brotherhood, noting that Islam is wrongly and falsely accused of terrorism and violence by its enemies.

He added that Muslim scientists are still the pioneers of civilization, progress, technology and modern science in the West, and the names of prominent Muslim scientists will remain famous in every science, such as Ishaq bin Hayyan in chemistry; Abu Bakr Al Khwarizmi, Buzjani and Omar

Khiam in mathematics; Abu Bakr Al Razi, Sinaan Ibn Thabit Ibn Qurra and Ibn Sina in medicine; Hassan bin Al Haytham in optics; Abuhadhifa Dinuri and Ibn Al Roumyiah in botany; and Al Qazwini and Al Idrisi in geography and astronomy, who were very famous in many knowledge and science fields.

He added that Islam is the religion of mercy, tolerance, peace and decent treatment for all human beings, regardless of religion, race and color.

Concerning the Palestinian issue, HE the Speaker said that in this situation, everyone is saddened by the pain and sorrow of what is seen every day from the cruelty of the military machine of the Israeli occupation, which is trying by all means to break the resistance. He added that the State of Qatar has not spared any effort to support the steadfastness and resistance of the Palestinian people in the face of the continuing aggression of Israeli forces.

During the conference, H E Al Mahmoud reiterated the State of Qatar's call for activating all resolutions on Jerusalem from the UN Security Council, the United Nations General Assembly and the numerous Arab and Islamic conferences adopted by the OIC parliamentary union.

With regard to terrorism and human rights, HE Al-Mahmoud pointed out that the State of Qatar calls for a distinction between the right of defense and resistance to occupation and terrorism against civilians, stressing that addressing the phenomenon of terrorism is not limited to the security aspect, but must be fought intellectually and ideologically in order to dry its sources.

He also said that the State of Qatar calls to provide support to Muslim minorities suffering from persecution and injustice in many regions of the world, especially Muslim minorities in

Myanmar and the southern Philippines and Central Africa so as not to be forced to use violence to defend themselves and their religion.

At the end of his speech, the speaker of the Advisory Council said that four experienced and competent women joined the Qatari Advisory Council at its current session, adding that this comes within the framework of increasing women's involvement in political work and their role.

President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Hassan Rowhani had opened the conference yesterday, where he delivered the opening speech in which he stressed the importance of strengthening and consolidating the relations of cooperation and exchange of views among Islamic countries. He called on the Islamic world to put differences aside and rely on its internal human and social potential, stressing that the preoccupation with conflicts does not provide the opportunity for construction and development.

President Rowhani referred also to the important role played by parliaments in reflecting people's views and participation in the administration of the country. He explained that the main reason for the instability of the region is the American support for the Zionist entity, considering that the American move against Jerusalem is a violation of all international laws, noting that terrorism led to the deviation of the compass from Jerusalem and Palestine.

President Rowhani noted the importance of the role of Muslim parliaments and the Islamic Action Organization in consolidating unity, adding that the Muslim world is facing serious obstacles, and confronting these obstacles, including military intervention and the spread of discrimination, will come through solving internal problems.

THERE can be no better illustration of the folly of victimhood and outrage than the furore surrounding US President Donald Trump's comments about poor countries with relatively high rates of migration to the United States.

In the last few days, the politics of indignation — particularly by people generally on the progressive side of politics — has reached new heights with tweets of African landscapes and immigrant success stories.

The drama that has greeted Trump's comments has provided a disappointing reminder that outrage can be addictive even when it is wholly ineffectual.

First, let me be clear, I am not denying that Trump's remarks are racist. It has been patently obvious for many years that Trump himself — in his

action and pronouncements — is a thoroughgoing racist. There is nothing new or shocking about this idea.

I am wondering, however, why anyone would be offended by the racism of a known racist who has proven himself to be foolish time and again. He is not unlike other racists — he has power.

I am also wondering why so many of the critiques of Trump's statement are concerned primarily with his racism instead of addressing the merits or demerits of the larger debate about the role and place of migrants in wealthy countries like the US.

I am wondering why so few people want to address the truth that lies at the heart of Trump's statements. It is indeed a fact that millions of poor people who happen to have been born in poor parts of the world are desperate to leave their homes in search of opportunities. Poor people do not leave their countries because of wanderlust.

This — it seems — is a more important reality to address than whether a discredited man who is a known provocateur has hurt some feelings.

Yet I cannot count the number of Facebook posts of beautiful African landscapes I have seen, or the range of tweets listing the number of American lives African doctors have saved, or the number of educated and morally upright people the US benefits from who come from "shithole" countries.

The people posting those messages have been, for the most part, middle-class Africans and enlightened globally aware Westerners — the type of people who stay in hotels in the nice part of Nairobi, and know where to get the best lattes in Port-au-Prince.

In reality, significant parts of the countries these indignant "progressive" people are posting about are, in fact, terrible places to live for poor people. Of course, there is joy and humour and grit and determination in even the poorest places — and there is no question that the word "shithole" is dismissive and tacky — much like the man who uttered it.

However, it is important not to romanticise poverty and gloss over the truth in the interest of point-scoring. The poor people who have been left out of the "Africa rising" narrative probably agree with the overarching sentiment behind Trump's descriptions of their countries.

The "Africa as paradise" social media posts are a sort of creative non-fiction then. Of course, the Cape Town skyline is beautiful, but we also know that life in Crossroads or Nyanga or any of the many sprawling townships that ring that city, is hard.

The photos on Facebook exist to address an audience that lives online; they do not actually speak to the reality at the heart of the US president's crude observation. For people who live in the ghettos of Port-au-Prince and Nairobi — yes, life is very, very hard.

Through their posts and their protestations, the Outraged signal their moral goodness but they do not advance understanding of the core problem Trump points out — which is that we are living in a moment of profound flux and ever-increasing pressures. Even reasonable, non-racist people can arrive at the conclusion that their own lives in wealthy countries are at risk of being undermined by migration.

People on the left — myself included — may disagree with this conclusion. We may point to data that indicate migrants lift the boat rather than sink it. We may argue that regardless of the



In the last few days, the politics of indignation — particularly by people generally on the progressive side of politics — has reached new heights with tweets of African landscapes and immigrant success stories.

economic merits of migration there are other non-tangible benefits in the realm of culture, art and creativity.

We may point out there is a strong historical dimension to the present-day existence of "shithole countries", which were turned into poor places by the acts and policies of countries like the US. We may talk about colonialism and slavery and the historical and moral debt owed to "shithole countries".

All of these arguments are part of ongoing debates in the ideological battles currently taking place globally. The racism Trump expresses is part of — but should not define — these debates. There are many people who are indeed opposed to migration on the basis of unjustified fear. There are many others who are opposed to migration on the basis of reasonable anxieties and concerns about the future.

Again, I may not agree with these anxieties, but consigning them to the racist heap is short-sighted and unstrategic if you are interested in genuinely changing societies for the better. Whether you want revolution or incremental reform — change never comes without conversations.

Having more focused, less reactionary conversations about the nature and roots of global migration patterns is crucial. Addressing the appalling conditions in which the vast majority of people live is even more important to me as a citizen of a country that is on Trump's "shithole" list.

This urgency is not new, and it has nothing to do with Trump.

The writer is a South African writer and political commentator who focuses on race, gender and democracy.



SISONKE MSIMANG
AL JAZEERA

Trump rage ignores the truth

The photos on Facebook exist to address an audience that lives online; they do not actually speak to the reality at the heart of the US president's crude observation. For people who live in the ghettos of Port-au-Prince and Nairobi - yes, life is very, very hard.

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Erdogan: Nato must take stance against US in Syria

AP

ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday called on Nato to take a stance against the United States, a fellow ally, over its plans to form a 30,000-strong Kurdish-led border security force in Syria.

Turkey has been threatening to launch a new military offensive in Syria against Syrian Kurdish militias, which Turkey considers to be terrorists because of their affiliation with outlawed Kurdish rebels fighting Turkey.

On Monday, Erdogan accused the United States of creating an "army of terror" in Syria, along the border with Turkey, and vowed to crush the US-backed border force.

Addressing his ruling party's deputies yesterday, Erdogan questioned Nato's stance on the issue, saying: "Hey Nato! You are obliged to make a stance against those who harass and violate the borders of your members."

Nato's headquarters

Addressing his ruling party's deputies yesterday, Erdogan questioned Nato's stance on the issue, saying: "Hey Nato! You are obliged to make a stance against those who harass and violate the borders of your members."

described Turkey as "a highly valued ally" and said the alliance was committed to Turkey's defense. It said however that the alliance did not have a presence on the ground in Syria and that the matter was an issue for the US-led anti-IS coalition, which includes dozens of countries.

Ties between Turkey and the United States have deteriorated over US support of the Kurdish militia, known as the People's Defense Units, or YPG, which Turkey says is a major threat

to its security. The United States however has relied on the YPG — the backbone of a Syrian force that drove the Islamic State group from much of northern and eastern Syria with the help of US-led airstrikes.

The coalition has said the new force, expected to reach 30,000 in the next several years, is a key element of its strategy in Syria to prevent the resurgence of the IS group in Syria.

Erdogan on Tuesday reiterated that Turkey planned an imminent intervention in the Kurdish-controlled enclave of Afrin in northern Syria. Turkey has sent reinforcements to its border in recent weeks and Erdogan said this week that Turkish troops were already firing artillery at Afrin from the border.

Speaking to reporters after his speech to party legislators, Erdogan said Turkey would conduct the operation in Afrin with Turkish-backed Syrian opposition forces, the state-run Anadolu Agency reported.



President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, (right) shakes hands with British Ambassador to Turkey, Dominic John Chilcott, after receiving the letter of credence at Presidential Complex in Ankara, yesterday.

Asked whether he planned to discuss the Kurdish-led border force with US President Donald Trump, Erdogan said he

had no plans to call the US leader.

"We discussed the issue before. He said he would get

back to me. I won't call him as long as he does not get back to me," Anadolu quoted Erdogan as saying.

5,000 kids dead or injured in Yemen

AFP

SANA'A: The war in Yemen has killed or injured more than 5,000 children and left another 400,000 severely malnourished and fighting for their lives, the UN children's agency said yesterday.

In a report unveiled in Sana'a, Unicef said nearly two million Yemeni children were out of school, a quarter of them since the conflict escalated when a Saudi-led coalition intervened in March 2015.

More than three million children were born into the war, it said, adding they had been "scarred by years of violence, displacement, disease, poverty, undernutrition and a lack of access to basic services".

UNICEF said the more than 5,000 children killed or injured in the violence amounted to "an average of five children every day since March 2015".

"An entire generation of children in Yemen is growing up knowing nothing but violence," said Meritxell Relano, UNICEF representative in Yemen.

"Children in Yemen are suffering the devastating



A child lies in a bed at a hospital in Sana'a, Yemen, yesterday.

consequences of a war that is not of their making," he said in a statement. "Malnutrition and disease are rampant as basic services collapse," he said, adding: "Those who survive are likely to carry the physical and psychological scars of conflict for the rest of their lives."

The UN agency said more than 11 million children — or "nearly every child in Yemen" — was now in need of humanitarian assistance.

It called for an end to the

bloodshed and the protection of children, as well as sustainable and unconditional access to deliver assistance to every child in need.

The war has killed 9,245 people since Saudi Arabia and its Arab allies joined the government's fight against Iran-backed Huthi rebels, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

It triggered what the United Nations has called the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Iran warns US-backed border force will 'fan the flames' in Syria

AFP

TEHRAN: Iran yesterday denounced a plan by the US-led coalition to create a 30,000-strong border force in north-eastern Syria, saying it would complicate efforts to end the country's war.

"It is a clear intervention by the United States in the internal affairs of other countries, makes the Syrian crisis more complicated, creates more instability, and fans the flames in this country," state news agency IRNA quoted foreign ministry spokesman Bahram Ghasemi as saying.

On Sunday, the US-led alliance fighting the Islamic State group in Syria and Iraq said it was working with Arab and Kurdish fighters to establish a 30,000-strong Border Security Force (BSF) in Syria.

The BSF, expected to be set up over the next several years, would be responsible for preventing a "resurgence" of IS in

areas where the jihadists had been cleared by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), it said. Iran, a key ally of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's regime, has sent thousands of fighters to Iraq and Syria to battle IS as well as other Sunni jihadists and Syrian rebels.

Iranian "military advisers" have also played a major role supporting the Syrian regime.

Ghasemi said the timing of the announcement was "significant" as it came "at a time when Syrian forces and their allies have achieved great victories in the fight against Daesh and Al Nusra Front terrorist", referring to IS and the former Al Qaeda affiliate.

IS has lost much of its strongholds in Syria, where the regime, backed by its Russian ally, has been pounding jihadist and rebels in the north-western Idlib province.

Syria has condemned the coalition's "border security force" plan.

Cash sought from firms linked to Zuma graft

AFP

JOHANNESBURG: South African prosecutors said yesterday they are seeking \$130m from global consultancy McKinsey and a local firm linked to a graft scandal that has engulfed President Jacob Zuma.

The announcement was the first move against the Gupta family that is accused of corrupt dealings with Zuma, including allegations it profited from lucrative government contracts and chose ministerial appointments.

The local company, Trilliant, was controlled by an associate of the Guptas at the time of the allegations in 2015 and 2016.

McKinsey and Trilliant were paid for a contract advising state power monopoly Eskom.

Man gets death over murder of Moroccan MP

AFP

RABAT: A Moroccan court sentenced to death a man over the murder of a member of parliament and jailed his widow, in a case involving sex and money, the government said yesterday.

Abdelatif Merdas, who was a member of the liberal Constitutional Union party, was gunned down near his house in Casablanca in March last year. A local councillor, Hicham Mouchtar, was sentenced to death on Monday after he was convicted of "premeditated murder", the justice ministry said. Merdas's widow, Ouafae Bensamadi, was given a life sentence, and a female acquaintance of hers described as a "fortune-teller" was sentenced to 20 years in jail.

Bensamadi had been having an affair with Mouchtar, who killed Merdas with the help of a nephew — who was sentenced on Monday to 30 years in jail. The motives were "money and vengeance," the state prosecutor said during the investigation, dismissing any political reason for the killing of Merdas.

Police beat Sudanese at protest over prices

AFP

KHARTOUM: Anti-riot police fired tear gas and beat protesters with batons yesterday as hundreds of Sudanese demonstrated against soaring bread prices near a presidential palace in Khartoum, a witness said.

Bread prices have more than doubled after a jump in the cost of flour due to dwindling wheat supplies, after the government decided to stop importing grain and allow private companies to do so.

The protest was the biggest in Khartoum since demonstrations erupted in some parts of the country earlier this month following the price increase.

Yesterday, hundreds of protesters poured into the streets near a presidential palace in central Khartoum after the opposition Communist Party of Sudan called for an anti-government rally.

"No, no to hunger! No, no to high prices!" protesters shouted near the palace. Police fired tear gas and hit protesters with batons as they tried to break up

the protest.

A senior leader from the Communist Party, Siddiq Yousif, was detained along with several protesters, the correspondent reported.

The Communist Party had sought permission from the authorities last week to hold Tuesday's rally but it had been denied. "Today is an important day for Sudan as it is the start of widespread protests," a demonstrator told AFP on condition of anonymity.

"We were demonstrating peacefully but still the police beat us. This shows that the regime will not tolerate even peaceful protests."

Pictures and videos of Tuesday's protests were widely uploaded on social media networks like Twitter and Facebook.

Later yesterday, police dispersed the rally near the palace but protesters staged small demonstrations in nearby streets as they were chased away. "Lot of people watched us as we protested. I'm sure they will join us next time," the protester said.



The leader of one of the Boko Haram group's factions, Abubakar Shekau, speaks in front of guards in an unknown location in Nigeria.

Nigeria releases 244 Boko Haram suspects

AP

MAIDUGURI: Nigeria's army released 244 Boko Haram suspects who have denounced their membership in the deadly extremist group, Nigerian army officials said yesterday.

Those released Monday included 118 adult males, 56 women, 19 teens and 51 children, according to operation commander Maj. Gen. Rogers Nicholas, who said they were freed after participating in a

de-radicalisation programme. One of the released females said she was accused of being a cook for Boko Haram and was held by Nigerian authorities for about a year.

Nigeria is trying to show it is making progress against the extremist group that has killed more than 20,000 people during its eight-year insurgency. Nigeria has arrested thousands of suspected Boko Haram members in recent years and is holding them in overcrowded

military detention facilities. Human rights groups say most of those detained have been picked up at random and without reasonable suspicion, including women and children. Former detainees have described malnutrition, mistreatment and deaths in the facilities. The public release Monday of the ex-Boko Haram suspects at the military barracks in Maiduguri was done to mark Nigeria's Armed Forces Remembrance Day.

India withdraws subsidy for Haj

IANS
NEW DELHI: The central government yesterday said it has decided to withdraw subsidy given to Muslims for the Haj.
 Announcing the decision, Union Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said it was in line with the government's agenda to empower minorities without appeasing them.

Announcing the decision, Union Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said it was in line with the government's agenda to empower minorities without appeasing them.

"This is part of our policy to empower minorities with dignity and without appeasement," Naqvi told reporters here.

from withdrawing the subsidy for education of minorities, particularly girls.

Naqvi said the subsidy amount ranged from Rs 500-700 crore, which mainly went to the national carrier Air India that flew the pilgrims to Jeddah, along with Saudi Airlines, in a 50:50 ratio.

With the government already moving ahead with privatisation of Air India, the subsidy would not make sense, he felt.
 Naqvi said the withdrawal of subsidy would not make much

difference in the airfare from major cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru and Kolkata, though it would make travel costlier from smaller cities.

"But to offset this cost hike, we have for the first time given the choice to pilgrims to select their point of embarkation. So, for example, a pilgrim from Srinagar may now embark from Delhi, or a pilgrim from Gaya may embark from Kolkata etc., to avoid extra expenses," Naqvi said.

However, the Minister said

that the government would "fulfill all its responsibilities it has towards its citizens" and would make all the arrangements for the pilgrims in Saudi Arabia apart from ensuring their safety, security and comfort.

The government had drafted the policy to abolish the Haj subsidy in phased manner after the Supreme Court asked it in 2012 to withdraw it gradually by 2022.

Last year, the government had formed a committee comprising eminent Muslims headed by retired IAS Afzal Amanullah

to revise India's Haj policy. The committee had recommended abolition of Haj subsidy and allowing women above 45 years of age to proceed on Haj without "mehrnam" (male guardian), among other things.

The government accepted most of the recommendations made by the committee.

This year, the highest number of Indian pilgrims are likely to go for the pilgrimage after Saudi Arabia increased India's quota by 5,000.

Deal to repatriate Rohingya in two years signed

AP
BANGKOK: Bangladesh and Myanmar have agreed that they will try to complete the repatriation of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslim refugees who fled from violence in Myanmar within two years, Bangladesh's Foreign Ministry said yesterday.

The ministry said a joint working group from the two countries finalized an agreement on Monday on the physical arrangements for the repatriation of the ethnic Rohingya. It said they agreed that the process "would be completed preferably within two years from the commencement of repatriation."

Myanmar and Bangladesh signed an initial agreement in November to repatriate the Rohingya, and the 30-member working group was set up last month to oversee the process. Many have questions whether Rohingya would return to Myanmar under the current circumstances, and whether Myanmar would accept them and allow them to live freely.

Under the November agreement, Rohingya will need to provide evidence of their residency in Myanmar in order to return — something many say they do not have.

More than 650,000 ethnic Rohingya have fled to Bangladesh since August, when

Myanmar's military launched a brutal crackdown in Rakhine state after a militant group attacked police posts. Myanmar's army described it as "clearance operations" against terrorists, but the United Nations and the U.S. have called it "ethnic cleansing."

Despite having lived in predominantly Buddhist Myanmar for generations, Rohingya Muslims have been denied citizenship, freedom of movement and access to basic social rights. They are generally called "Bengalis," a reference to the belief that they migrated illegally from Bangladesh.

Myanmar officials said the length of the repatriation will depend on how quickly Bangladesh can provide documentation of refugees' previous residency and how fast applications are submitted.

"Even though we are talking about a two-year process, it totally depends on how the two countries cooperate," Myanmar government spokesman Zaw Htay said. "Bangladesh authorities also need to proceed with the paperwork and documents for refugees and send it to us fast." Since the November agreement, Myanmar's civilian government led by Aung San Suu Kyi has pledged to take measures to halt the outflow of Rohingya to Bangladesh and restore normalcy in the Rakhine region.

Modi, Netanyahu to visit Gujarat today

IANS
GANDHINAGAR: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu will be in Gujarat for a day today where they will first have a mega roadshow from the airport to Sabarmati Ashram, and then visit an entrepreneurial centre and a horticultural centre.

Today's visit will be Modi's first to his home state after the assembly elections. Both the Prime Ministers will arrive at Ahmedabad airport at around 10.15am, from where they will travel to the Gandhi Ashram at Sabarmati in an open vehicle, receiving a warm welcome by the spectators, through the over 50 stages set up along the route jointly by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation and the Gujarat government.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (right) and his wife Sara pose for a photograph at the Taj Mahal in the Indian city of Agra, yesterday.

The 14-km-long roadshow will be heavily guarded by security forces including Israeli snipers along the route, where

almost 50,000 people are expected to be present. A km-long periphery will be turned into a fortress for almost half of the day, where 12 teams from 'Chetak commandos', the Quick Response Teams, the Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad and police will be guarding the venues.

Special squads will be deployed at high-rise buildings along the route and also on the Sabarmati river in speedboats when both the dignitaries are in the Ashram. Every spectator participating in the roadshow will be scrutinized in doorframe metal detectors at the special 200 entry gates erected for the purpose. Civil authorities have closed many of the roads adjoining the roadshow route on security grounds, which might create trouble for the commuters. The authorities have also closed the RTO office which is in the vicinity of the Ashram till noon.

SC: Share all details of Loya case

IANS
NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court yesterday directed the Maharashtra government to share all the documents relating to the death of Special CBI Judge B H Loya with the petitioners seeking independent probe and adjourned the matter for seven days.

"This is a matter, they must get everything. There should not be any confidentiality," said the bench of Justice Arun Mishra and Justice Mohan M. Shantanagoudar asking senior counsel Harish Salve to share the

documents with the petitioners. Social activists T. Poonawala and Mumbai journalist Bandhuraj Sambhajji Lone have moved the top court seeking independent probe into the death of Judge Loya.

As Salve appearing for Maharashtra government told the court to have a look at the documents that were in a sealed cover, Justice Mishra said "Exchange the copy with them (petitioners). And we adjourn the matter for seven days."

As Salve said that he had himself not seen the documents sent by Maharashtra

government, the bench told him to go through the documents and if he finds some are sensitive, then he can hold them back.

Justice Mishra said, "Unless there is something, there should not be any confidentiality. Normally there should not be any objection in sharing the documents." Salve has a spare copy which he can share with senior counsel Pallav Sisodia but he should keep it to himself. The death of Judge Loya has raised a storm as presiding over the special CBI court he held the trial in the Sohrabuddin Shaikh fake encounter case.

CBI files chargesheet against 95 in Vyapam scam

IANS
NEW DELHI: The CBI yesterday said it has filed a chargesheet against 95 people in the multi-crore-rupee Vyapam examination scam linked with the 2011 Pre-Medical Test (PMT) case.

Those named in the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) chargesheet include 83 candidates, four Vyapam officials and eight middlemen in a case relating to irregularities in Samvida Shala Shikshak Patrata Pariksha Varg-3 Examination in 2011 conducted by Vyapam.

The scam in Vyavasyaik Pariksha Mandal (Vyapam) or Madhya Pradesh Professional Examination Board broke out in 2013 wherein candidates bribed officials and rigged exams by deploying imposters to write their papers.

The scam, which began in 1995, involves politicians, senior officials and businessmen.

The CBI took over investigation following a Supreme Court order on July 9, 2015. The chargesheet was connected to the Pre-Medical Test of 2011 -- one of several cases of irregularities in examinations conducted by Vyapam.

According to the CBI chargesheet, files from the hard disk of the computer of then Principal System Analyst Vyapam reveal that marks of certain candidates were allegedly increased to enable them to qualify the test.

"The same were verified with the OMR answer sheets of the candidates and it was found that marks of 84 candidates were increased. In the final result, to make them qualify the examination," it said.

Two more gored to death in TN

AFP
MADURAI: Two spectators at a controversial bull-wrestling festival in southern India were gored to death yesterday, police said, the third such fatal attack in two days.

"Jallikattu," or the taming of the bulls, is a hugely popular annual event in Tamil Nadu state but has been criticised by animal rights activists.

Police in Sivaganga district, where the event took place, said two people were killed and another 40 sustained injuries when bulls ran into the crowd.

"The bulls ran amok into the crowd after some unidentified people let them loose outside the arena," T. Jayachandran, the police superintendent of Sivaganga, said. "A case will be registered and we will take appropriate action against the culprits."

A raging bull sprinted into the viewer's gallery, killing 11 teen spectator and wounding 11 others on Monday in Madurai district of Tamil Nadu. One more was gored to death in Tiruchirappalli city the same day, according to the NDTV news network.
 In Jallikattu, bulls, often festooned with marigolds, are



Participants try to control a bull during the annual Jallikattu bull-taming festival on the outskirts of Madurai.

released from pens and young men try to grab them by their sharpened horns or humps to win prizes for the best bull

taming. The prizes range from cars, motorcycles, fridges to television sets, gold coins and furniture.

Foundation stone laid for Rs430bn refinery project

IANS
BARMER: Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday laid the foundation stone of the Rs430bn big-ticket refinery project here and said it will change the economic landscape of Rajasthan.

"Rajasthan is taking the lead to become the energy power of the country," Modi said while addressing the event.

The refinery, a joint venture between Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited and Rajasthan government, will have the capacity to refine 90 lakh litres of crude oil annually. Due to be completed by 2022, the project is expected to bring Rs34,000 crore to the state government coffers annually.

He appreciated the efforts of Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Rajé who initiated the process to turn this project into reality.

"We cannot mislead people by installing stones. As in 2022 we complete 75 years of independence, we will ensure that our refinery starts functioning in the same year," Modi said.

He took a dig at the Congress, saying, "We don't want

"Rajasthan is taking the lead to become the energy power of the country," Modi said while addressing the event.

people to come and ask us that after installing the stone why you did not take action on implementing the same."

The foundation stone laying ceremony had been performed four years ago by then Congress president Sonia Gandhi. Hitting out at the Congress on the issue of inaugurating the Rajasthan refinery twice, Vasundhara Rajé said: "We don't believe in installing stones, but we believe in working hard to build a building. We work to turn our efforts into reality."

Accusing the Congress government of not doing anything after the stone-laying ceremony, she said: "There was no planning, no seriousness and no projection of implementing this scheme. We are doing this with a lot of planning. The programme was also addressed by Pradhan who said the refinery will bring in lot of growth and development in the state.

Pakistan clerics issue anti-terror fatwa

REUTERS

ISLAMABAD: More than 1,800 Pakistani Muslim clerics have issued an Islamic directive, or fatwa, forbidding suicide bombings, in a book unveiled by the government yesterday.

For years, the South Asian nation has been plagued by violence by militants, who often use suicide bombers.

Suicide attacks are frequently condemned as fanatical and immoral, especially when civilians are killed, but insurgents view the tactic as their most effective weapon.

Seeking to curb "terrorism" that has resulted in tens of thousands of casualties since the early 2000s, the clerics declared suicide bombings to be forbidden, or "haram".

"This fatwa provides a strong base for the stability of a moderate Islamic society," Pakistan President Mamnoon Hussain wrote in the book, prepared by the state-run International Islamic University and released at an official ceremony.

"We can seek guidance from this fatwa for building a national narrative in order to curb extremism, in keeping with the golden principles of Islam."

Foreign and domestic critics of Pakistan's government and

"We can seek guidance from this fatwa for building a national narrative in order to curb extremism, in keeping with the golden principles of Islam," Pakistan President Mamnoon Hussain wrote in the book.

military accuse them of cozying up to radical groups for political and military purposes and say the state has turned a blind eye to hate preachers in mosques for too long.

The fatwa was ratified by a number of prominent clerics who are outspoken critics of liberalism and the West, and are seen as controversial for preaching sectarianism or supporting the Afghan Taliban.

One of the clerics who signed, Muhammad Ahmed Ludhianvi, is the face of a banned sectarian organisation, Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat (ASWJ), and has been placed on a Pakistani legislative list of individuals with suspected links to "terrorism".

The ASWJ figurehead, Aurangzeb Farooqi, attended the

signing ceremony.

Another signatory, Hamid-ul-Haq, is the son of a cleric widely regarded as the "Father of the Afghan Taliban" after many prominent militants, including Taliban founder Mullah Mohammed Omar, were found to have graduated from his seminary in the north-western city of Peshawar.

Pakistani officials deny frequent U.S. allegations about collaborating with militant Islamist proxies in Afghanistan and India, and say vast gains have been made over the past decade against militant outfits such as the Pakistani Taliban.

But privately they also warn any moves against some popular headline groups based in Pakistan would take a long time and need to be undertaken carefully.

Similar anti-suicide bombing fatwas appear to have yielded scant results in the Middle East, where the practice is used by IS militants and other militant groups.

The Pakistani scholars, who declared that "no individual or group has the authority to declare and wage jihad (holy war)", said suicide bombings violate key Islamic teachings and, as such, were forbidden.



Diplomacy

Malaysia's Prime Minister Najib Razak (signed left) and his Singaporean counterpart Lee Hsien Loong (second right) during the exchange of signed documents on cooperation in the field of education at the 8th Singapore-Malaysia leaders retreat, in Singapore, yesterday.

Anti-polio drive in Punjab province

AP

LAHORE: A Pakistani health official says a special anti-polio drive has been launched in the country's eastern Punjab province.

Imran Nazir says the week-long campaign was launched on Monday amid tight security.

He says thousands of

workers are taking part in the drive by going house-to-house to vaccinate children in the struggle to eradicate the crippling disease.

Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria are the only three countries left in the world where polio has not been eliminated.

Pakistan regularly launches anti-polio drives despite threats

from the Taliban who perceive the campaign as part of a Western conspiracy and claim it will sterilise Pakistani children.

The Taliban and other militants have in the past attacked polio vaccination teams, health centers and health workers, even security forces accompanying health workers during the campaign.

ICAN chief urges Japan to join N-ban treaty

REUTERS

TOKYO: The leader of the campaign group that won last year's Nobel Peace Prize yesterday urged Japan to join a United Nations treaty to prohibit nuclear arms, saying a nuclear deterrence strategy would not bring about peace.

The comment by Beatrice Finh, executive director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), comes as Japan increasingly counts on the US nuclear umbrella while North Korea continues its missile and nuclear development in defiance of international pressure.

"If nuclear deterrence creates peace, then, we should welcome North Korean nuclear weapons. Then, it should be peace, right now, right? But that's not the case."

"Instead, we have increased risk. So I think we see clearly evidence that nuclear weapons fuel crisis."

ICAN is a coalition of non-governmental groups that campaigned for a UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was adopted by 122 nations last July.

Japan, the only country to suffer nuclear bombings, did not take part in UN negotiations on the treaty, saying such talks without nuclear armed countries participating would not contribute to bringing about a world without nuclear weapons.



Maritime museum catches fire

Firefighters extinguishing a blaze inside the 17th-century Dutch colonial building maritime museum in Jakarta, yesterday. No casualties were reported as the fire had caused damages to the collections of miniature historical navigation equipment, nautical vessels and maps, an official said.

Philippine Congress begins debate on federal system

AFP

MANILA: Philippine lawmakers yesterday began formal proceedings on changing the government into a federal system that could allow President Rodrigo Duterte to stay in office for more than a decade.

The proposed shift from a unitary system would give the next president two five-year terms and strong federal powers over a nation that would be divided into five federal states, congressional leader Roger Mercado said.

Although the proposed

charter calls for a federal, parliamentary system with the prime minister as head of government, the president would still have vast powers, Mercado, a member of Duterte's ruling coalition, said.

"The president will have oversight power over all branches of government," including parliament and the courts, Mercado, the House of Representatives constitutional amendments committee chairman, said in a public hearing.

Under the proposed draft being debated by Mercado's

commission, Duterte, whose single six-year term ends in mid-2022, would again be eligible to run for two more five-year terms.

Ramon Casiple, head of a think-tank involved in the charter change process, said that Duterte and all elected officials would no longer be bound by the term limits under the current 1987 constitution.

"That is always the case: if you have a (new) constitution, everybody starts with a clean slate."

He said Duterte, who has been pressing the charter-change effort,

wants the new constitution ratified in a vote by May 2019. Mercado is pushing his committee's version to be adopted.

Casiple said Congress, which is controlled by Duterte allies, could form itself into a "constituent assembly" to rewrite the constitution as early as May and could finish the draft new charter by December.

Duterte and congressional allies want to effect the changes by having the House and the Senate sit as one in a constituent assembly to change the constitution.

The president says giving

buildings and basements."

The false alarm came just days after Hawaii's Emergency Management Agency sent a mistaken warning of a North Korean missile attack to mobile phones across the state, triggering panic.

NHK said the mistake was the result of an error by a staff member who was operating the alert system for online news, but did not elaborate. NHK deleted the tweet and text warning after several minutes, issued a correction and apologised several times on air and on other formats.

"The flash was a mistake," NHK said. "We are very sorry."

Tension has grown in Japan over North Korean missile tests as they have flown closer to Japanese coasts.

61 children die from malnutrition and measles in Papua

ANATOLIA

YOGYAKARTA: At least 61 children have died of measles epidemic and malnutrition in Asmat Province of eastern Papua province over the past four months, an official said.

Elsa Kambu, head of the regency, said dozens of children have died since September 2017, and the number could increase as

An official said local government has deployed four health teams at 23 districts covering 224 villages to prevent the spread of measles outbreak.

the epidemic continues to spread in dozens of villages in the regency.

She said local government has deployed four health teams at 23 districts covering 224 villages to prevent the spread of measles outbreaks.

"I have started to lead a meeting with the medical team a week ago to address the serious issue," Kambu said.

"We agreed to form four teams to get to the field immediately to prevent spread of

measles and give supplemental feeding for toddlers and children," she said.

She said the government did not respond quickly to the epidemic because, among other things, it was difficult to reach several districts and many people could not be found in their villages as they usually live nomadic and sometimes stay in the forest.

"In addition, the numbers of medical personnel serving the local clinics are also very limited," she said, adding that the Asmat government still compiling the official data of citizens, who died from the epidemic. Nearly 500 children have suffered from the disease so far.

President Joko Widodo on Sunday had ordered local governments to move quickly to deal

with the epidemic.

Children commonly suffer from malnutrition in Papua Province -- the most impoverished of Indonesia's 33 provinces -- where meals are usually limited to vegetables and potatoes. The widespread lack of access to safe water and inadequate sanitation also cause a wide range of illnesses including malaria and leprosy in the province.

Kosovan Serb leader assassinated

AP

MITROVICA: A leading Serb politician in northern Kosovo was gunned down yesterday morning, an attack that raised ethnic tensions in the Balkans and prompted the suspension of EU-mediated talks between Kosovo and Serbia.

Assaults opened fire on Oliver Ivanovic, 64, close to the offices of his political party in the Serb-controlled northern city of Mitrovica. He was taken to a hospital but doctors were unable to save him.

The doctors said Ivanovic had received at least five gunshot wounds to his upper torso. The assassins escaped in a car that was later found burned out. Kosovo police sealed off the area of the shooting and began a manhunt for the attackers.

Ivanovic was one of the key politicians in Serb-dominated northern Kosovo, a former Serbian province where tensions

The doctors said Ivanovic had received at least five gunshot wounds to his upper torso.

still remain high a decade after it declared independence in 2008. Serbia does not recognise that independence.

Ivanovic was considered a moderate who maintained relations with Nato and EU officials even after Serbia lost the control of its former province following Nato's 1999 bombing to stop a deadly Serb crackdown against ethnic Albanian separatists.

A Kosovo court convicted Ivanovic of war crimes during the 1998 to 1999 war. That verdict was overturned and a retrial was underway.

In Pristina, the Kosovo government strongly denounced the slaying, saying it considers the attack a challenge to "the rule of



A ripped poster bearing a picture of leading Kosovo Serb politician Oliver Ivanovic.

law and efforts to establish the rule of law in the whole of Kosovo territory."

In Belgrade, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic held a top security meeting to discuss the shooting. Afterward, he called the killing "a terrorist act" and said Serbia is demanding that international missions in Kosovo

include Serbia in their investigation into the slaying.

"Serbia will take all necessary steps so the killer or killers are found," he said.

At the news of Ivanovic's slaying, the Serb delegation at the EU talks in Brussels immediately left to return to Belgrade.

Delegation leader Marko Djuric said "whoever is behind this attack ... whether they are Serb, Albanian or any other criminals, they must be punished."

EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini called the presidents of Serbia and Kosovo to express the EU's condemnation of the killing. She appealed for both sides "to show calm and restraint."

The head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Ambassador Jan Braathu, said he was "shocked and deeply saddened" and considered Ivanovic "among the most prominent Kosovo Serb representatives for almost two decades."

He also urged "all sides to avoid dangerous rhetoric and remain calm at this sensitive time, and recommit themselves to continue the work toward the normalization of relations and improvement of the lives of the citizens of Kosovo and Serbia."

48 injured in Germany bus accident

AFP

BERLIN: At least 48 people were injured, 10 of them seriously, when a school bus in Germany crashed into a wall yesterday, police said.

The accident, whose cause was not immediately clear, occurred at about 7:00am en route to a school in the southwestern town of Eberbach.

The fully occupied school bus drove for reasons that were not immediately clear at full speed into several other vehicles and then into the wall of an electronics shop, police said in a statement.

Forty-three of those hurt were children and a total of 10 victims suffered grave injuries. The driver was slightly hurt, a police spokesman told DPA news agency.



French President Emmanuel Macron (left) during his visit in the French northern city of Calais, yesterday.

Macron gets tough on migrants

AFP

CALAIS: President Emmanuel Macron yesterday vowed that France would no longer allow migrant camps as he defended a tougher line on immigration that has attracted sharp criticism from some of his allies.

In a closely-watched speech in Calais, Macron promised a more orderly immigration policy with zero tolerance for camps like the Jungle, the squalid shantytown near the northern city's port that was once home to some 10,000 migrants dreaming of Britain.

"There will be no reconstruction of the Jungle and no tolerance for the illegal occupation of public space," Macron

said in a speech at a police station in the port city.

While the Jungle was demolished in late 2016, hundreds of migrants remain in Calais, trying night after night to stow away on trucks heading across the Channel to England.

Calais has long been a sore point in relations with Britain and ahead of his first trip to London as president on Thursday, Macron called for better cooperation in managing the border.

Gearing up for his talks with Prime Minister Theresa May, Macron called for "specific responses" from Britain on the thorny issue of unaccompanied minors stranded in France—some of whom have relatives in

Britain.

May's spokesman issued a statement on an issue that is set to cause tension on Thursday, saying, "We've taken a significant number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children from the area around and in Calais already."

As Europe struggles with a historic wave of arrivals, Macron blasted EU migration policy as "insufficient and incoherent", repeating his call for the bloc to set up a shared asylum office.

He joined a chorus of criticism for the "Dublin" asylum rules which say asylum seekers must be dealt with in the country where they arrive, creating a huge burden for frontline states like Italy.

Czech govt loses confidence vote

AFP

PRAGUE: The new Czech minority cabinet led by billionaire Andrej Babis lost a parliamentary confidence vote yesterday, after lawmakers spurned the populist who has been charged with EU subsidy fraud.

"The parliament refused to voice confidence in the cabinet," parliament speaker Radek Vondracek said, rejecting the government in a vote of 117 to 78. All those in favour were members of Babis's ANO (YES) movement.

President Milos Zeman has promised the prime minister

another try at forming a government, but he insisted that Babis should prove he has the necessary backing for his second cabinet.

Campaigning on an anti-corruption, anti-euro and anti-immigration ticket, Babis, dubbed the "Czech Trump", and his ANO party came out on top in October's general election, far outstripping eight other elected parties.

But potential coalition partners have snubbed the Slovak-born billionaire, suspicious of his communist past and recent police charges over alleged fraud, which Babis flatly denies.

The mogul, whom Forbes pegs as the second wealthiest Czech citizen, has been charged with breaking EU subsidy rules back in 2007.

Babis allegedly pulled the Stork Nest farm out of his sprawling Agrofert chemicals, food and media holding to make it eligible for an EU subsidy granted to small companies, before eventually returning it to the holding.

Just before the confidence vote, the 63-year-old premier asked parliament to strip him of immunity, insisting that "no one stole anything, there was no corruption."

Russian pollster stops pre-election surveys

BLOOMBERG

MOSCOW: Russia's main independent pollster said it has stopped publishing surveys related to the March presidential election for fear of legal problems under a Kremlin-backed law that designated the group a "foreign agent."

"They simply want to shut our mouth," Lev Gudkov, director of the Levada Center, said in a telephone interview. The group's surveys had shown likely turnout in the March 18 contest at about 52 to 54 percent, far below the levels reported by the two other main polling companies, both of which are controlled by the government. All three show over 70 percent support for President Vladimir Putin, but low voter participation could undermine Kremlin hopes of winning a resounding mandate in the vote.

"Russian authorities declared Levada a foreign agent in 2016, under a new law aimed at limiting alleged outside influence in politics. The move effectively bans it from publishing polls related to national votes," Gudkov said. He dismissed the official justification for the status — receipt of foreign funding — as "complete garbage."

Populists vow to scrap vaccine decree ahead of Italy polls

AFP

ROME: Two Italian populist parties running in March elections are promising to scrap a compulsory vaccination law, a hot-button issue after a measles outbreak claimed four lives last year.

Under the decree, which sparked heated public debate when it took effect six months ago, children cannot enroll in a creche or kindergarten unless they have been vaccinated against measles as well as nine other diseases.

Parents of unvaccinated children aged between six and 16 face fines of up to \$610.

Now the far-right Northern League and the populist Five Star Movement (M5S) are proposing to scrap the decree ahead of the March elections in which the two parties and a divided left will go up against strong centre-right coalition.

M5S leader Luigi Di Maio says the law should revert to the previous four compulsory vaccines, while adding measles, after last year's outbreak sickened nearly 5,000 people and killed four.

He noted that Italy's measles immunisation rate of 87 percent is far below the 95 percent threshold recommended by the World Health Organization.

Northern League leader Matteo Salvini opposed the decree from the start, saying that while he had his children vaccinated he believed the shots should be optional.

The stance is at odds with the party's ally, the conservative Forza Italia movement of former premier Silvio Berlusconi, which voted in favour of the measure last year.

Inventor may face life sentence for murder

REUTERS

COPENHAGEN: Danish prosecutors will seek to have inventor Peter Madsen jailed for life for killing Swedish journalist Kim Wall on his home-built submarine in a premeditated murder, possibly by either cutting her throat or strangling her, police said yesterday.

Wall, a freelance journalist who was researching a story on the entrepreneur and aerospace engineer, went missing after Madsen took her out to sea in his submarine in August last year.

Later that month, police identified a headless female torso washed ashore in Copenhagen as that of Wall.

"Madsen has been charged with the murder and dismembering of Wall along with a charge of sexual assault without

intercourse of a particularly dangerous nature," police said yesterday.

Police said in October investigators had found 14 interior and exterior stab wounds to the journalist's genitals.

Madsen has admitted to dismembering Wall on board his submarine and dumping her body parts in the sea, but he denies murdering or sexually assaulting her.

A police statement said that, according to the prosecution's indictment, the murder had taken place "with prior planning and preparation".

"This is a very unusual and extremely brutal case which has had tragic consequences for Kim Wall and her relatives," said Special Prosecutor Jakob Buch-Jepsen, according to the statement.

Two dead in Belgium explosion

AFP

BRUSSELS: Belgian rescuers found two dead bodies early yesterday at the site of a powerful suspected gas explosion in the port city of Antwerp that also injured 14 people, police said.

The blast late Monday, which police say is not linked to terrorism, collapsed or severely damaged several buildings in the Paardenmarkt area of central Antwerp, a Dutch-speaking city in northern Belgium.

"Police confirm two more victims found under the rubble, both deceased. The victims have not yet been identified," Antwerp police said on Twitter.

Several people were pulled alive from the rubble on Monday night.

"Research into the cause of the explosion at Paardenmarkt continues," it added.



Emergency services work after the explosion at Paardenmarkt area, in Antwerp, yesterday.

Belgium's French-language broadcaster RTBF reported that a gas leak was suspected as the cause of the blast at around 9:30pm on Monday, though it had yet to be confirmed.

Police said the explosion was not related to terrorism, while Belgium has been on a high state of alert since 16 people were killed in suicide bombings in the capital Brussels in March 2016.

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Shop Dine Play Relax Enjoy

US & allies for more pressure on N Korea

REUTERS

VANCOUVER: Sanctions pressure must be maintained on North Korea to force it to abandon its nuclear weapons programme and the world should not be fooled by its current charm offensive in engaging South Korea, participants at a 20-nation meeting on North Korea said yesterday.

"We must increase the costs of the regime's behaviour to the point that North Korea must come to the table for credible negotiations," US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson told the one-day meeting in Vancouver.

North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un has refused to give up development of nuclear missiles capable of hitting the United States in spite of increasingly severe sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council.

Japan's Foreign Minister Taro Kono said the world should not be naive about North Korea's "charm offensive" in engaging in talks with South Korea ahead of next month's Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said: "We must increase the costs of the regime's behaviour to the point that North Korea must come to the table for credible negotiations."

"It is not the time to ease pressure or to reward North Korea," he said. "The fact that North Korea is engaging in dialogue could be interpreted as proof that the sanctions are working."

Tillerson said North Korea must not be allowed "to drive a wedge" through allied resolve or solidarity and reiterated Washington's rejection of a Chinese-Russian proposal for the US and South Korea to freeze military exercises in return for a freeze in North Korea's weapons programs.

He urged China and Russia, which have sharply criticised the Vancouver meeting and are not attending, to fully implement UN sanctions.

Tillerson said the Vancouver gathering, which groups countries that backed South Korea during the 1950-53 Korean War, - in which Russia and China backed the North - would aim to improve the effectiveness of the US-led "maximum pressure" campaign on Pyongyang and combat its attempts to evade sanctions.

He said all countries needed to work together to improve interdiction of ships attempting to skirt the sanctions and said there must be "new consequences" for North Korea "whenever new aggression occurs."

Earlier on Tuesday, Chinese state media said Chinese President Xi Jinping told US President Donald Trump on a phone call that unity on the North Korea issue was extremely important and the hard-earned easing of tensions must continue.

The White House said Trump and Xi both expressed hope that the resumption of dialogue between North and South might prompt a change in Pyongyang's "destructive behaviour" but



FROM LEFT: South Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs Kang Kyung-wha; US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson; Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs Chrystia Freeland and Japan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Taro Kono during the Foreign Ministers' Meeting on Security and Stability on the Korean Peninsula, in Vancouver, British Columbia, yesterday.

Trump also committed to sustain the maximum pressure campaign.

North and South Korea held formal talks for the first time in two years this month and Pyongyang said it would send athletes to the Olympics.

South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha said in

Vancouver she hoped the dialogue with North Korea would continue well beyond the

Olympics, but stressed that existing sanctions must be applied more rigorously.

"I believe these two tools - tough sanctions and pressure on the one hand, and the offer of a different, brighter future on the other - (have) worked hand in hand," she said.

"The concerted efforts of the international community have begun to bear fruit."

Separately yesterday, UN

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said UN sanctions must be fully implemented and added that unity of the 15-member council "paves the way for diplomatic engagement."

At the same time, Guterres welcomed the reopening of inter-Korean communication channels, especially military to military, calling this critical to lowering the risk of miscalculation or misunderstanding.

13 siblings found chained in California home

REUTERS

PERRY: A California couple has been charged with torture after police rescued their 13 malnourished children from a home where some of them had been chained to beds, and neighbours yesterday described the family as shut-ins who shunned social contact.

Police made the discovery after a 17-year-old girl escaped the house in Perris, about 113km east of Los Angeles, and used a cellular phone she had found in the house to call them, the Riverside County Sheriff's Office said yesterday.

"Deputies located what they believed to be 12 children inside the house, but were shocked to discover that seven of them were actually adults," police said in a statement. "The victims



Louise Anna Turpin and David Allen Turpin

appeared to be malnourished and very dirty."

The children ranged in age from 2 to 29, police said.

The girl, who officers had initially thought was about 10 years old, contacted police on Sunday after escaping the one-story house.

The parents, David Allen Turpin, 57, and Louise Anna Turpin, 49, were arrested and each charged with nine counts of torture and 10 counts of child endangerment. They were ordered held on \$9m bail each.

Neighbours said the Turpins and their children rarely

emerged from their unkempt home in the new built development of closely spaced single-family houses.

Police said six of the couple's children were minors, while the other seven were over 18.

The siblings told officers that they were starving and police did not give the parents' motive for holding the children captive.

A Facebook page that appeared to have been created by the parents showed the couple dressed in wedding clothes, surrounded by 10 girls in matching purple plaid dresses and three male children in suits.

California state records list David Turpin as the principal of the Sandcastle Day School, with its address at the Turpin house.

The Turpins are due in court tomorrow.

10 dead in Colombia helicopter crash

REUTERS

BOGOTA: Ten people were killed when a Colombian army helicopter crashed near the town of Segovia, in northern Antioquia province, yesterday, the army said.

The Russian-made MI-17 helicopter, carrying eight army personnel and two civilians, crashed yesterday morning on route from the town of Cauca.

Staff onboard the helicopter were set to inspect army gasoline storage facilities.

"The hypothesis is of an accident, it is being investigated," General Juan Vicente Trujillo, head of the army's

aviation division, said, ruling out an attack as the cause of the crash.

The National Liberation Army (ELN) rebel group, which recently restarted attacks after the end of a ceasefire with the government, is active in the area.

Troops were at the site working to recover the bodies of the victims, Trujillo said.

Colombia reached a peace agreement with the now-disbanded Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) rebel group last year, ending five decades of war. But the ELN, FARC dissidents, right-wing ex-paramilitaries and crime gangs remain active.

Mitt Romney declines to confirm Utah Senate bid

AP

SALT LAKE CITY: Former Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney has declined to say whether he would run for the Utah Senate seat being vacated by Republican Orrin Hatch.

Romney demurred yesterday when asked about a year 2018 campaign while speaking about economic and policy issues in Salt Lake City.

It's the first of two speeches the former Massachusetts governor is scheduled to give this week to leaders of Utah's business community as he ratchets up his appearances in the US state.

Those close to the 70-year-old say he's interested in running in his adopted home of Utah and expect an announcement soon.

The former Massachusetts governor moved to Utah after losing the year 2012 presidential election and became a frequent critic of President Donald Trump.

He called then-candidate Trump "a fraud" and unfit to be president.



Anti-racism protest

Hundreds of people demonstrate against racism in the Brooklyn neighbourhood of Bay Ridge, in New York City, yesterday.

AFP

WASHINGTON: Former top White House aide Steve Bannon appeared yesterday at the House Intelligence Committee to testify behind closed doors in its sensitive probe into the Trump campaign's links to Russia.

It is the first time Bannon has testified in the probe of whether

campaign associates of the president colluded with Russia in its bid to influence the 2016 US elections.

It was not likely to be Bannon's last such testimony: the *New York Times* reported yesterday that Bannon has been subpoenaed by Robert Mueller, the justice Department special counsel investigating the same issue.

That made Bannon the first person from President Donald Trump's inner circle to receive a grand jury subpoena from Mueller in the probe, which is also looking at whether Trump has tried to obstruct the investigation.

The testimony of Trump's estranged political strategist could be explosive: he had a front-row seat as

chief executive of the year 2016 presidential election campaign in its final months, and as a top policy advisor in the first seven months of the administration.

An incendiary book released last week, "Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House," by Michael Wolff, quoted him as saying that a pre-election meeting involving Trump's eldest son Donald Jr and a

Kremlin-linked Russian lawyer was "treasonous."

Wolff, who painted a picture of an erratic and poorly informed president, was given substantial access to the White House during Trump's first year by Bannon.

A hard-line nationalist who sought to shake up US domestic and foreign policy, Bannon, 64, was forced out as Trump's chief strategist in August.

Russia probe: Bannon testifies before House panel

PRAYER TIMINGS	
FAJR	05.01am
SHOROOK	06.21am
ZUHR	11.44am
ASR	02.46pm
MAGHRIB	05.09pm
ISHA	06.39pm



Kareena to light up Bollywood Fashion Show

RAYNALD C RIVERA
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Bollywood superstar Kareena Kapoor Khan is set to light up the runway at the Bollywood Fashion Show tonight at Mondrian Doha as she takes the ramp wearing a Vikram Phadnis Indian Lehenga.

Speaking to local media yesterday, famous celebrity designer Vikram Phadnis could not hide his excitement of having the actress appear at the finale of the show in his Doha debut as he recalled their long working relationship which he said dates back prior to Kareena's rise to stardom.

"I'm excited because I've worked with her in the film *Ajaneba* and known her even before she became an actress. Kareena is somebody who sets the runway on fire. I've done so many shows with her and she's one of the easiest to work with in the industry," he said.

Vikram will be one of the six designers who will feature at tonight's fashion show which serves as a highlight of Shop QATAR organized by Qatar Tourism Authority (QTA). He will be closing the show with 25 of his latest creations including Kareena's outfit set to be different from the rest.

"Tomorrow, her outfit will be completely different from the other 25 outfits; it's a typical Indian Lehenga. Her styling, the way we will present her in the runway will be completely different from what people will see with the other 25," explained Vikram who described the show as 'dramatic.'

Marking his 27th year in the fashion industry, he said the collection which people will see on the ramp tonight will be a first for the brand, a departure from what he usually does which are typical Indian clothes.

He was thankful to QTA for offering him and the other designers a platform to foray in Doha, a new destination for his creations.

"I'm looking forward to interacting with the crowd tomorrow. It's an exciting feeling because tomorrow a new side of the world will see our collections," he said.

More than 100 designs will be showcased tonight by well-known Indian designers including Archana Kochhar, Nida Mahmood, Saaj by Ankit, Pallavi Jaijpur, Mandira Wirk and Vikram.

Ankita Chaudhry will be presenting 10 to 12 outfits from her 'Azalea' collection which she said



Famous Indian designers Vikram Phadnis (right) and Ankit Chaudhry speak to the media at Mondrian Doha yesterday.

represents 'a global well-travelled woman.' The collection is inspired by Indian culture, particularly Indian arts and crafts using Indian hues.

"It is not a very traditional typical Indian wear. It has a touch of the modern Indian woman in it. It has newer silhouette, the kind that everybody in the world can also relate to. The sarees that we do are not very typical sarees that anybody in the world like here in Qatar can wear as

well," she said, citing the proximity of Indian culture to Qatari culture when it comes to fashion.

"I think it is something which can easily be fused to Qatari fashion because Indian and Qatari cultures traditionally have certain similarities and lots of overlaps in them such as the usage of colours and extravagance and richness of things," she explained.

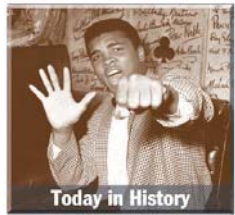
The fashion show starts at 7pm with red carpet at 6pm.



17°C Minimum | 23°C Maximum

Hazy at first becomes mild daytime with slight mist at places and some clouds, cold by night.

HIGH TIDE 05:45 - 16:30 LOW TIDE 13:00 - 22:30
COURTESY: Qatar Meteorology Department



Today in History
January 17, 1942
▲ U.S. prizefighter Muhammad Ali, the first world heavyweight boxing champion to win the title three times, was born as Cassius Clay in Louisville, Kentucky

- 1929: Popeye first appeared as a minor character in an American newspaper cartoon strip
- 1996: In Norway, four men were jailed for stealing Edward Munch's famous painting, *The Scream*
- 2003: Argentina was able to postpone a \$1bn debt repayment after agreeing to implement IMF fiscal policies
- 2011: In the wake of protests in Tunisia, a man set himself on fire outside parliament in Cairo, Egypt

Picture: Getty Images © GRAPHIC NEWS

DIFI seminar discusses strengths & challenges of Qatari families

ANNA PERVAIZ RAO
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Doha International Family Institute (DIFI), a member of Qatar Foundation (QF), in collaboration with the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs, yesterday started its two-day public seminar titled 'Qatari Families: Strengths and Challenges', at the Qatar National Convention Centre.

The seminar discussed the findings of a study on Qatari families, as part of a larger DIFI research project on Arab family strengths in Qatar, Jordan, and Tunisia.

In her opening speech, Noor Al Malki Al Jehani, Executive Director of the Doha International Family Institute, stressed that DIFI is committed to its ambitious research programme in supporting family policy-making in Qatar specifically and in the Arab world in general.

Al-Jehani referred to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which considers the family as the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

In reference to this, she highlighted Qatar National Vision 2030 second pillar of Social Development states that Qatar aspires to advance and develop the social dimensions of its society by nurturing Qatari citizens capable of dealing effectively and flexibly with the requirements of the age they live in, and by preserving a strong and coherent family that enjoys support, care and social protection. She added that to strengthen and protect families, a consistent set of supportive interventions must be adopted by the family, community and state.

She revealed researches confirm the importance of understanding the social and cultural context in which families live, which is supportive or frustrating for the family and lessens its role.

"Interventions and policies that neglect the social and cultural context of families often fail to achieve their goals, so imported solutions and ready-made policies often fail even if they have been successful in their communities of origin," she explained.

Al-Jehani assured that "the outputs, opinions, and recommendations of this seminar will be an extension of an extensive field study to be carried out by the DIFI this year in order to gain



Participants during the opening session of the seminar titled, 'Qatari Families: Strengths and Challenges', by Doha International Family Institute at QNCC yesterday. PIC: ABDULL BASIT / THE PENINSULA

more in-depth look at the characteristics of Qatari families"

Director of Family Affairs Department at Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs, Najat Al Abdullah said the State of Qatar has given great importance to the family and the welfare of its young to provide suitable conditions for the development of its members, as guaranteed by the constitution and national legislation, which maximize the role of the family and achieve its interests.

She added that the Qatar National Vision 2030 pillar related to social development and protection aims to maintain a cohesive and strong family that cares for its children and is committed to ethics, religion, and ideals.

She added that the State of Qatar is

witnessing an unprecedented leap in the family field, which imposes great responsibility on entities which take care of families so that their members can defend their rights and participate in the development of their communities. In addition, she said, the Ministry has taken care of the issues of family and childhood and has organized many activities and events that focused on how the community is aware of family rights.

Al Abdullah expressed her hope that by attending this seminar, the experts will be able to produce a strategic vision, innovative methods that comply with the nature of the Qatari community.

The two-day seminar included the following four-panel discussions: 'Marital Relationships', 'Parenting', 'Culture', and 'Financial Aspects'.

First Del Monte F&B store opens at HIA

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Hamad International Airport (HIA) announced yesterday the opening of the first Del Monte F&B store in Qatar at the airport. Located in Concourse A, near Gate A3, Del Monte F&B store is the newest addition to more than 30 cafes and restaurants currently at the airport.

The menu is designed to suit all tastes, in line with the diversity of passengers transiting through HIA; it is a combination of ultra-fresh juices, smoothies, and freshly made salads, sandwiches, wraps and muffins.

"The growing trend for healthier snacks and on-the-go food has opened up a new market catering for the health-conscious," opined Wissam Baghdadi, Del Monte Operations Manager MENA. "We want to encourage everyone to make healthy choices, whether that means a high-protein wrap, an ultra-fresh juice or a protein-rich salad. Qatar is no exception to the rising demand of healthy



Officials and staff during the opening of the first Del Monte F&B store in Qatar at the airport.

food and is a priority market for Del Monte. We are looking forward to catering to HIA 30 million passengers and are proud to team up with a world-class airport." HIA offers 40,000 square meters of combined retail, food and beverage facilities and is partnering with a wide diversity of brands in order to meet the airport customers' taste and preferences.

"The passenger is at the heart of HIA's growth strategy. HIA is continuously investing a

lot of efforts to improve its hospitality offer to passengers transiting through the airport from all corners of the globe. The diversity of food and beverage is part of the dining experience offered by HIA. We are conscious that healthy food is extremely important for travellers on-the-go and are glad to welcome the first Del Monte® F&B store in Qatar at the airport," said Abdulaziz Al Mass, VP Commercial, and Marketing at HIA.

Stifling your sneeze may rupture your throat

IAN5

LONDON: While pinching your nose and clamping your mouth shut to contain a forceful sneeze may be part of the workplace etiquette, it can rupture the throat, doctors have warned.

Ear, nose and throat (ENT) specialists at the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust warned that trying to withhold a forceful sneeze should be avoided as it could lead to "numerous complications".

"Halting sneezing via blocking (the) nostrils and mouth is a dangerous manoeuvre, and should be avoided," said researchers including Sudip Das, an ENT specialist at the hospital. In the paper detailed in the journal *BMJ Case Reports*, they cited the case of a 34-year-old man, who ruptured the back of his throat during this manoeuvre, leaving him barely able to speak.

Ancient Hebrew grammar book returns to Prague

AP

PRAGUE: A 16th century book that belonged to Prague's Jewish community before World War II and surfaced at a New York City auction last year was brought back to the Czech Republic yesterday.

Titled "Mikne Avram

-Peculum Abrae," the recovered volume is a grammar book published in both Hebrew and Latin in 1523. It was written by Abraham ben Melir de Balmes, and published in Italy. It belonged to the library of Prague's community before the war, and it is not clear under how it disappeared.



Demolition

The temporary bridge over the Mesamer Roundabout (Leabidly Roundabout) is seen demolished to facilitate the revamp of the roundabout into a multi-level interchange.

PIC: SALIM MATRAMKOT / THE PENINSULA