In the latest Global Competitiveness Report, released recently by the World Economic Forum (WEF), Qatar is ranked on top in the Arab region for the macroeconomic environment of the country. Qatar is placed at 21st position, with a score of 4.7, in the ranking of 137 countries. Qatar is also ranked on top in the Arab region for the macroeconomic environment of the country. With a score of 5.9, Qatar ranks second globally. The global ranking of Norway is on the top in the ranking followed by South Korea. In the overall ranking of the report, Qatar is ranked 21st globally. The Qatar Businessmen Association (QBA) along with Qatar University, specifically the Social and Economic Research Institute (SIERI) have been the local strategic partners of WEF in Qatar, where throughout 31 consecutive years, QBA worked with WEF to highlight the strengths of the local economy, especially with respect to the investment climate and opportunities in all areas. The Global Competitiveness Report presents a comprehensive picture of competitiveness in the world by collecting data in 12 core categories of competitiveness: enterprise, innovation, macroeconomic environment, health, basic education, higher education and training, commodity market efficiency, labor market efficiency, capital market development, technological, market size, business, and innovation. The report also highlights Qatar’s strengths and opportunities in all areas.

Blockade unethical and un-Islamic: Speakers

The Peninsula

Expressing disappointment over illegal, unethical, un-Islamic actions of some countries, speakers at an international seminar emphasised the need of dialogue to resolve political disputes. The Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID) organised an intellectual seminar entitled ‘The Role of Dialogue in Crisis Solving: Siege of Qatar: an Example’ in which the speakers termed the ongoing blockade of Qatar as illegal, unethical and against the teachings of Islam and other religions.

The seminar was addressed by Dr Ali Mohd Al Qureaishe, Secretary-General of the World Union of Muslim Scholars. Dr Aisha Al Manaa, Director of the Mohammed bin Hamad Al Thani Center for Islamic Contributions to Civilizations, Dr Ali Al Hammadi, prominent Qatar journalist and Eng. Abdulla Hezar Al Salahi, senior adviser to Qatar Petroleum. The seminar was moderated by Dr Ibrahim Al Namari, Chairman of the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue. The speakers touched different themes including the siege and the methods of solving it from the legal perspective: the evaluation of media discourse in dealing with the crisis, and lessons learnt from the siege.

Gas prices for October

Qatar Petroleum announced diesel and petrol prices for October 2017. The prices are QAR 3.50 per litre for diesel, QAR 70 per litre for petrol super and QAR 60 per litre for petrol premium.

Qatar Airways cancels flights to Erbil and Sulaymaniyah

QATAR AIRWAYS announced yesterday that it will cancel flights to northern Iraq from today at the request of Iraq’s Civil Aviation authority. The airline said in a statement on its website that the flights to and from Erbil and Sulaymaniyah have been cancelled after Iraqi authorities said all international air traffic would be suspended from today onwards.

Qatar and Oman companies sign ferry transport agreement

Qatar Airways

The Peninsula

Qatar Airways and Oman Shipping Company signed an agreement to start a movement of ferries transporting goods, equipment, cars and tourists from the ballast of Oman to Qatar and vice versa. The agreement was signed on the sidelines of the Oman Products Exhibition (OPED) by Qatar Chamber board member Mohammed Jaffer Said Al Mohammed and executive director of Oman, Ahmed Said Al Hamadi. Over 160 companies based in Oman participated in the exhibition which was held at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DCC).

The agreement assumes importance as it will boost the trade between the two countries. Companies from Qatar and Oman are looking to increase business activities. A number of Qatari companies, including several small and mid-sized enterprises (SMEs) are negotiating with local businesses and investors to establish partnerships aiming to set up factories and production units in Oman.
Omar sees 10% increase in real estate activities

The Peninsula

T he real estate activities increased 10 per cent last week compared to the previous week. Data from the Ministry of Municipality and Environment shows that the number of transactions in the real estate sector increased last week. According to the data, the number of transactions increased from 7,450 to 8,100 over the last week. The data also shows that the number of properties sold increased from 2,500 to 2,800 over the same period. The increase in real estate activities is attributed to the recent improvements in the real estate market, including the decrease in property prices and the availability of more properties. The Ministry of Municipality and Environment has stated that this increase is expected to continue in the coming weeks, due to the positive trends in the real estate market and the increasing demand for properties. The data also shows that the number of properties rented increased from 1,000 to 1,200 over the last week, indicating a strong demand for rental properties in the market. The Ministry of Municipality and Environment has attributed this increase to the growing demand for rental properties among local and expatriate residents.

A total of 1,916 real estate activities including property registration, authentications and other associated services were recorded during September 17 to 23. A deal of a house worth QR75m was made in Al Doha municipality. The deal was of a house measuring 750m² and included a plot of land worth QR40m. A total of 66 deals were made under QR1m. The small deals included three plots of land worth QR250,000 and one building measuring about 100m² in Al Khor. A total of 47 complaints were received by the Ministry of Municipality and Environment over the last week. The grievances brought to the ministry included issues related to the payment of wages and violations of the law. The ministry has stated that it will take action against those responsible for these grievances.

Emir meets CEO of Italian company Eni

Qatar takes part in 6th ALECSO meet in Kuwait

The State of Qatar participated in the meetings of the sixth Irregular General Conference of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) held yesterday in Kuwait. The delegation of Qatar was headed by Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani. Kuwait’s Dr Sanad Al Harbi was elected President of the General Assem- ber of ALECSO from five candidates – Morocco’s Mounir, Tunisia’s Lybia and Iraq’s Frisand. The conference started discussing the importance of joint Arab actions and the support of states in all fields of education, culture and science as well as the importance of good selec- tion of the candidate for the post among the candidates who possess rich experiences.

Dr Al Hamadi meets new Libyan Ambassador

Secretary-General of the Foreign Ministry, H E Dr Ahmed bin Hassan Al Hammadi, received the new ambassador of Brazil to Qatar. The ambassador met with the minister and discussed the bilateral relations between Qatar and Brazil. The meeting also included discussions on the recent developments in the Middle East, the situation in Syria and the ongoing talks to a peace agreement. The minister congratulated the ambassador on his appointment and wished him success in his new role.

Indian Embassy holds consular camps

The Embassy of India in Qatar organised four consular camps at Salwa, Messeideed, Al Khor and Dukhan-Zikreet areas and rendered 107 consular services to the Indian nationals in a week. The camps, which were a part of the Open House, were held in the presence of some other members of the ICBF Benevolent Forum (ICBF), and the Minister of Interior, Dr Al Hamadi. The activities included property registration, authentications and other associated services. The procedures included the issuance of new passports, the renewal of visas, the extension of visas, the renewal of residence permit and the payment of fines. The camps were attended by a large number of Indian nationals. The Indian Embassy has stated that it will continue to organise such camps in the future to provide consular services to the Indian community in Qatar.

Al Jazeera launches new content on Instagram

Al Jazeera Media Network launched yesterday its new Instagram channel, to reach out to the audiences with new and captivating content produced by young journalists from diverse backgrounds. The launch comes as part of Al Jazeera’s digital transformation strategy to boost its presence on available platforms and to prove to the world that press freedom and access to information are basic rights that cannot be taken away by any other party in the world. “I am delighted to announce that Al Jazeera is preparing to launch its first Instagram channel in the region. We are committed to produce content that speaks to the youth through various social media platforms,” said Al Jazeera’s Executive Director of Digital, Dr Yousif Buhle. The new channel will focus on four topics:.AllowUser to reach out to the audiences with new and captivating content produced by young journalists from diverse backgrounds. The launch comes as part of Al Jazeera’s digital transformation strategy to boost its presence on available platforms and to prove to the world that press freedom and access to information are basic rights that cannot be taken away by any other party in the world.

Continued from page 1

The launch of the channel on Instagram comes days after Snapchat had blocked Al Jazeera’s ‘Discover’ service in Saudi Arabia, Umm Arab Emirates and Bah- rain, restricting access to the content. “I want to use this victory to reach out to the youth and the uncles through Al Jazeera Instagram channel,” Buhle said. The new channel will use the most direct forms of communication to reach the audience, including short videos, live streams, and emojis. The channel will focus on four topics: news, entertainment, culture and sports. “Our audience is the main portion of our content strategy,” Buhle said. “We are committed to reach out to them through social media platforms.”

Blockade unethical and un-Islamic: Seminar

Hamad Al Thani Center for Media Freedom and Human Rights organized a seminar at the Institute of Islamic Civilization and Research, Marwah Al Qura, Al Gharafa, to discuss the blockade of the State of Qatar. The seminar was attended by a number of journalists, academics and activists from the region. The seminar was opened by Professor Dr Ibrahim Al Naimi, who called for dialogue and the support of the international community to resolve the crisis. Professor Al Naimi stated that the siege of Qatar by its neighbors is a violation of human rights and international law. The seminar also discussed the impact of the blockade on the lives of Qataris and the region.

Dr Al Qura Daghi, who is the Director of the Hamad Al Thani Center for Islamic Contributions to Civilization, said that the world has witnessed this unfair generalisation against the State of Qatar with allegations that it supports terrorism without proof. Al Qura Daghi also highlighted the efforts of Qatar to fight against terrorism and to promote dialogue and understanding. He said that Qatar is committed to building a future for its people based on peace and prosperity. Al Qura Daghi also highlighted the efforts of Qatar to fight against terrorism and to promote dialogue and understanding. He said that Qatar is committed to building a future for its people based on peace and prosperity. His Excellency Dr Al Qura Daghi highlighted the efforts of Qatar to fight against terrorism and to promote dialogue and understanding. He said that Qatar is committed to building a future for its people based on peace and prosperity.
QU set to announce new strategic plan

Qatar University (QU) said it is set to adopt in a new strategic plan for the period from 2018 to 2022, which will serve as a roadmap for comprehensive transformation that the university aims at in the coming years.

Speaking during the annual convocation yesterday, QU President Hassan Al Derham said the new strategic plan will be a roadmap to comprehensive transformation that the university is set to adopt in the coming years. The president started with a deep analysis of challenges that the university needs to address, notably the academic demands facing a large number of students and the low rates of enrolment in science, technology, engineering and mathematics programs.

Al Derham noted that the gap between the outcomes of the university and the future needs of the market as well as the limited social and economic effect of research are also other challenges facing the university.

The president said the new plan will be accessible for QU community within weeks for review and to learn about in full. He added that several teams from different units were appointed to prepare the draft plan.

Al Derham also said that creating a day dedicated to discussing the university’s future in full is a crucial responsibility. He said that QU has supported students enrolled in universities in siege countries in order to continue their education at the university. He added that the university has set up a comprehensive task with drafting a plan to provide and implement programs, events, lectures and seminars on the siege that discusses the subject across academic and research units. He added QU’s role as a host of students.

Al Derham said that QU understood that selecting education and the nurturing of national cadres is the most important tool for developing nations and promoting the country towards achieving its achievements that it desires.

He highlighted the achievements in the previous academic year at all levels, which reflected on the university’s ranking in global QS and Times Higher Education.

Education (QU) ranked 436th on QS Global University Index for 2018, jump of 44 places from the year before, ranking among the top 44 universities in the world, according to the Times Higher Education ranking, which placed Qatar universities in 8th place among the top universities in the Arab world.

Al Derham also said new five programmes will be introduced in the next academic year, including physical therapy, Quran and Islamic Studies and Islamic Juridical Flight.

Al Derham said the internationally awarded research scholarships amounted to more than QR100m in 2016, stressing the importance of students’ participation to research and development to enhance and develop this skill.

He noted that the research sector is currently working to develop a research strategy for QU for the next five years so as to increase the effectiveness of research.

The president also touched on the infrastructure expansion and the new projects that were opened over the previous academic year as well as the one that will open in the future.

The annual convocation was held in the presence of senior university officials, teaching staff and a number of students. It featured the honouring of the teaching staff and graduation of students from mathematics programs.

Hassan Al Derham said that he current exceptional situation that Qatar is going through in terms of the siege is a critical situation for the country and places every institution and individual in its responsibility. In this regard, he said that QU has supported students enrolled in universities in siege countries in order to continue their education at the university.

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Qatar praises measures by Somali govt on human rights

Qatar has praised the peaceful transition of power in Somalia after the president General Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo, popularly known as Farmajo, was sworn in for a second term.


Qatar also praised the efforts and actions taken by the Somali government to protect and promote human rights, including the rebuilding of state institutions and the adoption of new laws, the most important of which is the establishment of the National Human rights commission and the constitution of the country.

Qatar underlined the importance of the London International Conference on Somalia, calling on the international community and all actors to reduce efforts to address the deteriorating humanitarian situation and continue coordination of assistance and capacity building to support and develop Somali institutions, particularly human rights and security institutions, in order to maintain progress, confront terrorism and extremism and ensure the development of the country.

The celebrations included the Quo Vadis Music Festival, the Quo Vadis Art Competition, a Quo Vadis Fashion Show, the Quo Vadis Culinary Show, the Quo Vadis Photography Competition, the Quo Vadis Film Festival and the Quo Vadis Caravanserai.

Hassan Al Derham said the university aims at in the coming years include developing and improving the teaching staff and staff of the university.

The president said that the current exceptional situation that Qatar is going through means the implementation of the new strategic plan in full, which is currently under QU’s control, in the coming years.

FROM LEFT: QU Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Dr Omar Al Ansari; Prof Maha Khalil Al Durrah who was appointed as QU’s Vice-President for Academic Affairs during the annual convocation yesterday; QU President Dr Hassan Al Derham; Prof Ayat Al-Khulaifi, Chair of the Board of Directors, and Prof Maha Khalil Al Durrah who was appointed as QU’s Vice-President for Academic Affairs.

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The Islamic concept of the life of the Prophet

Dr Mohammed Rateb Nabloi

Prophet Muhammad’s (peace be upon him) merciful heart was always open to those who had suffered or were in need. He was always ready to help those in distress, providing food, clothing, and shelter to the needy. He was a model of compassion and kindness, and his behavior was always guided by compassion and humanity. He was a model of compassion and kindness, and his behavior was always guided by compassion and humanity.

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The human aspect of the life of the Prophet

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Jaitely hits back as BJP war of words heats up

The former minister got support from within the BJP when the veteran BJP leader said the previous Congress-led UPA regime could no longer be held responsible for the mess Indian economy was in today. He had a word of advice to the government. “The questions raised by him, why was he removed from the post. He was asked to write an article rebutting his views as an article was written by his son and Union Minister Jayant Sinha which was not published,” Jaitely said.

Yes, we are getting the images live. I was sitting in the operations room in our command headquarter in Udhampur. I saw the entire operation live how our teams attacked the targets and the entire live feed was switched on to Dilli Headquarter,” former General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Indian Army’s Northern Command Lieutenant General DS Hooda said.

Priya Soman

Priya Soman

A vendor paints pumpkins to resemble demons at a wholesale market during the Durga Puja festival at Chembur in Mumbai, India.

The former Lieutenant General and a former Prime Minister Shankar Dayal Sharma and former Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha expressed their support for him.

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Myanmar to vet Rohingya who fled country

Yangon

AFP

Myanmar is poised to begin "verifying" how many of the nearly half a million Rohingya refugees to Bangladesh it will take back, the Ministry of Information said yesterday.

Some 480,000 Rohingya Muslims have fled Rakhine to Bangladesh since August 25, when militant attacks sparked an army campaign that the UN says was tantamount to "eth- nic cleansing."

The new arrivals are living in miserable conditions on overcrowded returnee camps reliant on a trickle of aid.

Bangladesh, which already hosted hundreds of thousands of Rohingya displaced by the latest crisis, has led the global chorus calling on Myanmar to take back its nationals and guarantee their safety.

But many wonder how many Rohingya, who numbered around 1.1 million in Myanmar before August 25, will be eligi- ble for return to a country that does not recognize them as cit- izens. Many others are unwilling to move back to a place where they face communal hate in Rakhine.

Last week, Myanmar’s leader Aung San Suu Kyi said her country will repatriate Rohingya who have previously lived in the Rakhine state for their return. "We have to cooperate with the Rohingya in a positive manner, even if we disagree with them," she said.

The UN has warned that repatriation efforts risk exacerbating abuses. "We cannot do this, we must not do this," UN envoyadata.

A US delegation to Myanmar is now in the capital Naypyidaw to discuss the issue.

Teenagers charged with murder after school fire leaves 23 dead

Kuala Lumpur

AFP

Two Malaysian teenagers were charged yesterday with intentionally setting fire to an Islamic boarding school for 23 people, mostly boys.

The fire in Kuala Lumpur on Sunday killed one and left 22 others dead, in one of the country’s worst deadly school fires.

The blaze had broken out in a top floor dormitory at the three-story boarding school where most of the students were sleeping in bunk beds, with many of the windows barred by metal grilles.

The two accused were part of a group of seven youths, all male and aged between 12 and 18, who police said had started the fire after being angered by the boarding school’s rules. They lived in the neighborhood and did not attend the school.

Prosecutors declined to provide the suspects’ names or ages, citing juvenile court protection laws, but said both the accused boys were minors.

“They are being tried jointly and are facing 23 counts of murder, one for each victim of the fire,” prosecuting lawyer Othman Abdullah told reporters outside a juvenile court in Kuala Lumpur.

At least 14 dead as Rohingya boat capsizes off Bangladesh

Cox’s Bazar

AFP

A least 15 children and four women were killed when a boat carrying Rohingya fleeing violence in Myanmar capsized off Bangladesh yesterday, as the number of new arrivals topped 500,000.

The latest disaster came in a UN visit to Myanmar’s conflict-battered Rakhine state, postponed yesterday, thwarting efforts to reach the epicenter of violence for the first time since the start of the massive Rohingya exodus.

At the scene of the accident, witnesses and survivors said the boat overturned just yards from the coast after apparently hitting a reef, with about 500 people missing.

A difficult battle starts today,” Abe told reporters, shak- ing his fist. “This is an election about how to protect the lives of individuals,” said the premier.

“[We] have to cooperate with the international community as we face the threat from North Korea,” Abe said.

“Abe asked for public support for his ‘strong diplomacy’ on Kim Jong-un’s regime, which has threatened to ‘sink’ Japan into the sea and fired missiles over its northern Hokkaido island twice in the space of a month, siding Abe’s alliance with the US against the North’s threats.”

The United Nations has urged Myanmar to allow humanitarian access to north- ern parts of Rakhine state since violence erupted in late September, forcing around 480,000 Rohingya to flee.

On Wednesday the UN said it had been informed some aid agencies might join a government-supervised trip to the area yesterday, but the visit did not take place.

The government-organised visit was postponed to next week because of weather conditions, a spokesman from the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in Myanmar said, without giving further details.

Access to the area by relief agencies and global media has been heavily controlled by Myanmar’s army and govern- ment. That has made it impossible to independently assess the situation or allegations of widespread abuses.

Rohingya refugees who have crossed into Bangladesh have brought with them multiple accounts of widespread arson of their villages by Myanmar soldiers and mobs of ethnic Rakhine, who are holding the areas.

Aid groups fear Rohingya Muslims who remain in north- ern parts of Myanmar are in urgent need of food, medicine and shelter after months of military operations.
North Korea says 'old lunatic' Warmbier had no signs of torture

Seoul Agencies

North Korea yesterday accused the US of exploiting Otto Warmbier, an American college student who was arrested in Pyongyang last January and later sent home in a mysterious coma. "The fact that the old lunaticTrump sent Warmbier to the country for 'luring and pushing' stall owners, according to the source," said the North's official newspaper, the Ryugyong Daily.

"Warmbier, who was visiting the North as a tourist in January 2016, was arrested and imprisoned by the regime. In June this year, just days before he was released from custody and sent home in a mysterious coma, in the statement, the North accused the US of "attacking DPRK owners in the US for 'luring and pushing' stall owners," referring to the North's official newspaper, the Ryugyong Daily.

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What happened

There are no surprises coming from North Korea now. Every day is a new normal for the regime of North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un. Though his reclusive regime is targeting the Western world, Washington is the last country on his hit list. Kim scores the highest when his poisoned dart hits the eye in the political board game laid out by his geopolitical and military strategies. Pyongyang has ratcheted up tensions by the day – the diplomatic heat keeps rising a notch every 24 hours. While it was the death of an arrested American student that made headlines on Wednesday as Trump shot across from the hip. North Korea calling Trump an ‘old lunatic’ sent tongues wagging yesterday. With the North Korean crisis, threat at arms up sparks all around the Asia Pacific, tensions on the Korean Peninsula continue to run deep.

Like a steady unbroken drumbeat, supremacist eddies have, by design, worked its way into all segments of an Israeli culture that sees kind as weak, just as soft, and equality as something much less than equal.

As the new administration in the White House seems to have started a need to find that aged, rusted keys can still open the doors to equality, freedom and justice. Not to worry, there is competition galore.

Not to be outdone by Shalak’s call for genocide, in keeping with Israeli political necessity and tradition, Bennett once bragged, “I already killed lots of Arabs in my life, and there is absolutely no problem with that.”

For 70 years, Israeli tropes, whether addressed to their citizens or the diaspora, have been the gateway to informed transformation mistakes. Built of help and hope, this expression of justice is little more than a legible(property and its infrastructure). To her, justice is nothing else, naive, if not slow, learners to believe in the doors to equality, freedom and justice.

Give birth to little snakes.”

Sharon, the war criminal covered with the blood of women and children in Beirut and later, again, in Jenin or Netanyahu, the proud architect of multiple slaughters in Gaza, his deceitful deception has remained constant in the halls of the Israeli power. Absent a democratic shift, don’t expect that to change any time soon, should the current prime minister ultimately find himself in a much more deserved place in the prisoner’s dock. Indeed, waiting in the wings to assume the grand lust are, yet, others that we should shudder at that began with the romanticised myth of Kibbutzim which, almost magically blossomed from the sand and evolved its way to the insolent canard which, today, wraps Israel like a steady unbroken drumbeat, supremacist eddies have, by design, worked its way into all segments of an Israeli culture that sees kind as weak, just as soft, and equality as something much less than equal.

For generations of Israeli leaders, the message, although at times managed, has been that Israel is here to stay, and nothing else, naive, if not slow, learners to believe in the doors to equality, freedom and justice.

But in Israel, where bravado and bombast reign, it’s not, at least not of its own volition. If not to be outdone by Shalak’s call for genocide, in keeping with Israeli political necessity and tradition, Bennett once bragged, “I already killed lots of Arabs in my life, and there is absolutely no problem with that.”

Today, I have no doubt the community will run out of excuses, if not of its own volition, when no such corner exists. It’s not, at least not of its own volition.

“It’s not, at least not of its own volition.

The writer is a lawyer and human rights activist who has done extensive work in the Middle East and Africa.
T he latest lurch of the Republican party at health-care legislation has collapsed in the US Senate. A Republican tax plan – heavily benefiting the wealthy and costing trillions in lost federal tax revenue – has been wrapped in false claims about the economy. With US stocks falling, the US dollar, sterling and yen are falling. The internet is aching for relief.

illegal border crossings have been declining for the better part of two decades, and it’s hard to find border-state Republicans who are excited about Trump’s knowledge-free, multibillion-dollar commitment at the border. The wall may not even matter all that much to Trump’s followers.

A new credit rating agency by the BRICS would be a dues these challenges are not addressed. The agency needs to be truly independent and based on a model which doesn’t base revenue on delivering the results that its clients want.

Can BRICS credit rating agency ever take off?

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The author writes editorials on politics and domestic politics. Bloomberg View. He was executive editor of the Wall Street Journal. He also runs a non-profitely a national affairs writer for Bloomberg View. Bloom

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One of the key reasons that Trump’s wall has failed is that the wall’s cost has been understated. The cost of the wall has been estimated to be $15 billion, but the real cost is likely to be much higher. The wall is also likely to be ineffective in preventing illegal border crossings.

The BRICS credit rating agency could potentially provide an alternative to the existing rating agencies, which are often seen as biased and self-interested. However, it is unclear whether such a new agency would be able to establish its credibility and gain market acceptance.

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German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who has already yielded on Ukraine, is said to have taken a more conciliatory view over Germany and France on many of his ambitious proposals and that EU leaders should move quickly on reform.

There is an agreement that the Western Europe is a world leader, but the EU has been slow to implement the reforms proposed by the French leader, said before meeting with his counterparts to discuss the blockade of the migration reform.

France's current President Emmanuel Macron (left) and his Chancellor Angela Merkel pose for a photo as they meet on the eve of the European Union Digital Summit in Tallinn yesterday.

2017 Nobels to turn page on Dylan, anti-nuclear buzz for peace prize

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Barcelona

Police yesterday seized more than six million euros worth of envelopes and 100 ballot boxes in a Catalan town. The latest bid to block a banned indepen

Crackdown

The Guardia Civil (police force) seized 2.5 million ballots, four million envelopes and 100 ballot boxes in a warehouse in Igualada, according to spokes

The prosecutor dropped

A Dutch school

Compulsory viewings of Rembrandt's masterpieces were halted yesterday as part of a judicial investigation into the appointment of Romina "Ada" Fontana to the post of Rome's mayor. The investigation was launched by the public prosecutor in Rome, who is investigating the mayor's role in a previous

Rome public prosecutor wants mayor tried in cronymism case

Rome’s public prosecutor yesterday asked for city mayor Virginia Raggi to be tried on trial for allegedly making a false statement to an anti-corruption office.

Pension protest

A Dutch school

Millions of ballots seized ahead of Catalan vote

Students take part in a pro-referendum demonstration in Barcelona yesterday. Right: Students with Looney Toons character 'Tweety' masks take part in a pro-referendum demonstration.

Compulsory viewings of Rembrandt’s masterpieces were halted yesterday as part of a judicial investigation into the appointment of Romina "Ada" Fontana to the post of Rome’s mayor. The investigation was launched by the public prosecutor in Rome, who is investigating the mayor’s role in a previous appointment that had been shelved as there was no evidence of her having committed any crime. Raggi welcomed the element of the announcement.

"For months the media has been speaking about me as if I was a criminal but now they owe me and the citizens of Rome an apology," she wrote on her Facebook page.

A Dutch school children must visit Rembrandt and House: Report

The plans form part of a growing debate in the small town about whether some 17 million people about what the centre-eight Christian-based CDA party refers to as "Dutch norms and values" and "Dutch identity."
**12 AMERICAS**

**Call for swift action to assist Puerto Rico**

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) is flanked by House members during a press conference at Trump International Hotel in Washington, DC, yesterday.

**Pressure mounts on Trump cabinet members for private jet use**

Two members of President Donald Trump’s cabinet found themselves under mounting scrutiny yesterday amid revelations they used private jets for government travel costing tens of thousands of dollars.

First Democrats lawmakers have called for the resignation of Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price for what they described as a “gross misuse of public funds,” notably for spending $24,500 on a private roundtrip flight from Washington to nearby Philadelphia.

In all, Price has flown on 26 separate trips this year on expensive private aircraft, including some $40,000 according to Politico. The trips were for government business, the health department said, but some of the flights were to destinations where Price owns property, or where he met relatives.

**US President still deeply unpopular among black Americans:** Polls

Donald Trump won only a fraction of the black vote in last year’s presidential election and is still deeply unpopular among African-Americans.

A new poll of black voters in a Quinnipiac University poll published on Thursday said that they believe Trump is not fit to serve as president. About the same number — 50 percent — said they did not approve of the way he is handling race relations. And nearly two-thirds of the African-Americans surveyed in another poll — this one conducted by the Perry-Castañeda research firm — said they are worried by Trump.

A doctor, responsible for the deepening chasm of racial discord,” said Tim Malloy, assistant director of Quinnipiac University poll of African vote and the increasing number of those black voters who believe Trump is not fit to serve as president. About the same number — 50 percent — said they did not approve of the way he is handling race relations. And nearly two-thirds of the African-Americans surveyed in another poll — this one conducted by the Perry-Castañeda research firm — said they are worried by Trump.

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**WEATHER TODAY**

30°C | 40°C

Minimum | Maximum

**Setting sun in Lusail City**

The sun sets over Lusail City in Doha yesterday. Lusail City, located in the northern part of the municipality of Al Daayen, will have marinas, residential areas, island resorts, commercial districts, luxury shopping and leisure facilities and a golf course, among others.

Pic: Saim Almamoodi / The Peninsula

**Moon village the first stop to Mars: ESA**

Settling at a permanent village on the moon is the first step towards exploring Mars, the European Space Agency said yesterday as plans to reach and colonise the Red Planet gathered pace.

At an annual gathering of 4,000 global space experts in Adelaide, the ESA said the moon was the ‘right place to help humans expand economic activities beyond low-Earth orbit’, even while Mars remained the ‘ultimate destination’.

“We have been living in low-Earth orbit for the last 17 years on board a space station and we are on our journey to Mars for the first human mission,” ESA’s Paolo Nespoli said at the congress. “In between, we believe that there is an opportunity to create a permanent, sustainable presence on the surface of the Moon.”

Reaching and colonising Mars has been viewed by private and public-sector interests as the next stage in exploring the final frontier, and has been a key part of this year’s International Astronautical Congress in Adelaide.

Nespoli said the more immediate goal was to have a permanent presence on the moon, even if it was just a robot, by the end of the next decade.

“There are a series of missions planned in the moon over the next 10 years, and all these missions will create a movement, a momentum, and will create a wealth of data that will enable building the village,” he added.

“I think it’s the right time now to start discussing, start planning for something which is as inspiring as the space station but on a truly global, international cooperation basis.”

The space agency has been pursuing the permanent lunar colony as a replacement for the existing international Space Station, which is due to be decommissioned in 2024.

Also on the cards is a Nasa-led project to build the first lunar space station as part of a programme called the Deep Space Gateway.

The Russian space agency Roscosmos and Nasa on Wednesday signed a cooperation agreement to work on the station, building the systems needed to organise scientific missions in lunar orbit and to the surface of the Moon.

The congress in the southern Australian city is set to conclude on Friday with new details from Lockheed Mar- tin on its Mars Base Camp, the defence giant’s plans to send humans to the planet by 2028. SpaceX’s Elon Musk will also outline a new design for an interplanetary transport system to take humans to the Red Planet.

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**Auction of Hepburn’s personal memorabilia tops $6.21m**

London AFG

An auction of items from screen icon Audrey Hepburn’s personal collection has made more than $6.6m, including a world record for her script of the 1961 film ‘Breakfast at Tiffany’s’. Christie’s announced yesterday.

The lots realised $4,355,500 ($6.21m). Christie’s said following the 10-hour sale in London on Wednesday. "We have been utterly delighted with the overwhelming response to the personal collection of Audrey Hepburn,” said Adrian Hume-Sayer, head of sale and director of private collections at Christie’s auction house.

She is one of the greatest icons in the history of film and the incredible result to far, for part one of the collection, is a testament to her enduring appeal.

Building remains open online until October 4 for part two of the sale. The British actress, who died in 1993 aged 63, was a movie and style icon from the 1950s onwards. Dresses and coats, accessories including sunglasses, gloves and earrings as well as letters, photographs and paintings were among the 246 lots in Wednesday’s sale, entitled “The Personal Collection of Audrey Hepburn”.

They came from the late film legend’s Swiss home. “My mother kept it in the attic, quite literally,” Hepburn’s son Luca Dotti told AFP at a viewing last week.

The top-selling item on Wednesday was a 1969 oil on canvas painting by Hepburn entitled “My Garden Flowers” went for £224,750. A Cecil Beaton silver print photograph of Hepburn as Eliza Doolittle from “My Fair Lady” fetched £93,750, well above its estimate of £2,000 to £3,000.

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The final lot was an engraved Tiffany bangle from the late 1980s, a gift from director Steven Spielberg, with the interior engraving “You are my ‘imagination’ Always, Steven”. It was estimated at £3,000 to £5,000, but sold for £332,750.

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**Nearly half of abortions ‘unsafe’: Study**

Paris AFG

Close to half of the approximately 56 million abortions performed every year worldwide are unsafe, according to researchers who said in a study that a large number of women who have procedures are at risk of death, the researchers said.

The share of safe abortions exceeded 50 percent in only three developing world regions: Southeast Asia (66 percent), western Asia (52 percent), and southern Africa (74 percent). In countries where abortion is available upon request, more than 87 percent of abortions are deemed safe.

Some 14.4 percent of all recent abortions — more than eight million per year — fell into the “least safe” category, based on data collected in more than 80 countries. Some 53 percent of all recent abortions were safe, followed by northern Europe (98 percent). Western Europe (94 percent), and southern Europe (90 percent). Unlike previous estimates, the new study divides the category of unsafe abortions into two groups: “less” and “least” safe.

“Unsafe abortions — accounting for 37 percent of the total — include those induced with the drug misoprostol without the support of professional health providers, or those performed by trained personnel using outdated methods, such as scraping the lining of the uterus with a surgical tool,” the researchers said.

In the 62 countries where the procedure is banned or allowed only to save a woman’s life, nearly 25 percent of abortions were unsafe.

“Our findings call for the need to ensure access to safe abortions in the full extent of the law, particularly in low income regions,” said Ganatra.

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**A U.S. stint for Tony Lichtleben**

London AFG

A U.S. stint for Tony Lichtleben (Idle, a founder of the Pop Art movement of the 60s, his work was highly influenced by popular advertising and comic books.

2003: Proof of concept: most of Tony Lichtleben’s collection of items from the 1960s are now at the University of California, Berkeley.

2010: A scientific discovery: the first known instance of a human fetus possessing 86.6 million sperm.

2016: The Lawn Journal is published. The journal is now being used by scientists worldwide to support research.

2018: A winner: the 300th millionth visitor to the Paris landmark celebrates the 300 millionth visitor to the Paris landmark yesterday since it opened in 1889.

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**300 millions of thank you**

Paris AFG

A rickshaw drives past the illuminated Eiffel Tower with lettering reading ‘300 millions of thank you’, to celebrate the 300 millionth visitor to the Paris landmark yesterday since it opened in 1889.