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Campaign to catch erring motorists

The patrolling teams deployed across the city focus on the most common violations like overtaking from right, use of mobile phones while driving, failure to fasten seat belts and wrong parking.

By Sidi Mohamed
The Peninsula

DOHA: With roads and streets across the city witnessing heavy traffic after opening of schools and offices last week, the traffic authorities have launched a campaign to catch erring motorists.

The campaign has its focus on the most common violations like overtaking from right, use of mobile phones while driving, failure to fasten seat belts and wrong parking.

The patrolling teams deployed across the city have caught 428 violations since the launch of the campaign only related to overtaking from right, according to data released by the General Directorate of Traffic at the Ministry of Interior yesterday.

Dubbing it a bad road habit causing many accidents, the authorities had raised the fine for this violation from QR500 to QR1000.

Traffic inspectors also caught 309 violations for failure to fasten seat belts and 52 violations involving the use of mobile phones while driving, the ministry said on its Twitter account.

" The General Directorate of Traffic since last week (Sunday) has launched a campaign to catch motorists who adopt mistaken road behaviours," Major Jaber Mohamed Rashid Odaiba, Assistant Director, Media and Traffic Awareness Department told *The Peninsula* yesterday.

He said that the campaign will continue for one month.

" It has coincided with opening of schools. We have launched the campaign to curb violations of the traffic rules, with an increase in traffic on the roads," he added.

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Prime Minister and Interior Minister H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani is briefed about the tunnelling works for the Doha Metro Project on the south side of the Red Line at Hamad International Airport (HIA) station, yesterday.

Doha Metro tunnel works complete

The Peninsula

DOHA: Qatar Railways Company (Qatar Rail) yesterday marked the completion of the tunnelling works for the Doha Metro Project, on the south side of the Red Line in Hamad International Airport (HIA) station at a ceremony attended by the Prime Minister and Interior Minister H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani.

With completion of tunnelling, 50% of the Doha Metro project has been completed. The drilling works started in July 2014 and 111KM were covered yesterday by the Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM).

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister of Transport and Communications H E Jassim bin Saif Al Sulaiti said that the Doha Metro project represented the main backbone for an integrated public transport system in the country, supported by Qatar Rail's Lusail Light Rail Transit (LLRT) network and the Long Distance Passenger and Freight Rail transportation system. "The transport sector has become an important indicator to measure the nation's renaissance and welfare of the communities which necessitate further development of plans and projects," said the minister.

Al Sulaiti said that Qatar Rail has bypassed all the obstacles over the drilling work as 50% of the Doha Metro Project has been completed. The tunneling works were completed three months ahead of schedule, he added.

→ Continued on page 3

Power production capacity to touch 13,000MW in two years

By Mohammad Shoeb
The Peninsula

DOHA: Qatar's power generating capacity is expected to receive a major boost in the next couple of years. The country's installed power production capacity is set to increase by nearly 50 percent to 13,000 megawatt (MW) compared to the existing installed capacity, further bolstering the surplus capacity enjoyed by the energy-rich nation.

This was announced yesterday by Fahad bin Hamad Al Mohannadi, Managing Director of Qatar Electricity and Water Company (QEWC), the main producer of utilities in Qatar.

"Our existing capacity is around 8,800MW. By 2018 we will have an installed capacity of about 13,000MW. And with the completion of the upcoming Umm Al Houl power plant by 2018, which has the capacity of over 2,500MW, we will have about 11,000MW. And the future projects will add more capacity to meet the target of 13,000," Al Mohannadi told reporters on the sidelines of an event held to celebrate the delivery of Siemens' 1000th gas turbine, which is the fifth of six gas turbines for the Umm Al Houl plant.

"Actually our plan is to achieve 13,000MW by 2020. And this is part of our readiness for the upcoming mega event in 2022 (Fifa games). There will be another project to be developed between 2018 and 2020," he added. The demand for electricity this year is expected to grow by 10 percent compared to last year. According to figures provided by Al Mohannadi earlier this year, the peak demand of electricity in 2015 was about 7,000 megawatt (MW).



Cheap-priced Chinese tabs attracting lower income expatriates in a local market. Pic: Abdul Basit/The Peninsula

Cheap tabs a big hit among low-income expats

By Irfan Bukhari
The Peninsula

DOHA: The sale of cheap tabs in the local market has grown manifold as they are the main stay of lower-income expats from Asia and Africa.

Like smart phones, tabs are a popular electronic gadget in this age of digital dependency. And the questions revolving around the affordability and price have been addressed by the low-priced products available in the market.

Those who can afford select Apple's iPad or other competitors from famous companies like Samsung, Huawei etc. and the customers representing lower income groups too are not optionless. They can buy a Chinese tab for just as low as QR89.

The Peninsula observed a number of Chinese and Indian tabs in the market with the prices varying from QR89 to QR300. The price of famous brands increases with the enhancement of specifications like processor core, processor speed, screen size, screen resolution, system memory, hard drive, camera strength etc.

But there is a significant difference depending on the brand and the manufacturer. One can purchase a Samsung 4G tablet having 9.7" screen and 32 GB hard drive for QR1,799 while with identical specifications a made-in-China-tab is available for as low as QR190.

"I am interested in buying a Chinese tab. The choice is due to financial constraints though I know very well that its life will be short," said Kuldip Singh, an expat from India who was selecting a tab from the existing stock at a hypermarket.

Singh, who was a carrying a smart phone decided to buy a tab as well on the grounds that its big screen would provide extra pleasure in entertainment. The salesman of the hypermarket told *The Peninsula* that those low-priced tabs were selling like hot-cakes among lower-income expatriates.

Asked about any guarantee for the gadgets, he said that they used to give a warranty not a guarantee. " Warranty may be for six months or a year depending upon the company policy. In case of any technical fault in the specified time, we offer repair services to the customer but we cannot replace the product," he said.

→ Continued on page 4

QA named best Middle Eastern and African Airline for 7th year

The Peninsula

DOHA: Qatar Airways was once again named the Best Middle Eastern/African Airline at the 2016 Business Traveller Asia-Pacific Awards held in Hong Kong on Friday. This marks the seventh consecutive year the airline has received this accolade.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, Akbar Al Baker said: "We are extremely honoured to be voted as the Best Middle Eastern/African Airline for the seventh straight year. We would like to thank our loyal passengers for their continued support and for giving us their vote of confidence. I would also like to express my gratitude to all of our staff for their continued dedication to delivering exceptional, award-winning, travel experiences and products to our passengers."

The accolade adds to a year of continued success for Qatar Airways, particularly when it pertains to awards that echo consumer sentiments. Some of the recent recognition Qatar Airways has achieved include awards for 'Best For Business' by Condé Nast Traveller readers; being ranked number one globally by AirHelp – an independent airline consumer rights organisation – for providing travellers worldwide with the highest quality and service, on-time performance, and customer claim processing; and being awarded the World's Best Business Class, Best Business Class Airline Lounge and Best Airline Staff Service in the Middle East at the prestigious Skytrax 2016 World Airline Awards.

Due to increased passenger demand, Qatar Airways recently increased capacity to Guangzhou on July 1 and Sydney on September 16, flying the flagship A380 aircraft with 517 seats and three-class service. Qatar Airways' A380 features a double deck with First and Business Class on the upper deck, along with a lounge.

→ Continued on page 4

Peace almost impossible in Syria: Russia

Reuters

UNITED NATIONS: The United States yesterday called Russia's action in Syria "barbarism" not counter-terrorism while Moscow's UN envoy said ending the war "is almost an impossible task now" as Syrian government forces, backed by Moscow, bombed the city of Aleppo.

The United Nations Security Council met yesterday at the request of the United States, Britain and France to discuss the escalation of fighting in Aleppo following the announcement on Thursday of an offensive by the Syrian army to retake the city.

"What Russia is sponsoring and doing is not counter-terrorism, it is barbarism," US Ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, told the 15-member council.

"Instead of pursuing peace, Russia and Assad make war. Instead of helping get life-saving aid to civilians, Russia and Assad are bombing the humanitarian convoys, hospitals, and first responders who are trying desperately to keep people alive," said Power.

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HBKU welcomes over 200 new students

Qatari students account for 70 percent of students enrolled in recently added programmes.

The Peninsula

DOHA: Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), a member of Qatar Foundation (QF), has welcomed more than 200 new students for the 2016-17 academic year, bringing the total number of students at the university to over 450.

More than 90 percent of the students are undertaking advanced study at master's and doctoral level, and there is a heavy emphasis on research across the university.

The number of Qatari students accounts for around 70 percent of students enrolled in recently added programmes such as Master of Science in Cybersecurity and Juris Doctor graduate law degree.

Addressed the new students at an orientation event at the start of the new academic year, Maryam Hamad Al Mannai, Vice-President, Students Affairs, HBKU, said: "You are joining a university that is proud to be pushing the boundaries of research education in Qatar.

"I know that today marks an important milestone for each one of you. The start of the new academic year is also an important milestone for the university. HBKU is growing and thriving. Together with our existing students, you represent the hopes and aspirations of a university that is committed to building educational capacity in Qatar at the highest level."

Dedicated to delivering novel, high-quality academic programmes to meet the needs of Qatar and the region, HBKU introduced three new graduate degrees this year. Two new master's programmes — Master of Science in Cybersecurity and Master of Science in Data Science and Engineering, are the first of their kind in the Gulf and offer students the opportunity to conduct research alongside HBKU's world-renowned faculty members and researchers. HBKU also initiated a PhD programme in Computer Science and Engineering this Fall, complementing its existing doctorate-level offerings in sustainable energy, sustainable environment, and biological and biomedical sciences.

Students have enrolled in a range of programmes across HBKU's College of Science and Engineering, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, College of Law and Public Policy, and Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies. This year's new students come from notable companies, including Qatar Petroleum, Ernst & Young, Ashghal, Deloitte, Vodafone, Sidra Medical and Research Center, Kahramaa, and Qatar Central Bank.



Students attending an orientation event.



Prime Minister and Interior Minister H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani with other officials during the completion of tunnelling works for the Doha Metro Project at Hamad International Airport station, yesterday.

Doha Metro Project to boost 'national development'

Continued from page 1

"Today's achievement is another step towards accomplishing the project according to timeline and budget in place and taking into account the highest quality standards, the latest eco-friendly technology and the highest international standards.

"The Doha Metro Project would contribute to national development and become an international legacy for Qatar," said the Minister.

He said the Ministry of Transport and Communications has developed policies and strategies that have contributed to developing infrastructure in the transport sector, promoting the use of the latest technology in projects and facilitating cargo and passenger traffic. These efforts would live up this vital sector and increase Qatar's GDP.

The ceremony featured a presentation on Doha Metro and screening of a video on the 21 TBMs, thanks to which Qatar Rail was officially recognised by the *Guinness World Records* for the Largest Number of Tunnel Boring Machines Operating Simultaneously in a Single Project.

Seventy percent of the total contracts were awarded to local contractors in support of the local economy.

To dig 111km of tunnels, the Doha Metro Project required 470,497 concrete blocks to produce 70,071 tubes. Engineer Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Turki Al Subaie, Managing Director and Chairman, Qatar Rail, said completion of drilling works of Doha Metro Project is an important milestone in its progress.





Qatar National Human Rights Committee Chairman Dr. Ali bin Smaikh Al Marri with Dr. Obaid Ahmed Al Obaid, Director of the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for Southwest Asia and the Arab Region.

NHRC chief reiterates support for UN centre

QNA

DOHA: Qatar National Human Rights Committee Chairman Dr. Ali bin Smaikh Al Marri reiterated NHRC's continued support for the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for Southwest Asia and the Arab Region as a strategic choice to build capacities of government agencies and civil society institutions in the Arab region.

Dr Al Marri's remarks came as he met the centre's Director Dr. Obaid Ahmed Al Obaid, who has been appointed as Director of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Yemen.

During the meeting at the NHRC headquarters, Dr. Al Marri called for building bridges of communication and activation of cooperation mechanisms with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and highlighted continued support provided by Qatar and NHRC in the field of human rights to achieve peace, security and stability in Yemen.

Dr Obaid praised the partnership between the centre and NHRC and between the centre and the Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions in Doha.

Mental health disorders among kids on the rise

HMC Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service receives between 20 and 35 referrals each week and caters to more than 1,000 patients every month.

The Peninsula

DOHA: Hamad Medical Corporation's (HMC) Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) has seen an increasing number of people seeking mental healthcare since its official opening in April.

CAMHS provides much-needed mental healthcare to young patients aged up to 18 years.

At present, it receives between 20 and 35 referrals each week and caters to more than 1,000 patients every month.

The centre serves children with varying types of mental health disorders and conditions such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder and other psychological and physiological problems.

"Mental health services in Qatar are being viewed differently nowadays and we are receiving an increasing number of users.

"We have also been able to gain the trust of those people who use our services and their family members knowing that they will not be stigmatised due to their mental illness and that their information and health history are safe and highly confidential," said Dr Hanan Derby, Director of CAMHS, and Senior Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist.

CAMHS runs routine booked clinics except on Wednesday. However, it attends to all emergency and urgent cases five days a week.

Wednesday is considered the CAMHS Team Day for referral and allocation meetings, business meetings and educational activities.

"The aims of this new service are to provide a multi-disciplinary approach to mental healthcare to ensure that the right assessment and diagnosis are provided and the beneficiaries receive the best quality care they can get," Dr Derby stressed.

"Our model of care strives to support patients towards recovery and self-management.

"The service went through an inspiring journey and overcame significant challenges through team work cohesion and perseverance," she added.

Dr Derby recalled that over the past two years, extensive work has been done to establish service policies and procedures, including the development of operational policies, a service model, a staffing structure and the internal and external referral pathways.

"A clear response time with a well-defined but flexible appointment booking system was established in the operational policy.

"Additionally, referral and exclusion criteria were identified to guide the team and external agencies in the referral process.

"One of our targets is providing smooth access to all families on the bases of their clinical needs. As such, the established screening clinic model outlines the process of prioritising cases," she said.

The screening clinic is led by senior nursing staff, in consultation with medical leads.

Additionally, a triage system has been developed for cases identified as not urgent.

Rasheeda Interchange to close for traffic

The Peninsula

DOHA: The Public Works Authority (Ashghal) will close Rasheeda Interchange on North Road to traffic, including the bridge and the ramps.

The closure begins tomorrow and lasts two months, in coordination with the General Traffic Department. The main North Road will remain open to traffic.

Road change is required to facilitate revamp of the interchange's ramps along with access routes to the newly constructed service roads along Al Shamal Road. During diversion, interchange users will be diverted to the next Umm Leshkhoot Interchange, accessing the newly-built service roads between the two interchanges.

The upgrade of Rasheeda Interchange is part of the North Corridor Enhancement project, including construction of service roads along North Road, starting from Al Duhail Interchange, northern Doha, to Al Shamal City, northern Qatar. Al Khor Road will also be upgraded with a link road provided between North Road and Umm Birkah Road. A cycle path will be built along North Road.

Some expats buy tabs as gifts for family and friends

Continued from page 1

On the other hand, a shopkeeper selling branded tabs challenged the quality of cheap tabs saying: "The moment you hold a cheap tab in your hand you will feel the difference. You will also note the difference in screen resolution, specifications, camera and everything. They are not durable also."

Some expats buy such gadgets not for personal use but for sending them back at home as gifts for friends and family.

Ahsan Qureshi, an industrial worker from Pakistan was selecting a tab from the unknown brands like Touchmate, Uniontouch, Prestigio, Advance, Life, BSNL, Atouch etc. at a supermarket.

"I want to send one tab to Pakistan for my nephew and I am selecting from these as they are low-priced," he said.



Some of the tablets at one of the hypermarkets.

Jankoli, 24, from Nepal who works at a restaurant is well aware of complications attached with non-branded electronic gadgets but he says, "I will throw it when it will be broken down. But now it is enough to appease my hunger for a tab using that allows me to enjoy various social media tools like Facebook and YouTube."

He further said that he used to make video calls through various apps like Viber to his family and friends in Nepal.

"Though smart phones give me the same facility but a bigger-screen experience is a rich experience," he added.

The customers here also search the prices of cheap tabs on the web to make a right choice. Interestingly, a query regarding the cheapest tab available in Doha on a Qatar-based social networking site met a humorous reply from another enthusiast.

"Buy Panadol. I assure you it is cheap and it is an effective tab," was his comment.

Asia 'a core part of Qatar Airways'

Continued from page 1

Representing the airline at the 2016 Business Traveller Asia-Pacific Awards, Qatar Airways Vice-President North Asia, Paul Johannes, said: "It is my honour to receive the award on behalf of Qatar Airways and to be recognised among Asia Pacific's best within the travel and hospitality industry. Asia is a core part of Qatar Airways' business and network and we are privileged to remain an airline of choice in the region. We will continue to work hard at exceeding our travellers' expectations."

Qatar Airways offers convenient flight schedules for Asia/Pacific travellers to the Middle East, Africa and Europe, on one of the world's youngest fleets, averaging just under five years old. The airline operates the most technologically advanced aircraft in the world, including the A350, for which it was the global launch customer, and the Boeing Dreamliner, for which it was the Middle East launch customer.



Paul Johannes, Vice-President, North Asia, Qatar Airways, receiving the Business Traveller Award from Hong Kong's 2016 Olympian Yvette Kong.

The Business Traveller Asia-Pacific Awards pay tribute to the very best in the hospitality industry, who go the extra mile to make travellers' experiences as enjoyable and stress-free as possible. The awards are independent and based on votes from its readers — business travellers and frequent flyers — and verified by global market research leaders.

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Invitation to Tender

Tender Number	Description	Tender Bond USD	Deadline for Submission, 12 Noon (Qatar Time) on
ITT-QC-TSU-1124	SUBSEA SERVICES	200,000	17th October 2016

Dolphin Energy Limited (Qatar) is inviting companies to participate in the above Invitation to Tender.

Only companies registered in the State of Qatar with proven experience, the required facilities and technical knowledge as well as a demonstrated track record in supplying the required services should apply.

Companies who intend to participate in the above Invitation to Tender must also be appropriately registered with Dolphin Energy Limited.

How to Tender	Complete instructions are included in the Invitation to Tender documents that can be downloaded from the company's website: www.dolphinenergy.com

Aster to mark World Heart Day

The Peninsula

DOHA: Aster Medical Centre, a division of Aster DM Healthcare, the largest healthcare provider in the region, will organise an interactive session on cardiovascular diseases to mark World Heart Day.

Prof. Dr. Raveendran P, Cardiologist, Aster Medical Center, Al Hilal, will lead the session at Millenium Hotel in Al Sadd on Thursday at 6.30pm.

Dr. Sameer Moopan, CEO, Aster DM Healthcare, Qatar, said, "World Heart Day raises awareness about cardiovascular diseases (CVD), including heart disease and stroke under the patronage of World Heart Federation. The theme this year is Power your Life."

The session is part of Aster's Community Good Health Programme to promote good health and wellbeing in society. It is limited to first 100 pre-registered participants. Call Aster Helpline 44440499 for details and free registration.

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The Limited and General Tenders Committee requests Tenders for the following works / services:

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Suppliers and Contractors who are already registered with QP via e-Registration system and are in possession of a valid SAP ID issued by QP can "Buy Tender Online and download Tender Document" from QP website. Effective 1st February 2016, payment of Tender Fee by Cash and Manual collection of Tender Document is discontinued.

Sl. No.	Tender No.	Tender Sale Period Start Date	Tender Sale Period End Date	Tender Closing Date	Tender Bond	Bond Curr.	Tender Fee	Fee Curr.
1	GT16106800	27.09.2016	03.10.2016	30.10.2016	625,000.00	QAR	N/A	

Title of Work : ENGINEERING MEASUREMENT SERVICES

Mid-Tender Meeting Location : To be advised if required

Mid-Tender Meeting Date & Time : To be advised if required

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- No queries will be entertained, or bids received, from entities who have not purchased tender documents in compliance with the above provisions.

Fines for parking reserved for disabled raised

Continued from page 1

The inspectors have also registered 52 violations related to parking in spaces reserved for the disabled. Fine for this violation has also been raised to QR1,000 from QR500.

Odaiba said these violations were caught by police patrols in different areas in the city and its outskirts during their inspection campaigns.

"People commit mistakes like overtaking from right because they don't want to wait in the traffic jam.

"Some use mobile phone while waiting for other vehicles to move and some others move right and left creating accidents and traffic jams, especially at intersections and roundabouts," said Odaiba.

The Ministry on its social media channels has been continuously advising motorists against the use mobile phones while driving, saying this habit can lead to accidents and endanger the lives of the user as well as others on the road.

It also causes the vehicle to slow down while approaching intersections, signal, schools, hospitals and other public places.

"Motorists should also stick to speed limit and other regulations, which will help in achieving traffic safety and smooth flow of traffic," said Odaiba.

During summer, the department had launched a crackdown on motorists using mobile phones and those not fastening seat belts.

The summer months were chosen for the crackdown because it was easier to identify and stop violators due to less traffic.

Dar Al Sharq Group & KidzMondo in tie-up

Al Sharq Newspaper establishment will mimic its real-world counterpart and teach kids the inner workings of a newspaper organisation at the edutainment theme park.

The Peninsula

DOHA: KidzMondo Doha, an upcoming children's edutainment theme park, will add a 'newspaper establishment' to its wide array of offerings in partnership with Dar Al Sharq Group.

The establishment will be built to mimic its real-world counterpart and teach kids the inner workings of a newspaper organisation.

The child will be able to learn the printing process, work flow of a newspaper editor, technical aspects of the profession, technical terms related to newspaper editing and interview people and become an editor through role playing.

Nabil R Barakat, General Manager, KidzMondo Doha, said: "KidzMondo Doha's partnership with Dar Al Sharq is designed to take our young visitors on an immersive journey through the media landscape in Qatar through our upcoming 'newspaper' establishment, which will be modelled after the actual setup of one of the leading publications in the country, *Al Sharq*.

"We are excited to bring this sensational new educational activity to children and families at KidzMondo's upcoming indoor theme park."



Jaber Al Harami (centre), Editor-in-Chief, Dar Al Sharq Group, and Nabil R Barakat (third left), General Manager, KidzMondo Doha, with other officials at the signing of a memorandum of understanding for setting up Al Sharq Newspaper establishment at the edutainment theme park recently.

Jaber Al Harami, Editor-in Chief, Dar Al Sharq Group, said: "Our mission has always been to become a media institution that seeks to integrate its contribution to the construction of our beloved homeland and Qatar National Vision 2030.

"Our partnership with KidzMondo Doha is an important step in that direction. Over the years, we have strategically grown our activities and expanded the core journalism mission of our debut beyond expectations.

"Al Sharq Newspaper establishment at KidzMondo Doha is a fascinating way to introduce young minds to the thrilling world of news and media in a fun, yet educational environment, which is aligned with Dar Al Sharq's social and awareness initiatives, emanating from its belief in the importance of social work and the distinctive role it plays in building human capacity in Qatar."

Since it published its first edition in 1987, *Al Sharq* has grown to become the most-read Arabic daily in Qatar. In 2011, it was named by Forbes magazine as one of the 50 most powerful Arab newspapers in terms of online presence.

Al Sharq was also the first Qatari newspaper to offer an electronic news service that is updated round the clock via its official website. KidzMondo Doha, dubbed the "city of education and entertainment" features an interactive kid-sized city developed for and managed by children between ages two and 14. With its own economy and currency (Kidlars), it includes over 80 real-life simulation activities across diverse business environments and allows children to dress up and role-play realistic tasks in a safe, interactive and educational environment.

15,000 visit back-to-school campaign in two malls

The Peninsula

DOHA: The back- to-school campaign of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education at Gulf Mall in Al Gharrafa and Dar Al Salam Mall in Abu Hamour concluded on Saturday, attracting about 15,000 visitors.

The 10-day campaign was organised in collaboration with the Traffic Department at the Ministry of Interior, Weill Cornell Medicine and Mowasalat Company and featured a variety of activities, especially for children and families.

The average number of visitors during the weekend at the two campaign stalls at the malls was around 1,800 a day, said Hassan Abdullah Al Mohammadi, Director, Public Relations and Communication, at the ministry.

Over 16,000 gifts and 8,000 pamphlets and brochures were distributed to raise health and nutrition awareness. Eighteen students from Independent and private schools participated as volunteers and highlighted traffic safety and safe transport using school bus

Vodafone adds benefits to Falla Club for youth

The Peninsula

DOHA: Vodafone has added new benefits to its platform for youth in Qatar which is exclusively for customers under 24.

The Vodafone Falla Club is packed with more data and discounts on lifestyle benefits. Members of the club, which is free to join, can choose any plan that suits them and get additional benefits. With their plan, members will get more data every month, including double data on Red, and 25 percent more data each on Connect and Prepaid.

Customers will receive extra data on signing up to any Red or Connect Postpaid plan in one of Vodafone's retail stores. Customers of Prepaid can join the club by dialling *100# and can enjoy 25 percent extra data every time they recharge with Vodafone's Internet 60 and 100 cards.

Vodafone is also offering club members Buy 1 Get 1 Free offers at restaurants, cinemas, spas and more so they can enjoy them with their friends by downloading the Vodafone-sponsored apps. Every Tuesday, club members get an extra free cinema ticket and drink plus popcorn combo when purchasing a ticket and drink plus popcorn combo.

Urban Point offers Buy 1 get 1 Free offers at restaurants, spas and fun attractions. For a discounted subscription of QR10 charged every second month, club members can unlock all discounts it has to offer. My Vodafone app allows customers to manage their accounts and track data usage, including Club Data Bonus. All Vodafone-sponsored apps can be found and downloaded from GooglePlay and AppleApp stores.

Students from 40 nations join CMU-Q



Ilker Baybars, Dean and CEO of CMU-Q, addressing the new students.

The Peninsula

DOHA: For the academic year 2016-17, Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar's (CMU-Q) students represent 40 nations, including its first freshmen from Albania, Japan and Kazakhstan.

CMU-Q announced that 413 students are enrolled, including 100 new ones.

Ilker Baybars, Dean and CEO, said: "We are educating our students to be global professionals, to understand how to negotiate and thrive in an international setting. Throughout their undergraduate education, our students work together, create projects and compete as teams, building crucial skills to work in a global marketplace."

In the new academic year, Qatari enrolment has increased to 43 percent.

CMU-Q offers five undergraduate degree programmes in business administration; biological sciences; computer science; computational biology; and information systems.

Applications are being accepted for August 2017 admission.

Safari begins 'Win 10 BMW 5' promotion

The Peninsula

DOHA: Safari Group has always been the No. 1 retail group in Qatar to pioneer 'never before seen' promotional events.

"We were the first to launch the QR1m promotion in Qatar and since then events have only been growing bigger, better and more exciting," said Zainulabideen, Director and General Manager, Safari Group.

"All our promotions have been getting tremendous response from our valued customers," he added.

"This time Safari is again setting the pulse rising with lucky draws for 10 BMW 5 series.

"In every draw, two cars would be won by the luckiest of our customers and this would be repeated five times, said Zainulabideen.

"We value our customers and want them to have the true value for their money always. This has been our prime motive since the inception and would reflect in all our activities.

"This is why when we had discussion of the next promotion event, we wanted to give our customers one of the best rated and valued performing cars rather than just any car," he said.

The promotion starts today and the first draw will be held on November 7.

"We wish all our customers a happy shopping experience." Zainulabideen added.

INVITATION TO TENDER FOR SUPREME COMMITTEE CAMP

Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy

The Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC) is pleased to announce the following Tenders:

Tender No.	Tender Title	Tender Bond (QAR)	Tender Fee (QAR)	Last Date to Issue RFP	Tender Closing Date	Email Address
TDO-16-TTC-0021	Supreme Committee Camp - Tents	500,000	5,000	9 Oct 2016	9 Nov 2016	fvmtents@sc.qa
TDO-16-TTC-0027	Supreme Committee Camp - Civil Works	1,000,000	5,000	9 Oct 2016	9 Nov 2016	fvmcivil@sc.qa

The SC invites suitable companies or consortia to tender for the design and construction of Supreme Committee Camp covering an area of approximately 300,000 square metres and housing 350 temporary tents and 300 permanent tents, which together are adequate to accommodate around 2,000 people. The Tents package includes design and construction of tents.
The Civil Works package includes design and construction of civil and site works required for the tents, associated infrastructure works, foundations and timber platforms and operator facilities such as accommodation, storage and servicing.

Who should respond to this invitation to tender?
- Local and regional companies and consortia that have relevant experience in the design and construction of similar works.

Tender process:
- Applicants should register their interest by submitting an Expression of Interest letter, along with an accompanying copy of a valid Commercial Registration, by email to the relevant email address/addresses listed in the table above.
- Upon receipt, the applicants will be issued a Confidentiality Agreement (CA).
- Applicants should then pay the non refundable tender fee to the following SC account at Qatar National Bank (QNB):

SUPREME COMM FOR DELIVERY & LEGACY
Account No.: 0013-002022-001
IBAN: QA74 QNBA 0000 0000 0013 0020 2200 1

- Applicants will return a completed CA and tender fee payment slip with bank stamp to the relevant SC email address, and submit a hard copy of the above documentation to the address below:

Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy
Capital Procurement – Technical Delivery Office
Al Bidda Tower, 34th Floor
PO Box 62022
Doha, State of Qatar

- Upon receipt of a conformant CA and proof of payment of tender fee, the applicant will be issued a copy of the Request for Proposal (RFP).
- Requests for RFP documents after 9 October 2016 will be rejected.
- The decision to issue RFP documents to an applicant rests solely with the SC.
- Any queries in relation to these Tenders should be addressed in writing to the relevant email address/addresses above.

www.sc.qa @roadto2022

Air strike in Sana'a



Yemenis stand on a rooftop looking at smoke billowing from a building following a reported air strike carried out by the coalition forces in the capital Sana'a, yesterday.

Warplanes pound Aleppo; UN Council slams Russia

"What Russia is sponsoring and doing is not counter terrorism, it is barbarism," US Ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, told the 15-member council.

Reuters

AMMAN: Warplanes bombed a strategic camp on the northern edge of Aleppo yesterday as Syrian government forces, backed by Russia, battled rebels for control of the city as the UN Security Council met to discuss the escalating violence.

A diplomatic solution to the fighting looked unlikely as US and Russian diplomats disagreed at a UN Security Council meeting called to discuss the violence, which has escalated since a ceasefire collapsed last week.

"What Russia is sponsoring and doing is not counter terrorism, it is barbarism," US Ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, told the 15-member council.

"Instead of pursuing peace, Russia and Assad make war. Instead of helping get lifesaving aid to civilians, Russia and Assad are bombing the humanitarian convoys, hospitals, and first responders who are trying desperately to keep people alive."

The French and British foreign ministers also took aim at Russia, saying it could be guilty of war crimes. But Russia defended its position.

Russia's support of the latest offensive by Syrian forces since an international ceasefire collapsed last week appears to have buried any hope for diplomacy. The rebels said any peace process would be futile unless the "scorched earth bombing" stopped immediately.

Capturing the rebel-held half of Syria's largest city, where more than 250,000 civilians are trapped, would be the biggest victory of the civil war for President Bashar Al Assad's forces.

They have achieved their strongest position in years thanks to Russian and Iranian support and launched a fresh offensive for a decisive battlefield victory on Thursday. In the first major advance, they seized control of the Handarat Palestinian refugee camp, north of Aleppo.

Rebels counter attacked and said on Sunday they had retaken the camp before the bombing started.

"We retook the camp, but the regime burnt it with phosphorous bombs," said Abu Al Hassanien, a commander in a rebel operations room that includes the main brigades fighting to repel the army assault.

The army, which is being helped by Iranian-backed militias, Lebanon's Shia Hezbollah militant group and a Palestinian militia, acknowledged rebels had retaken Handarat.

"The Syrian army is targeting the armed groups' positions in Handarat camp," a military source was quoted on state media as saying.

Planes also continued to pound residential areas on Sunday, flattening buildings, rebels and residents said. They say air strikes have intensified, with more powerful weapons, since the new offensive began.

"The Assad regime and with direct participation of its ally Russia and Iranian militias has escalated its criminal and vicious attack on our people in Aleppo employing a scorched earth policy to destroy the city and uproot its people," a statement signed by 30 mainstream rebel groups said on Sunday.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a monitoring group, said at least 45 people, among them 10 children, were killed in eastern Aleppo on Saturday. The army says it is targeting only militants.

Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed in the civil war and 11 million driven from their homes.

Russia and the United States agreed on September 9 a deal to put the peace process back on track. It included a nationwide truce and improved humanitarian aid access but it collapsed when an aid convoy was bombed killing some 20 people.

US Secretary of State John Kerry, who hammered out the truce in months of intensive diplomacy, pleaded with Russia to halt air strikes.

12-year jail term urged for Palestinian minor over stabbing

JERUSALEM: An Israeli prosecutor called yesterday for a 12-year jail term to be handed down to a Palestinian minor for stabbing an Israeli child in October 2015, his lawyer said. Ahmed Manasra, a 14-year-old Palestinian, was convicted in May this year of the attempted murder of two Israelis in a knife attack last October.

He was 13 when he carried out the attack with his 15-year-old cousin Hassan Manasra. The two stabbed and seriously wounded a 20-year-old and a 12-year-old boy in the Jewish settlement neighbourhood of Pisgat Zeev in annexed east Jerusalem.

Oman Air disables inflight map naming Gulf as 'Persian'

AFP

MUSCAT: Oman Air has switched off an inflight map system that labelled the waterway between the Arabian Peninsula and Iran, the subject of a bitter naming dispute, as the "Persian Gulf".

The decision followed a storm of criticism on social media after a passenger posted a video showing the map in Arabic referring to the Persian, rather than Arabian Gulf.

"Our crew have been notified to disable the disturbing maps," the sultanate's national carrier said in a statement on Twitter.

Two Boeing Dreamliners hired from Kenya Airways used a different map system to its own, it said, adding that it had asked Panasonic, which runs the system, to change the maps "without delay".

One Twitter user called the map "a resounding scandal", while another said Oman had "said goodbye to Arabism".

The United Nations and international maps generally refer to the body of water between the Arabian Peninsula and Iran as the "Persian Gulf", the term used by ancient Greek geographer Ptolemy.

Arab states, particularly the Gulf countries, call it the "Arabian Gulf". In 2010, Tehran said it would not grant air access to planes using the term "Arabian Gulf" on their inflight maps.

Jordan's premier re-appointed

AMMAN: Jordan's King Abdullah II re-appointed Prime Minister Hani Al Malki yesterday to form a new government following elections in which the Muslim Brotherhood made its return as a parliamentary force.

"The king has accepted the resignation of Hani Al Malki's government and charged him with forming a new one," the royal palace said in a statement.

Malki, 65, an engineer by training, was closely involved with the negotiations that led to Jordan signing a peace deal with Israel in 1994.

South Sudan's rebel leader issues war call from exile

AFP

NAIROBI: South Sudan's rebel leader issued a call for renewed war with the government this weekend, declaring the collapse of an internationally-backed peace deal.

Former vice-president Riek Machar is in exile in Khartoum where he fled following fighting in the South Sudanese capital Juba in July. In a statement, Machar said he intended to "wage a popular armed resistance against the authoritarian and fascist regime of President Salva Kiir in order to bring peace, freedom, democracy and the rule of law in the country."

Machar's leadership of a faction of rebels, known as the SPLA/IO, is in question with former ally Taban Deng Gai having taken his position in government and international backers of the peace plan urging that efforts to end the war should move ahead, with or without Machar. It is unclear whether armed rebel forces and allied militias on the ground in South Sudan follow Machar or Deng.

South Sudan's civil war began in December 2013 when Kiir accused Machar of plotting a coup.

The conflict, characterised by attacks on civilians, ethnic massacres and appalling human rights abuses, has killed tens of thousands of people and forced millions from their homes. Machar said the international community should "declare the regime in Juba as a rogue government and a spoiler of peace that is threatening regional and international peace and security."

He also called for "resuscitation of the peace agreement", for Deng's dismissal, and for the immediate deployment of a proposed 4,000-strong UN protection force.

The statement is Machar's first public declaration since he fled Juba after fierce fighting with Kiir's army. He termed that outbreak of violence an "assassination attempt".

John Clement Kuc, a spokesman with the rebel faction in Juba that follows Deng dismissed Machar's declarations. "This group don't want peace in South Sudan. They believe in resolving issues through war," Kuc said.



لجنة المناقصات والمزايدات
TENDER AND AUCTION COMMITTEE

تعلن لجنة المناقصات والمزايدات بالحرس الأميري عن طرح المناقصة التالية :

Announce the following Tender :

رقم المناقصة	الموضوع	قيمة الوثائق	قيمة التأمين المؤقت	نظام تقديم العطاءات	الفئة / التخصص	تاريخ الاقفال
Tender Number	Tender Title	Document Fee -QR	Tender Bond -QR	Envelope System	Tenderer's Classification /Grade	Tender Closing Date
(16/359/ج)	توريد أجهزة (X-RAY) Supply devices (X-RAY)	-	30,000	مظروف واحد one envelopes	الشركات المتخصصة في هذا المجال	06/10/2016

Conditions :

- A copy of the tender documents can be obtained from the Tender & auction committe located in the Amiri Guard Barzan Camp during official working hours after having deposited a non-refundable amount of money into the Amiri Guard QNB account No . 0013-013303-058 .
- The tender documents are handed over to a company representative after submitting an authorization letter from the company / organization , a copy of the ID , the commercial register , a contractors classification certificate with regard to contracting companies and the receipt showing that the value of the documents has been paid .
- The deadline for the submission of the tenders will be at 12:00 a.m. of the closing date. Any tender submitted after the deadline will be rejected .
- A letter of credit / a certified cheque issued by one of the banks operating in Qatar covering the amount indicated above as a temporary guarantee for (120) days .
- The tender quotation shall be valid for (90) days with effect from the date on which the tender envelopes are opened .
- The original tenders together with copies are put into the tender & auction committe box located at the Amiri Guard Barzan Camp .
- Both the technical tender and financial tender have to be enveloped in one case max-sealed and addressed to the head of the AG Tender & Auction Committee with reference to the tender number and title .
- The successful tenderer has to submit a final guarantee amounting to (10%) of the total contract value , and valid for (90) days after the project has been accomplished .
- Any tenderer that does not comply with the above conditions will be excluded

الشروط :

- يمكن الحصول على نسخة من مستندات هذه المناقصة من لجنة المناقصات والمزايدات بمعسكر الحرس الأميري (برزان) خلال أوقات الدوام الرسمي ، وذلك بعد قيمة وغير قابلة للرد تدفع في حساب الحرس الأميري رقم (013303-058-0013) بنك قطر الوطني QNB .
- تسلم الوثائق لمندوب الشركة بعد إبراز كتاب تفويض من الشركة / المؤسسة + صورة من البطاقة الشخصية + سجل تجاري + شهادة تصنيف مقاول في ما يخص شركات المقاولات + الإيصال الدال على سداد قيمة الوثائق .
- يكون آخر موعد لتقديم العطاءات هو الساعة الثانية عشر من صباح يوم الإقفال ، ولن يتقبل أي عطاء يرد بعد الموعد المحدد .
- يجب أن يرفق مع العطاء مظلب ضمان مصرفي / شيك مصدق من أحد البنوك العاملة في دولة قطر بالقيمة المبينة أعلاه كتأمين مؤقت لمدة (120) يوم .
- يجب أن يكون العرض صالحاً لمدة (90) يوماً من تاريخ فتح المظاريف .
- تودع العطاءات بمستندي لجنة المناقصات والمزايدات ، الكائن بمعسكر الحرس الأميري (برزان) من أصل وصورة .
- يجب أن يكون العطاء الفني والمالي داخل مظروف واحد مغلق ومختوم بالشمع الأحمر ومعنون باسم رئيس لجنة المناقصات والمزايدات بالحرس الأميري ، ويكتب عليه رقم المناقصة وموضوعها .
- يقدم صاحب العطاء المقبول تأميناً نهائياً بمقدار (10%) من إجمالي القيمة الواجبة عليه ، ويسري لمدة لاتقل عن (90يوماً) بعد الانتهاء من تنفيذ المشروع .
- سوف يتم استبعاد أي عطاء لا يلتزم بالشروط أعلاه .

للاستفسار يرجى الاتصال على هاتف رقم (44220286) و (44220293)
For Further Information / Queries please contact Tel No 44220286 Fax No. 44220266

Chairman of the Committee of tenders and auctions
Amiri Guard

رئيس لجنة المناقصات والمزايدات
الحرس الأميري

Egypt migrant shipwreck toll rises to 168

AFP

CAIRO: Egyptian rescue workers have recovered 168 bodies from a migrant shipwreck off Egypt›s Mediterranean coast, the health ministry said yesterday.

Survivors have said up to 450 migrants were on board the overcrowded fishing vessel headed to Italy from Egypt when it keeled over Wednesday off the port city of Rosetta. Egypt's military has said it rescued 163 survivors and that recovery attempts were continuing.

The International Organization for Migration said most of those rescued were Egyptians but they also included Sudanese, Eritreans, a Syrian and an Ethiopian.

Jordan writer shot dead outside court

AMMAN: A prominent Jordanian writer was shot dead yesterday on the steps of a court where he was facing charges for sharing an anti-Islam cartoon on Facebook.

Nahed Hattar was struck by three bullets before the alleged assassin was arrested at the scene of the shooting in Amman›s central Abdali district, said the official *Petra* news agency.

The assailant shot Hattar, a 56-year-old Christian, as he made his way up the steps outside the court, a security source said.

Hit in the head, he was pronounced dead on arriving at hospital, the source said.



Supporters of Morocco's Justice and Development Party (PJD) wave the party flag during a meeting in Rabat yesterday, ahead of the upcoming parliamentary election.

Morocco's Islamists play down tensions as poll campaign begins

Reuters

RABAT: Morocco's governing Islamist party opened its campaign for the kingdom's parliamentary election yesterday, playing down tensions with the royal establishment.

The October 7 ballot will be the second since the 2011 Arab Spring-like protests that prompted King Mohammed to introduce a new constitution to diffuse unrest and give the elected cabinet more powers.

While rulers in Libya, Tunisia and Egypt were felled by the 2011 protests, King Mohammed succeeded in stifling the protest movement by devolving some of his absolute power, spending heavily and tightening security, though the palace still holds ultimate authority.

The Islamist Justice and Development party (PJD) is looking to strengthen its position, though it is not openly challenging a royal establishment that is distrustful and ill at ease sharing power with Islamists.

"These are the signs of victory," Prime Minister and PJD leader Abdelilah Benkirane told thousands packed into a sports stadium in Rabat, where party supporters chanted against corruption, one of PJD's main policies. "In 2011 the PJD said no, we won't risk our monarchy ... now all that instability has disappeared thanks to the reforms."

The elections will select lawmakers for the country's 395-seat House of Representatives. The prime minister will be selected by the king from the party that wins most seats, with PJD favourite to remain the dominant party. Whoever wins, however, will then face weeks of wrangling to form a coalition with political partners to comply with election law that does not allow one party to take full control.

PJD's main rival, the Authenticity and Modernity Party (PAM), promises to fight Islamism and cancel what it says are unpopular reforms carried out by the PJD's coalition, mainly the pension system reform.

Boko Haram leader resurfaces on video

You have been spreading in the social media that you injured or killed me. Oh tyrants, I'm in a happy state, in good health and in safety: Abubakar Shekau

AFP

KANO: The embattled leader of jihadist group Boko Haram, Abubakar Shekau, resurfaced on a video posted online yesterday, rejecting assertions by the Nigerian army that he had been seriously wounded.

"You have been spreading in the social media that you injured or killed me," Shekau said in the 40-minute video released on YouTube and dated September 25.

"Oh tyrants, I'm in a happy state, in good health and in safety."

The Nigerian army said on August 23 that the longtime militant chief had been seriously wounded in the shoulder in an air raid in which several commanders were killed.

Nigerian authorities have reported him dead several times before, but the army's latest claim was bolstered when Boko Haram -- which pledged allegiance last year to the Islamic State (IS) group -- released a video on September 13 without Shekau in it.

However, in the video released yesterday, Shekau points to a date on an Islamic calendar corresponding to September 25, 2016.

Speaking in Hausa, Arabic and English and in dialects spoken in northeast Nigeria he appeared to be in good physical health.

He used the video to issue threats against President Muhammadu Buhari, who appealed to the United Nations this week for help in negotiating the release of the Chibok schoolgirls kidnapped by the militants more than two years ago.

"If you want your girls, bring back our brethren," Shekau says.

Boko Haram, which has killed at least 20,000 people since 2009 in its quest for a hardline Islamist state in northeast Nigeria, has been in the grip of a power struggle since late last year.

Last month, IS high command said Shekau had been replaced as leader by Abu Musab Al Barnawi, the 22-year-old son of Boko Haram's founder Mohammed Yusuf.

But Shekau has maintained he is still in charge.

The first signs of a rift appeared after Shekau pledged allegiance to IS in March 2015 and changed Boko Haram's name to Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP).

Clashes have since been reported between rival Boko Haram factions in Nigeria's northeastern Borno State, near Lake Chad. Barnawi, once a protege of Shekau, has criticised his former mentor for his indiscriminate killing of civilians -- most of them fellow Muslims. He had also criticised the brutal leadership style of Shekau, alleging he has secretly killed top militant commanders who disagreed with him.

But many experts say he is not a spent force.

"He has more fighters than either Al Barnawi or Nur, especially from the Kanuri ethnic group around Lake Chad," said Jacob Zenn from the Jameston Foundation and an expert on the conflict.

But Zenn said many of Shekau's backers in the IS were now dead and the embattled leader "may therefore have few supporters in IS ranks to argue for his reinstatement over Al Barnawi."

Four soldiers dead in attack

N'DJAMENA: Nigeria's Boko Haram jihadists have killed four Chadian soldiers in a cross-border raid in the volatile Lake Chad region, a security source said yesterday.

"Around 8:00pm on Saturday night, Boko Haram members attacked the Djoroye border post near the Niger border in the Lake Chad region killing four of our soldiers," the source said. "The Chadian army killed seven Boko Haram fighters," the source said. The military did not comment, to confirm or deny the attack.



This screen grab image taken from a video released on YouTube by Boko Haram shows its leader Abubakar Shekau making a statement at an undisclosed location.

NEWS BYTES

6.8 magnitude earthquake strikes off Fiji

WELLINGTON: A powerful 6.8-magnitude earthquake struck off Fiji on Saturday but there was no threat of a tsunami, US seismologists said.

The offshore quake hit at 9:28am and was centered around 100km northeast of Ndoi Island, Fiji, the US Geological Survey (USGS) said. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center said there was no tsunami threat.

13 dead in DR Congo stampede

GOMA: Thirteen people died when a panic-stricken crowd stampeded in a troubled town in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo yesterday, local officials said. "The incident happened when a drunken soldier in civilian clothes fired four shots from his gun, causing panic," the mayor of Beni, Jean Edmond Nyonyi, said.

"Eight people drowned when they threw themselves in the river, four were killed in accidents and one person died of a heart attack," he said.

Nanjing to restrict home purchases

BEIJING: China's eastern city of Nanjing said yesterday that it would restrict home purchases, according to a statement posted on the Nanjing government's website, as the government tries to cool sharply rising home prices in China's second- and third-tier cities.

Families not registered as residents and who own one or more houses in certain districts will not be allowed to purchase another home, either new or pre-owned.

Aerial display



A parachutist releases fireworks for an aerial display during the second day of the Wonsan Friendship Air Festival in Wonsan, yesterday.

HK refugees protest for Snowden's pardon

AFP

HONG KONG: Activists and refugees staged a protest in Hong Kong yesterday calling on Washington to pardon fugitive whistle-blower Edward Snowden, with protesters describing refugees in the city as "heroes" for helping him evade authorities in 2013.

The former National Security Agency contractor, who released thousands of classified documents revealing the vast US surveillance put in place after the September 11 attacks, currently lives in Russia. He fled with documents to Hong Kong, where he hid among Sri Lankan refugees in cramped tenements, and later received political asylum in Russia after the United States revoked his passport while he was en route to Ecuador.

The New York Times reported he stayed with at least four refugees with the help of a human rights lawyer in the southern Chinese city.

Protesters said the city's refugees, many of them forced to live in slum-like conditions, and Snowden both suffered rights abuses. "We are forced to leave our country like Snowden. We stand together with him to fight for pardon," a 36-year-old refugee from Indonesia, who only gave her name as Dede, said.

Around 50 protesters chanted "Pardon Snowden" and "We are not criminals" as they marched to the US consulate, with some holding placards that read "No racism. Stop Oppressing refugees". Protest organisers said 11,000 refugees have applications for protection pending

"The HK govt thinks refugees are criminals... but they are true heroes. They helped Edward Snowden escape the US govt back in 2013," Sally Tang of Socialist Action said.

Zuma gets call from brother to quit: Report

Agencies



JOHANNESBURG: President Jacob Zuma **(pictured)** has received the latest call for his resignation from his own brother, according to a media report, as the South African leader clings to power despite a string of scandals.

Zuma's younger brother Michael urged him to quit or risk being killed, the *Sunday Times* reported.

The president has survived accusations of corruption before he took office in 2009, showing no signs of leaving office before 2019 when he is required by law to step down after two five-year terms.

"My brother is having a very difficult time and I have never seen such difficulty," said Michael Zuma, speaking from the family's rural home of Nkandla in the KwaZulu-Natal province.

"My brother has such difficulty in such a way that you fear that they are going to kill him," he said, without elaborating on any death threats.

Presidential spokesman Bongani Ngqulunga said he could not comment on family matters, while State Security Minister David Mahlobo told Reuters he could not comment on Zuma's safety. "We never discuss any security details of the president," he said.

The leader of Africa's most industrialised nation has faced calls to quit from several members of the African National Congress (ANC) after the ruling party suffered its worst losses in municipal elections in August. But the ANC's top echelons have backed the president.

Madikizela-Mandela, a former first lady and wife of the late Nelson Mandela, said South Africa needed fresh leadership, but stopped short of asking Zuma to resign.

The opposition failed in a bid to remove Zuma through a motion of no-confidence in parliament in April following a scandal.

South Africa's ruling African National Congress denied the report in the Johannesburg-based Sunday Times that Chief Whip Jackson Mthembu wants to change parliament's rules to create new measures to defend President Jacob Zuma against "abuse" in the National Assembly.

The Times story "makes a wild and baseless claim" that changes are being sought before Zuma's next visit to the assembly, the ANC said in an e-mailed statement. "This is blatantly untrue."

On Sept. 13, Zuma said he feels "abused" by lawmakers whenever he goes before the National Assembly and requested the matter be looked into.

World's largest radio telescope starts operating in China



The 500-metre Aperture Spherical Radio Telescope (FAST) is seen on its first day of operation in Pingtang, in southwestern China's Guizhou province, yesterday.

AFP

BEIJING: The world's largest radio telescope began operating in southwestern China yesterday, a project Beijing says will help humanity search for alien life.

The 500-metre Aperture Spherical Radio Telescope (FAST), nestled between hills in the mountainous region of Guizhou, began working around noon, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

Built at a cost of 1.2bn yuan ($180m), the telescope dwarfs the Arecibo Observatory in Puerto Rico as the world's largest single-dish radio telescope, with twice the sensitivity and a reflector as large as 30 football fields, it said.

FAST will use its vast dish, made up of 4,450 panels, to search for signs of intelligent life, and to observe distant pulsars -- tiny, rapidly spinning neutron stars believed to be the products of supernova explosions.

China sees its ambitious military-run, multi-billion-dollar space programme as symbolising the country's progress. It plans a permanent orbiting space station by 2020 and eventually a manned mission to the moon.

Chinese President Xi Jinping celebrated the launch, with reports that he had sent a congratulatory letter to the scientists and engineers who contributed to its creation.

The telescope represents a leap forward for China's astronomical capabilities and will be one of several "world-class" telescope projects launched in the next decade, said Yan Jun, head of China's National Astronomical Observation (NAO), according to Xinhua.

In a test run before the launch, FAST detected electromagnetic waves emitted by a pulsar more than 1,300 light-years away, state media reported an NAO researcher as saying.

Earlier Xinhua cited Wu Xiangping, director-general of the Chinese Astronomical Society, as saying that the telescope's high degree of sensitivity "will help us to search for intelligent life outside of the galaxy".

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EDITORIAL

War crimes

Any hope of ending the civil war in Syria, or at least the hope of starting a meaningful dialogue that could lead to a cessation of hostilities, evaporated yesterday with the US and Russia using the toughest and strongest words in an unusually blunt session at the UN Security Council meeting called to discuss the violence even as warplanes belonging to the Syrian government pounded Aleppo. Washington accused Russia of 'barbarism' while Russia said ending the war was almost 'impossible'. The exchange of recriminations shows Syria is set to witness more of the same and even worse after the collapse last week of a ceasefire brokered by Russia and the US.

Bashar Al Assad's forces, backed by Russia, are complicating the war and closing the door on peace talks with relentless attacks on Syrians. Russians have been accused of widespread use of bunker-busting and incendiary bombs on the 275,000 civilians living in the rebel-held east of Aleppo. Assad is desperately trying to capture this city which is under rebel control, where more than 250,000 civilians are now trapped, because any victory in Aleppo will be the biggest victory for Assad since the civil war began. But it won't be easy. Syrian forces seized control of the Handarat Palestinian refugee camp, north of Aleppo, but rebels took it back.

It's a dark and dangerous tunnel ahead for Syrians with no signs of light.

Russia's UN Ambassador Vitaly Churkin's statement that ending the war was 'impossible' speaks of the evil designs of Moscow and its allies. Instead of trying to bring the war to an end, Moscow seems determined to give complete control to Assad by killing Syrians and bombing territories. US Ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, told the 15-member council that what "Russia is sponsoring and doing is not counter-terrorism, it is barbarism. Instead of pursuing peace, Russia and Assad make war. Instead of helping get lifesaving aid to civilians, Russia and Assad are bombing the humanitarian convoys, hospitals, and first responders who are trying desperately to keep people alive."

The UN investigators are already looking into the alleged use of dangerous weapons like phosphorus and napalm in several cities of Syria. The investigation must be expedited and those found guilty must be brought before the international law.

It's unfortunate that the entry of superpowers is complicating the war in Syria and destroying the chances of peace. The Syrian opposition and people are finding themselves caught between forces beyond their control. There are too many players on the ground and diverse interests and motives have become so entangled that nobody knows the way out.

It's a dark and dangerous tunnel ahead with no signs of light.

Quote of the day

US and Russian attempts to bring peace to Syria is very, very near the end of its life and yes the Security Council needs to be ready to fulfil our responsibilities.

Matthew Rycroft
Britain's UN Ambassador



'Ferocious' air strikes pummel Aleppo as ground gained

Al Jazeera

Warplanes mounted a new wave of heavy air strikes on rebel-held areas of Aleppo on Saturday pressing on with a major offensive by the Russian-backed Syrian military to take back the entire city.

The attacks came as a United Nations official said nearly two million people in Aleppo are without running water as security conditions deteriorate. Syrian government forces, meanwhile, seized ground from rebels north of Aleppo.

The capture of the Handarat camp marked the first major ground advance by the government in an offensive that rebels say has unleashed unprecedented firepower against their half of the city.

The captured area - elevated ground overlooking one of the main roads into Aleppo - had been in rebel hands for years.

"Handarat has fallen," an official with one of the main Aleppo rebel groups told Reuters. An army statement confirming the advance said "large numbers of terrorists" had been killed.

Residents of rebel-held eastern Aleppo say it has been subjected to the most ferocious bombardment of the war since the government declared a new offensive that has killed dozens of people in the last three days.

Sources told Al Jazeera on Saturday that at least 91 people had been killed in the past 24 hours.

"The raids are intense and continuous," Rami Abdulrahman, the director of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a British-based organisation that reports on the war, said. Rebels said air strikes on Saturday morning hit at least four areas of the opposition-held east, home to more than 250,000 people. The attack has drawn on ordinance more destructive than anything previously used against the area, and many buildings have been entirely destroyed, residents say.

"They are using weapons that appear to be specifically for [bringing down] buildings," said a senior official in an Aleppo-based rebel faction, the Levant Front. "Most of the victims are under the rubble because more than half the civil defence has been forced out of service."

The Syrian army said it is targeting rebel positions in the city and denied hitting civilians. Hanaa Singer, UNICEF representative in Syria, said intense attacks damaged the Bab al-Nairab water pumping station that supplies some 250,000 people in rebel-held eastern parts of the contested city with water.

Singer said in retaliation, the Suleiman al-Halabi pumping station, also located in the rebel-held east, was switched off - cutting water to 1.5 million people in government-held western parts of the city.

"Depriving children of water puts them at risk of catastrophic outbreaks of water-borne diseases," Singer warned in her statement released late Friday.

White Helmets: Risking lives

Residents say more than 150 air strikes have been launched, crushing emergency service structures, as well as underground shelters used by civilians to hide from bombings.

At least 30 neighbourhoods were targeted, Al Jazeera's Amr Al Halabi said, reporting from Aleppo. He added the relentless strikes hampered the ability of rescue workers to help civilians caught up in the fighting.

Three centres for a volunteer rescue group known as the White Helmets were also hit.

"We have four centres in eastern Aleppo. The aircraft targeted three centres. Two of them are now out of service," Abdul Rahman al-Hassani of the White Helmets told Al Jazeera.

Residents of rebel-held eastern Aleppo say it has been subjected to the most ferocious bombardment of the war since the government declared a new offensive that has killed dozens of people in the last three days.

He added that five vehicles belonging to the group were destroyed, including an ambulance.

"Our centres were the direct target [of the strikes]," Hassani said.

"We feel the earth trembling and shaking under our feet. Aleppo is burning," said Bahaa Al Halabi, an activist from a besieged rebel-held district.

The Syrian military, which is backed by the Russian air force, said it was starting a new operation against the rebel-held east.

The Syrian defence ministry has called on residents to move to government-held areas, adding there would be "no detention, or inquiry to any citizen" who reached the checkpoints that divide the city.

A high-ranking military source confirmed the intense bombardment was in preparation for a ground assault.

"We have begun reconnaissance, aerial and artillery bombardment," he told the AFP news agency, adding the strikes could "go on for days" before the ground operation starts.

Aleppo was once Syria's commercial and industrial hub but has been ravaged by fighting and roughly divided between government control in the west and rebel control in the east since mid-2012.

The announcement of the new Syrian army offensive on Thursday came as international powers failed to revive a collapsed ceasefire during diplomatic talks in New York.

The Syrian war has seen more than 400,000 people killed and almost 11 million Syrians - half the country's prewar population - displaced .



Men inspect the damage after an air strike on the rebel held Al Qaterji neighbourhood of Aleppo, yesterday.

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The activists who stood up to Iran when Obama wouldn't



By Eli Lake
Bloomberg



Abed Ayoub, left, and Zaher Sahloul, activists for Syrians.

Iran's President, Hassan Rowhani, has persuaded most Western elites that he is a moderate worthy of deference. Big-shot journalists respectfully interview him. Former senior US officials dine with him. European foreign ministries accommodate his pious sensibilities.

US President Barack Obama and his top advisers are no exception. They too go out of their way not to offend Rowhani, particularly since he agreed to the nuclear deal in 2015. Last week at the UN General Assembly, Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry did not call out Iran by name, as they did with Russia, for supporting the slaughter in Syria. And even though Iran's president has declined Obama's requests for a face-to-face meeting, the US president had kind words for Iran in his big speech at the UN on Tuesday.

Two people who are not taken in by Rowhani's charms are Zaher Sahloul and Yahya Basha. They are Syrian-American medical doctors who have devoted themselves to pleading with diplomats and world leaders to stop the killing in the place of their birth. Sahloul traveled to Aleppo in June and July to treat some victims of the Syrian war.

US President Barack Obama and his top advisers are no exception. They too go out of their way not to offend Rowhani, particularly since he agreed to the nuclear deal in 2015. Last week at the UN General Assembly, Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry did not call out Iran by name, as they did with Russia, for supporting the slaughter in Syria.

On Tuesday last week, Sahloul and Basha were invited to a meeting in New York with Rowhani for US Muslim leaders. It was the second meeting with Rowhani for the two doctors, and they decided to press Iran's president on his country's support for the man tormenting their fellow Syrians.

Sahloul told me that when it was his turn to speak, he told Iran's president about a 5-year-old boy named Ahmed. Between June 27 and July 1, Sahloul performed surgeries on Ahmed, who suffered shrapnel wounds in his spinal cord and left lung after his family's home collapsed from a barrel bomb dropped by the Syrian air force. When Sahloul left Aleppo, Ahmed was alive, but on life support. The next day, the young boy's heart stopped and he died.

"I asked the president, as a Muslim, whether Hussein would be on the side of the people dropping the barrel bombs," Sahloul told me. Hussein is the grandson of the prophet Mohammed and is the third imam of the Shiite sect of Islam, which is practised in Iran.

Sahloul said Rowhani heard him out and then responded that Iran has no choice but to fight against terrorists like the Islamic State.

Later as the meeting with US Muslim leaders was wrapping up, Basha tried to approach Rowhani in the hallway to press the Syria issue. Basha told me Rowhani just kept walking.

The moral and spiritual case these doctors made to Iran's president is undercut by Obama's policy decisions. After all, the day after Sahloul and Basha met with Rowhani, the US approved licenses for Boeing and Airbus to sell planes to Iran Air. This is despite evidence the airline has helped supply the Syrian regime with military equipment and personnel for the war Obama says he is trying to end. On Sunday evening, White House deputy national security adviser Ben Rhodes is scheduled to address the annual meeting of the National Iranian American Council, which has lobbied since 2013 in Congress to burnish the image of Rowhani as a reformer who is fighting against his country's hardliners.

Sahloul understands Rowhani's appeal on a certain level. "He is an excellent public relations person for the Iranian regime,"

Sahloul told me. "He hugs everyone, he smiles, the language he uses is not controversial in Muslim circles." Many Syrian-Americans, though, see a menace behind that smile. Sahloul said when he first agreed to meet with Rowhani in 2014, others at his humanitarian organization protested. "Many of our board members say Rowhani is a war criminal and we should have no contact with him," he said.

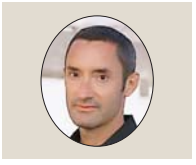
But Sahloul sees it differently. He told me that it is now apparent in the final months of the Obama administration that the US has failed to diminish Iran's support for Bashar Al Assad's regime in Syria. "Clearly our government, the US government, can't influence the regime," he said. "So I meet with Iranian leaders and ask them directly."

To say that Obama disappointed Sahloul in this respect is an understatement. "I think history will judge him as the president who had all the information and allowed a genocide in Syria," he said.

Sahloul wasn't always this tough on him. In the summer of 2013, before Assad's forces dropped sarin gas bombs on a Damascus suburb, he met with Obama at the White House for an Iftar dinner. He delivered a letter to the US president urging him to establish a no-fly zone in Syria to protect civilians. In his brief moment with Obama, the doctor made the case for more US humanitarian intervention.

Obama listened respectfully to the Syrian-American and took the letter in his hand. "He told me he would get back to me," Sahloul said. "But he never did."

Cracks showing in Germany's fragile truce with the ECB



By Noah Barkin
Reuters

Michael Stuebgen, a conservative member of the German parliament, was speaking with the head of a local savings bank recently about the European Central Bank's quantitative easing (QE) programme.

"He told me the bond market was being emptied out," Stuebgen recalled. "He likened it to going into a supermarket where everything has been bought up. You might find a shrivelled old carrot or potato. Pretty soon you're starving."

Stuebgen, a spokesman on European affairs for Chancellor Angela Merkel's party in the Bundestag, credits the ECB and its President Mario Draghi with saving the euro zone from collapse four years ago.

But conversations like the one with the banker have convinced him that its policies, in particular the massive bond-buying programme known as QE, have gone too far. He is not alone.

Stuebgen and his colleagues plan to send Draghi a message when he makes a rare appearance in the Bundestag on Wednesday to explain his policies and answer questions from lawmakers.

"It is time for the ECB to change course," Stuebgen said.

Last spring German criticism of the ECB reached new heights (some would say lows) when Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble blamed Draghi's policies for fuelling the rise of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), which was founded in 2013 in opposition to euro zone bailouts and has since morphed into an anti-immigration party.

Schaeuble's attack was unusual for two reasons. First, it was coming from Germany, where central bank independence has long been sacrosanct. Second, it was personal. Schaeuble was not only expressing concerns about ECB policies, which he had done off and on for years, but he was singling out Draghi.

A storm ensued, eventually forcing the two men to sit down over lunch in Washington in late April and agree a fragile truce.

It has held for five months, but there are signs it could be on the verge of collapse.

Instead of changing course, as Stuebgen and his colleagues want, the ECB is widely expected to announce an extension of its QE programme by the end of the year. The programme is due to expire in March.

As early as next month, it could also announce steps to broaden the scope of what it can buy in response to a dwindling pool of available assets.

The most controversial change would be abandoning the so-called "capital key", which limits the proportion of government bonds the ECB can buy from any given member state, based on its size and economic weight.

"The big challenge for Mario Draghi will be to prepare the Bundestag and German public for a further easing of monetary policy," said Marcel Fratzscher, head of the DIW economic institute and a former senior official at the ECB.

That message is unlikely to go down well in Berlin. In addition to concerns about the distorting effects of QE on financial markets and the impact of low interest rates on German savers and insurers, the political landscape in Germany has become decidedly more toxic for the ECB over the past months.

With one year to go until the next federal election, the AfD has risen to a record high of 16 percent in national polls. On the defensive, Merkel's conservatives are desperate to shift the debate away from her increasingly unpopular stance on refugees.

In this environment, the ECB could become the target of choice.

"I expect the German debate over ECB policy to ratchet up again if we see an extension of the QE programme or adjustments to it that broaden the scope of what the ECB can buy," said Thorsten Frei, another lawmaker from Merkel's party, who will attend the Draghi session.

"There is certainly a risk that this becomes an issue in the election campaign next year."

Juergen Stark, a former ECB board member who resigned over concerns about the direction of policy at the height of the euro zone crisis in 2011, said he expects a more intense debate in the coming months.

"The longer the ECB stays on its current course, the fiercer the public reaction in Germany will be," he said.

The latest Eurobarometer survey, which measures public opinion in the European Union, shows that only 30 percent of Germans say they trust the ECB, below the EU average of 34 percent.

"Many perceive the rescue measures to lack democratic legitimacy," a report published this month by the Delors Institute and Bertelsmann Foundation said.

"Even a central bank that is independent of direct political influence relies on trust and public support to be credible and effective in the long run."

The ECB, for its part, has gone on the offensive to address the criticism from its biggest and most important shareholder. Board member Benoit Coeure visited Berlin in May to defend the policies.

A month later, Francois Villeroy de Galhau, the German-speaking governor of the Bank of France, also paid a visit and explained ECB policies to Bundestag members in their own language.

Villeroy was back in Berlin last week for a meeting of French and German ministers and central bankers and said that, while it was fine to have a public debate about monetary policy, calling the legitimacy of the ECB into question was problematic.

"What is not always taken into account in Germany and elsewhere is that there was a serious risk of deflation in the euro zone and ECB actions have significantly helped to avoid this danger," Villeroy said.

"We may need to explain our policies better," he added. "But there has to be an effort from both sides."

Worryingly for the ECB, Schaeuble has begun criticising the bank once again and was reported to have urged lawmakers to give Draghi a relentless grilling when he visits Berlin this week.

Speaking at an evening event in Berlin last week, Schaeuble mocked the ECB's bond-buying programme, drawing laughter from the audience of German industrialists.

"I think it's called QE," Schaeuble said. "I don't even know what that means."

With one year to go until the next federal election, the AfD has risen to a record high of 16 percent in national polls. On the defensive, Merkel's conservatives are desperate to shift the debate away from her increasingly unpopular stance on refugees.

All thoughts and views expressed in these columns are those of the writers, not of the newspaper.
All correspondence regarding Views and Opinion pages should be mailed to the Editor-in-Chief.

Philippines to hold war games with US in Oct

The war games will be conducted from October 4 to 12 in various parts of northern Luzon island as well as Palawan — located near Spratly island chain in the disputed South China Sea.

Anatolia

ZAMBOANGA CITY: The Philippine military is set to hold its first exercise with United States forces under President Rodrigo Duterte, despite his earlier call for American special forces to withdraw from the troubled southern island of Mindanao. *GMA News* reported yesterday that the war games will be conducted October 4 to 12 in various parts of northern Luzon island as well a Palawan -- located near the Spratly island chain in the disputed South China Sea.

It cited a statement on the website of the US Embassy in Manila which said that the 33rd iteration of the Philippines Amphibious Landing Exercise, called PHIBLEX 33, would include around 1,400 US service members based in Okinawa in Japan and 500 Philippine troops.

"The opportunity to train and build mutually beneficial capabilities with our Armed Forces of the Philippines partners is essential for sharpening our bilateral amphibious and humanitarian assistance capabilities, both hallmarks of the US Marine Corps," said Brig. Gen. John M Jansen, 3d Marine Expeditionary Brigade commanding general.

"Exchanging expertise and cultivating our longstanding security alliance provides a cornerstone for security and stability in the region, and has for decades," he added.

The war games will feature humanitarian civic assistance efforts, an amphibious landing drill and live-fire training aimed at advancing cooperation between the long-time allies, improving interoperability and assisting in strengthening bilateral amphibious capabilities. Earlier this month, Duterte declared his administration would pursue an "independent foreign policy" and warned that the US military presence would worsen conditions in Mindanao -- where several armed Muslim groups, including those involved in an ongoing peace process with the government, and a communist insurgency operate.

Rights respected amid drug crackdown: FM

AP



Philippine Foreign Minister Perfecto Yasay addresses the United Nations General Assembly in the Manhattan borough of New York, US, yesterday.

UNITED NATIONS: Despite growing international criticism of his government's bloody crackdown on illegal drugs, the Philippine top diplomat told world leaders on Saturday that the rule of law governs the campaign to eradicate the illicit substances, which he said have stunted the country's development.

Secretary for Foreign Affairs Perfecto Yasay said President Rodrigo Duterte's crackdown is guided by a respect for human rights and the legal system, even though thousands of drug dealers and users have been killed in recent months.

"The rule of law and strict adherence to due process fully governs our campaign against corruption and criminality, including the fight against illegal drugs," he said.

More than 3,000 suspected drug dealers and users have been killed since July and more than 600,000 others have surrendered out of fear of being killed.

Despite growing alarm and international criticism, including from President Barack Obama and human rights watchdogs, the controversial Duterte has said he won't stop the campaign. He has said that killing drug suspects is lawful if police act in self-defense and urged citizens with guns to shoot and kill drug dealers who resist arrest. Witnesses have accused some police of gunning down people suspected of being involved in illegal drugs.

Yasay, who was addressing the UN. General Assembly during its annual ministerial meeting on Saturday, said the government is determined to eradicate the distribution, sale and use of illegal drugs because they threaten the country's peace and order "which, in turn, impedes our sustainable development goals."

Duterte, 71, overwhelmingly won election in May on the ambitious promise of eradicating corruption and crime, particularly illegal drugs, in six months. He recently said he underestimated the magnitude of the drug problem and will extend the crackdown by another half year.

Duterte said this week he will invite the UN chief and European Union officials to investigate his anti-drug effort, but only if he can question them in public afterward to prove their human rights concerns are baseless.

He disclosed the offer in a speech on Thursday in the Philippines in which he again lashed out at critics of his crackdown, including Obama. He accused them of hypocrisy for raising concerns about his anti-crime fight while launching military strikes that have killed innocent people in the Middle East.

Yasay acknowledged the scrutiny that the drugs crackdown has evoked from the international community.

"We urge everyone to allow us to deal with our domestic challenges in order to achieve our national goals, without undue interference," he said.

The big catch



A resident casts his net as he fishes in shallow waters near the shore in San Fernando, La Union, in northern Philippines, yesterday.

Vietnam urges restraint on S China Sea

AP

UNITED NATIONS: Vietnam's Deputy Prime Minister Pham Binh Minh is calling on all parties involved with territorial ownership issues in the South China Sea to exercise self-restraint and solve disputes by peaceful means.

The issue of ownership of territories in the South China Sea has become a heated topic in recent years.

China claims virtually the entire sea as its own, citing historical reasons. That has pitted it against Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei.

US President Barack Obama said earlier this month at a meeting with leaders of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations that an international arbitration ruling on July 12 against China was binding and "helped to clarify maritime rights in the region."

Pham, addressing the United Nations General Assembly during its annual ministerial meeting on Saturday, said parties should abide by international law, including the U.N.›s Convention on the Law of the Sea, and respect diplomatic and legal processes.

Ousted PM tells junta chief to probe own brother's corruption

AFP

BANGKOK: Thailand's first female prime minister yesterday told the man who ousted her government two years ago to investigate his own brother over corruption allegations, in an unusually strong broadside against the junta.

Yingluck Shinawatra was booted from office shortly before army chief Prayut Chan-O-Cha seized power in May 2014, the military's second coup in less than a decade and their twelfth successful power grab since 1932.

Since then she has been hit with a series of junta-led prosecutions including a retroactive impeachment, an ongoing criminal negligence trial that could see her jailed for up to a decade and a separate move to seize more than $1bn in civil damages.

The last two legal cases stem from a popular but financially costly rice subsidy scheme that Yingluck's government pushed.

"The Prime Minister (Prayut) says that all the legal actions against me are based on the law and are not bullying," Yingluck wrote on her Facebook account on yesterday.

"I would like the Prime Minister to apply the same logic and justice given to me like he gives justice and protection to his brother and other people who are on his side. Because the laws should be enforced for everyone, not just used only against my side." Yingluck's comments were a direct reference to new corruption allegations that have surfaced this month against Prime Minister Prayut's brother Preecha Chan-O-Cha, who is also a senior army general.

Local media said one of Preecha's sons had won a series of lucrative construction contracts from Thailand's Third Army, which Preecha used to command.

Preecha insisted his son won the contracts in a fair tender process and denied any wrongdoing.

But it is not the first time the junta chief's brother has had to deny negative headlines.

Earlier this year he admitted helping another son land a well-paid officer's job in the military. And when the junta ordered senior officials to reveal their wealth -- part of a post-coup attempt at transparency -- Preecha had $1.2m in his bank account -- money he said was military assets he was looking after and not his own personal wealth. Such headlines have stung Prayut, who has defended his coup as necessary to root out political corruption and end years of instability between competing factions.

China's Air Force holds drills in western Pacific

Reuters

BEIJING: China's Air Force said yesterday that it had flown more than 40 bombers and other fighter planes through a strait between Japanese islands on their way to drills in the Western Pacific.

Regular long range drills in the Western Pacific and patrols over the East China Sea air defence identification zone were for the Air Force to protect China's sovereignty and national security, China's Air Force spokesman Shen Jinke said, according to a statement by the Ministry of Defence.

China drew condemnation from Japan and the United States in 2013 when it imposed an Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea, in which aircraft are supposed to identify themselves to Chinese authorities.

The patrols were to "carefully monitor and judge the foreign military aircraft that enter the anti-aircraft defence zone, to take measures to respond to different threats in the sky and to protect national airspace," the statement said. Aircraft of the People's Liberation Army did the exercises after flying over the Miyako Strait, a body of water between Japan's islands of Miyako and Okinawa, the Air Force statement said.

This comes as China has been increasingly asserting itself in territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas.

Elephant population falls due to rise in ivory poaching

Reuters

JOHANNESBURG: Africa's elephant population fell around 20 percent between 2006 and 2015 because of a surge in ivory poaching, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) said in a report yesterday.

Switzerland-based IUCN is regarded as the most authoritative source on wild fauna populations and the report's release at a UN conference on the global wildlife trade will lend a sense of urgency as some countries seek to keep the global ivory trade shut while others want to reopen it.

"This is yet another set of data clearly indicating that governments must take all necessary actions to address the crisis," said Susan Lieberman, head of international policy for the Wildlife Conservation Society.

The IUCN, which drew on a range of estimates and census data, said it now had a fairly accurate count of 415,000 elephants in Africa in the areas where extensive surveys could be taken, down from over 500,000 in 2006.

There are a number of regions where systematic surveys could not be taken and so it is difficult to say what is happening to elephants in such places. These include South Sudan, Liberia and savannah areas of Central African Republic. Losses in some countries have been staggering. Tanzania, which relies heavily on wildlife tourism, saw a 60 percent decline in its elephant population.

"The surge in poaching for ivory that began approximately a decade ago - the worst that Africa has experienced since the 1970s and 1980s - has been the main driver of the decline," the IUCN said.

Elephant poaching has risen to meet red-hot demand among fast-growing consumer markets in Asian economies such as China's, where ivory is a coveted commodity used in carving and ornamental accessories. The IUCN noted that southern populations in "Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe are stable or increasing, and there is evidence of elephant range expansion in Botswana."

But poachers are also training their guns on southern Africa with big declines noted in Mozambique, it said. Namibia and Zimbabwe have submitted proposals to the U.N.'s Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), which is meeting in Johannesburg, seeking permission to lift a global ban on the ivory trade so they can sell stockpiles. This is opposed by other African nations such as Kenya which fear that illicit ivory can be laundered with clean supplies and that it could stimulate demand for a commodity which has one main source - a dead elephant.

Altaf-led MQM to set-up new organisation

The announcement of the new set up is expected to be made in next few days.

Internews

ISLAMABAD: Highly disappointed with the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P), the London based MQM led by its founder Altaf Hussain has formally decided to form a new organisational set up of MQM Pakistan.

The announcement of the new setup is expected to be made in the next a few days, credible sources within the MQM said.

"There is no place for those who ditched the party and its founding chief Altaf Hussain," the source said.

According to a key MQM-London leader, those who showed allegiance to MQM chief, who believes in the party's philosophy and ideologies of Altaf Hussain would be given important positions and portfolios in the revamped party.

The decision of revamping the party was taken following the resolution adopted in Sindh Assembly against MQM supremoAltaft Hussain. The MQM-London has strongly taken notice of MQM-Pakistan endorsing resolution moved by the lawmakers of provincial assembly and said that "enough is enough".

The source said when the party members united for their vested interests against founding chief, nothing remained in it and it was high time to part ways with them.

Under the given circumstances, the party chief himself distanced himself and endorsed the MQM-P's decision and announced his full support to Dr Farooq Sattar.

But now the MQM London has reached the conclusion that over two dozen leaders within the MQM are not struggling for the survival of the organisation but have become part of a conspiracy to eliminate the party once and for all. So it was immediately decided to establish a new organisational setup of the party, the sources said. Political pundits opined that a large number of MQM leaders and parliamentarians of 1992 were confused over the situation and waiting for the dust to settle.

Solidarity



Demonstrators shout anti-India slogans to show solidarity with those living in Kashmir at a protest in Lahore, yesterday.

Top Pakistani Taliban commander dead

AFP

PESHAWAR: Afghan security forces have killed one of the top Pakistani Taliban commanders along with at least 10 other militants in a border area operation, sources said yesterday.

Raeas Khan, also known as Azam Khan Tariq, had a Rs 20m ($190,740) bounty on his head and was fourth-highest ranking commander in the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

"I confirm the killing of Azam Tariq along with at least 10 other Pakistani Taliban in Paktika province," a senior commander loyal to Tariq said. The nature of the operation was unclear, but three sources in the militant group said Tariq and his associates were killed in the Laman area of the Afghan province, which is near Pakistan's South Waziristan region.

Tariq worked as chief TTP spokesman from 2009 until 2013 and was a close aide to former TTP chief Hakimullah Mehsud, who was killed in a US drone strike in Pakistan in 2013.

In 2009 the Pakistani government offered $5m for information leading to the capture of TTP commanders. Tariq was top of the list as three other commanders had been killed—either in US drone strikes or in Pakistani military operations.

Imran may rethink Raiwind rally's timing if border tension rises

Internews

KARACHI: Pakistani political parties may differ on a lot of issues, but when it comes to dealing with India, they are willing to bury their differences and put up a united front.

This is what Imran Khan says his party will do. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman, who is scheduled to lead a protest in the residential estate of ruling Sharif family, said his party might reconsider timing of the much-trumpeted Raiwind march, if tensions between Pakistan and India boiled over, though he doesn't see that happening.

"We will stand by our armed forces and the nation, if tensions with India escalate," Imran said during an interaction with journalists in Karachi. However, he said he didn't think India could go beyond sabre-rattling.

Imran said India was using last Sunday's Uri attack to shift international spotlight away from its flagrant rights abuses in Kashmir.

He was critical of the Indian media which, he said, was stirring up war hysteria in the region.

The PTI is scheduled to lead a march to Raiwind, where the residences of the Sharif family are located, to press the PML-N government to order an independent inquiry into Panamagate scandal.

No plans to procure voting machines from India: ECP

Internews

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) says that it has no plans to procure electronic voting machines (EVMs) and biometric verification machines (BVMs) from India for 2018 general elections.

A senior official of the ECP said three firms had been "technically qualified" for supplying EVMs and two for supplying BVMs and none of the five companies was Indian. He said the commission was in process of acquiring 400 EVMs and 300 BVMs for a pilot project only.

A petition filed in Lahore High Court on Friday claimed that three Indian companies - Indira Kamra, Reliance and Morpho had also submitted their bids for supplying the machines and the commission was likely to approve their bids.

The petition argued that it would be dangerous for Pakistan's security if the machines were purchased from Indian companies.

"The ECP has not allowed any Indian firm to participate in the process of procurement of the machines," the official said.

"Rather, the commission has taken extra precautions and made it mandatory for qualified firms to get security clearance from top intelligence agencies before a contract is awarded to them." He confirmed that Indira Systems and Reliance were among the qualified firms but said Indira Systems was a purely Spanish company.

Preparations afoot to welcome Hekmatyar in Kabul

Internews

ISLAMABAD: As Hizb-i-Islami Afghanistan (HIA) entered into a peace agreement with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's regime last week, preparations are afoot for the return of Gulbaddin Hekmatyar to Kabul.

A source in Kabul said that many HIA leaders, who had distanced themselves from the armed struggle of the party but did not disconnect their political association with Hekmatyar, have already reached Kabul to welcome him back most probably in a next couple of weeks.

Hekmatyar has been assured of full security by Turkish commandos during his stay in Kabul as he has also hinted at visiting Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan soon after his homecoming, the sources close to HIA's political wing based in Islamabad and Peshawar said.

A source claimed, "The former prime minister of Afghanistan of seven mujahideen coalition outfits is likely to engage in intensive dialogue with his friends in Taliban ranks and also inviting Pakistani authorities to join a joint effort to pave the way for foreign troops exit from Afghanistan when complete peace returns to the war-torn country.

A team of journalists who reported the long armed struggle of Afghan nation against Soviet army's invasion of the country for more than ten years may also visit Kabul as soon Hizb-i-Islami Afghanistan chief sets foot in the capital.

Diplomatic sources in Islamabad are optimistic about returning of Taliban to negotiation table after GulbaddinHekmatyar's joining mainstream politics by shunning arms struggle.

He said there were also indications that Hekmatyar might start dialogue with his party's reneged leaders to reunite and make HIA more formidable political force which shares major share in the local administration.

Before retreat from Sarobi, south of Kabul after Taliban taking over country's reigns of the country, Hekmatyar has been rapidly changing his places.

Hekmatyar also extended his support to the Taliban forces against US occupation of the country but then withdrew his cooperation and kept himself quiet while many of his party men entrenched themselves in country's politics by changing their positions.

The source said that with the age and experience, Hekmatyar has finally come to the conclusion that war is no solution to the Afghan problem and decided to join the political forces to drive the country out of crisis.

Honing skills



Members of the Islamabad rock climbing club practise in the hills skirting Islamabad, yesterday.

Seminary torched in 2013 riots to reopen

Internews

ISLAMABAD: The newly-built Taleemul Quran seminary and its attached mosque in Rawalpindi, which were burned down during riots triggered during Muharram procession of Shia Muslims in the city three years ago, is set to be inaugurated with the permission of the district administration on September 29, just a couple of days before the start of Muharram.

The seminary and mosque were torched along with a nearby cloth market during violence that led to clamping of curfew in Rawalpindi on November 15, 2013.

The provincial government then allocated Rs 240m for their reconstruction.

The seminary's administration has invited several key figures, including Maulana Fazal ur-Rehman, Jamaat-i-Islami Emir Sirajul Haq, Ahle Sunnat WalJamaat leader Ahmed Ludhanvi, JamaatudDawa chief Hafiz Saeed and several religious scholars from the country.

The timing of the inauguration ceremony, however, has raised eyebrows among locals, with many fearing that such an event held in such close proximity to the beginning of Muharram may heighten tensions in the area.

Head of the Taleemul Quran Seminary Maulana Ashraf Ali said that both buildings had been reconstructed some time ago, but the inauguration would be held on September 29.

He admitted that students had shifted to the new building around four months back.

'Construction on some washrooms is not yet complete and may take about a month, so we were waiting for the right time to schedule the inauguration,' he said.

Before green-lighting the inauguration, the City District Government Rawalpindi (CDGR) called a meeting of law enforcement and intelligence agencies.

A senior CDGR official said the local administration and police had been directed to ensure that speakers at the event do not indulge in hate speech.

'The local administration was worried, but the District Intelligence Committee reviewed the case and decided to let the seminary go ahead with their event, because if they denied permission, it would also create tensions in the area,' he said.

He said that the law enforcement and intelligence agencies recommended surveillance of foreign elements so that they do not participate in the inauguration function since in 2013, such elements played a role in inciting sectarian violence.

He said that the administration had also ensured that inauguration did not fall on a Friday, as there would be an even bigger crowd on that day on account of Friday prayers.

'The district administration and police will ensure that no banned religious leaders participate in the event, and that loud speakers are not used,' he said.

Global partners commend fight against polio

Internews

ISLAMABAD: International development partners have commended Pakistan's performance in the fight against polio, curtailing the disease's transmission across the country. They committed to continue supporting Pakistan for eradicating polio.

The international partners, comprising WHO, UNICEF, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Canadian High Commission, JICA, Rotary International, CDC, USAID and AUSAID, expressed this at a high-profile briefing at the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) yesterday.

They were given a detailed briefing on the status of ongoing polio programme by EOC National Coordinator Dr Rana Muhammad Safdar.

Besides briefing the participants about the progress of current polio situation, Dr Safdar presented a performance report of the government during the 2015-16 transmission season prepared by a third party. The programme achieved its target of 90 percent coverage in all provinces.

Dr Safdar said that their next target was to increase the coverage level up to 95 percent in all designated areas.

"Steady pressure on the virus is paying dividends which can be seen well beyond the reduced case count," he said, adding that "Core reservoirs are now Khyber-Peshawar-Nangarhar, Quetta-Kandhar and Karachi".

He hoped that consistent cooperation and support from the communities along with an aggressive campaign schedule would help wipe the virus out of the country.

Earlier, Prime Minister's focal person on polio, Senator Ayesha Raza Farooq, told the international partners about government's determination to rid the country of the menace of polio while pointing towards the considerable progress made over the past 18 months.

Highlighting successes of the programme, Senator Farooq, said they had managed to gain access to almost all past inaccessible pockets.

Uri perpetrators will not be spared: PM

Modi urged the countrymen to channelise the anger into a constructive nation-building approach.

IANS

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday said there was a pan-India fury after the Uri terror attack in which 18 soldiers were killed, but urged the people to exercise restraint and channelise their energies in a constructive way to help the country progress.

Opening his monthly radio broadcast 'Mann ki Baat' with condemnation against the "cowardly" cross-border terror strike, Modi vowed that its perpetrators would not be spared.

He, however, refrained from naming Pakistan even as the government has unambiguously said the four attackers who struck at the army base in Jammu and Kashmir on September 18 had come from across the Line of Control (LoC) -- the de facto border that divides the state between the two countries.

"Recently, we lost 18 bravehearts in a terror attack in Uri. I salute and pay my tributes to these martyrs," the Prime Minister said.

"This cowardly act was enough to shake the nation. There is sorrow and deep resentment in the country. This is a loss not only for those who lost their sons, brothers and husbands. It is a loss for the entire nation. And that is why I reiterate today what I had said on the day of the attack: The culprits will be punished for sure," he said.

Modi expressed his confidence in the armed forces capability in battling terrorism.

"We have full confidence in the Indian Army and are proud of them. We, the politicians, have many occasions to speak and we do speak. But the army doesn›t speak. They speak through their bravery," the Prime Minister said.

The Uri assault has plunged the already frosty India-Pakistan ties to a new low amid apprehensions that it may even trigger an armed conflict between the two nuclear-powered neighbours.

Islamabad has denied the allegation that the attack originated from its soil even as New Delhi says it has incriminating evidence to prove that the four attackers, who were killed in the Uri gunfight, belonged to the Jaish-e-Mohammed and had come from Pakistan.

In his address, Modi avoided taking on Pakistan and rather chose to calm the tempers and urged the countrymen to channelise the anger into a constructive nation-building approach.

"This anger is valuable. During the 1965 (India-Pakistan) war, Indians had similar sentiments, similar anger. At that time, (the then Prime Minister) Lal Bahadur Shastri gave a message to channelise this energy towards nation-building through his 'Jai Jawan-Jai Kisan' slogan."

The Prime Minister mentioned about a Class 11 student named Harshvardhan who, disturbed by the attack, had written to him saying that he wanted to do something for the country.

The young man took a "resolve that he would study for three extra hours daily, be a good citizen and serve the nation".

"This is another way for every citizen to show love for the country amidst the din of bombs and bullets. This was shown by Shastriji, just as Mahatma Gandhi did during the freedom struggle."

The "healthy" and "constructive" thinking of this young man, Modi said, was inspiring for all to take the "nation to new heights".

Modi also referred to hardships faced by the Kashmiri people because of an ongoing unrest that has disrupted the normal life in the valley for over two-and-a-half months.

Back to business



Kashmiri shoppers and commuters pass through Lal Chowk, the main market in Srinagar, yesterday. Markets across Kashmir opened for the first time in 79 days after separatist leaders called for businesses to open at 2pm. More than 80 Kashmiris have died in the two months since violence began.

Delhi to ratify climate deal on October 2

AFP

NEW DELHI: India will ratify the Paris climate change pact next month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said yesterday, bringing the deal a step closer to reality.

Modi said India will formally join the landmark accord struck in 2015 in Paris, through which countries commit to take action to stem the planet's rising temperatures.

The accord needs ratification from 55 countries that account for at least 55 percent of the planet's greenhouse gas emissions responsible for climate change. "Ratification is yet to be done and India too is yet to do it. I announce that India will ratify the decision on October 2, the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi," Modi said in a speech at a national meeting of his ruling party in the southern state of Kerala.

Modi said he had chosen that date because Indian independence leader Gandhi had lived his life with a low carbon footprint. The treaty moved closer to taking effect earlier this month when a string of countries joined during the UN General Assembly. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon voiced confidence then that the accord would come into force by the end of the year.

Modi's 'Muslims our own' remark at BJP meet evokes mixed reactions

IANS

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi seems to have come a long way vis-a-vis his troubled relations with the Muslim community -- which suffered much during the 2002 Gujarat riots when he was Chief Minister -- telling a BJP meet in Kerala's Kozhikode yesterday that Muslims should not be "rebuked and hated".

While many opposition leaders see the Prime Minister›s statement as an attempt to play up a centrist image, others remained sceptical.

From an outright rejection to wear a Muslim skull cap at his Sadbhavna Fast in 2012, Modi, in a major shift of stance, sought to move closer towards the community.

"Do not rebuke Muslims... They need not be rewarded. Empower them. They are not items of vote market nor are they substance of hate. Treat them as your own," Modi told a BJP national council meeting at Kozhikode quoting Jan Sangh ideologue Deendayal Upadhyaya.

Biju Janata Dal leader B. Mahtab welcomed the statement, but said he also saw it "as an attempt by Modi to play a centrist role".

"Moreover, significantly, it is an attempt to distance himself from the core agenda of the Sangh parivar. He is trying to give an effect to playing the centrist role henceforth. I welcome this because this is necessary for a country like India," Mahtab told IANS.

A sitting BJP MP from Uttar Pradesh said on condition of anonymity that "Modi's speech on Muslims seemed to have been well thought of and well crafted". "There is a new message in it definitely," he said while declining to elaborate.

Some leaders, however, remained sceptical.

Janata Dal-United leader K.C. Tyagi said that "if he is trying to make an image makeover, why is there 'Ghar Wapsi' and so much of hate campaign on cow slaughter".

"According to me, he is a 100 per cent pukka Sanghi and will never come out of the core agenda of that Parivar," Tyagi told IANS.

Trinamool Congress leader Sultan Ahmed also dismissed the statement and said Modi was simply playing politics. "We do not trust him. He is making statements left and right. Sometimes he talks about poverty in Pakistan, sometime he says Muslims should not be rebuked or hated," Ahmed said.

Others saw Modi›s statement as aimed at the forthcoming Uttar Pradesh assembly elections.

"By making such a statement, Modi is eyeing elections in Uttar Pradesh, but he will not gain anything," said Samajwadi Party leader Dharmendra Yadav.

According to Tyagi and Mahtab, the Prime Minister, however, remained "political in his statement" as he was addressing BJP leaders and took a dig at the opposition parties -- whom the BJP leaders from time to time have charged with playing appeasement politics towards Muslims.

Modi's role in the 2002 post-Godhra mayhem had come in for serious questioning and he was even considered a pariah at various fora -- including by the US, which declined him a visa in 2005.

Lambasting the "vikrut paribhasha (distorted definition)" of secularism as being propagated by political detractors and a section of intellectuals in the country, the Prime Minister recalled that long back, Upadhyay, founding father of the Jan Sangh -- the predecessor of the ruling BJP -- had said Muslims should not be treated as "substance of vote market".

"We have always tried to uphold his principles," he said, adding that if the BJP had compromised with the ideology, it could have attained power long back.

Jayalalithaa to be discharged soon from hospital

IANS

CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J.Jayalalithaa is responding well to the treatment and will be discharged soon, the Apollo Hospitals here said yesterday.

In a statement issued here, the hospital said: "The Honourable Chief Minister is responding well to the treatment and continues to get better. As part of ongoing recuperation, the Honourable Chief Minister has been advised few more days of rest."

The hospital said Jayalalithaa, who was admitted on Thursday after suffering from fever and dehydration, is under observation.

According to Apollo Hospitals, Jayalalithaa will be discharged from the hospital in a few days and would resume normal official duties soon.

Dismissing as "baseless" rumours in the social media that Jayalalithaa has been taken abroad for treatment, the hospital said: "There is no question of taking the Honourable Chief Minister abroad for treatment, as there is no necessity at all for this."

According to the statement, necessary medications are being administered and necessary tests and investigations are being done to prevent recurrence of fever.

Jayalalithaa is on normal diet and she has no fever, the statement added.

Navaratri preparations



Folk dancers from the Panghat Group of Performing Arts use a laptop as they take a break during a dress rehearsal for an event to mark the forthcoming Hindu festival of Navaratri, or the Festival of Nine Nights, in Ahmedabad, yesterday. The Navaratri festival begins on October 1.

Revamp of Congress in Kerala begins

IANS

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The state Congress party that received one of its worst ever electoral drubbing at the May assembly polls has begun a large scale revamp of the party's organisational structure, said Mukul Wasnik, Congress General Secretary in charge of the party's affairs in Kerala, yesterday.

As the first step, all presidents of the 14 District Congress Committees (DCC) would be replaced at the earliest. Wasnik took part in the first meeting of the newly constituted political affairs committee of the state Congress unit, which will oversee the functioning of the party in a cohesive manner.

"The party leadership is united in the state and the new presidents of the 14 DCCs would be selected on the basis of their image and capability and not based on factional affiliations," said Wasnik. The party in Kerala over the years has been a deeply divided unit.

Flood warning as Godavari overflows in Telangana

IANS

HYDERABAD: Authorities yesterday sounded flood alert in Telangana as water level is rising in Godavari river due to huge inflows following heavy rains.

With all the projects across the river overflowing, the administration in five districts were put on high alert to prevent loss of life by taking up evacuation from low-lying areas in towns and villages facing the flood threat.

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, who reviewed the situation, directed ministers, MPs and MLAs to remain in their constituencies and closely monitor the situation. He asked collectors and superintendents of police of Adilabad, Nizamabad, Karimnagar, Warangal and Khammam districts to be on alert as the water could rise to a danger level due to huge inflows from upstream Maharashtra.

National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams swung into action to evacuate people from four villages in Karimnagar district, where an under construction project across Godavari was overflowing due to huge inflows. Water was flowing above the bund of Mid Maneru project.

Irrigation Minister Harish Rao and Finance Minister Etela Rajender visited the project to review the situation. The Chief Minister said all projects in Godavari basin were full to the brim. As Sriram Sagar, Nizam Sagar, Mid Maneru, Lower Maneru, Singur and other projects were full, water was being released downstream and as a result, the level is increasing every hour.

Chandrasekhar Rao said the officials need to be on alert along the entire river course from Kaleswaram to Bhadrachalam.

He noted that Pranahita and Indravati (tributaries of Godavari) were also receiving huge inflows from upstream and the water is reaching Godavari.

He said people were happy over the fact that all the reservoirs including Himayatsagar and Gandipet, the main sources of drinking water supply to Hyderabad, were full and this would be sufficient to overcome drought like situation for two years.

He, however, cautioned public representatives and officials to ensure that there is no loss of human life or livestock due to floods.

Meanwhile, the met office has forecast rains over next four days. According to Hyderabad Meteorological Centre, heavy rains is very likely over next two days ending 8.30 a.m. on September 27. After this period, light to moderate rains are likely.

The met office said the south-west monsoon was vigorous over Telangana. The low pressure area over Vidharbha and adjoining Telangana and south Chhattisgarh persist.

Swiss voters back new surveillance law

Switzerland's police and intelligence agencies have had limited investigative tools compared to other developed countries. But the new law will change that.

AFP

GENEVA: Swiss voters approved a new surveillance law yesterday, in a victory for the government which argued the security services needed enhanced powers in an increasingly volatile world.

The proposed law won 65.5 percent support across the wealthy alpine nation, final results showed.

Switzerland's police and intelligence agencies have had limited investigative tools compared to other developed countries: phone tapping and email surveillance were previously banned, regardless of the circumstances. But the new law will change that.

The government insisted it was not aiming to set up a vast data-gathering apparatus, similar to the one developed by the US National Security Agency that came into the public eye in part through former contractor Edward Snowden's revelations.

"This is not generalised surveillance," lawmaker and Christian Democratic Party Vice-President Yannick Buttet told public broadcaster RTS as results were coming in.

"It's letting the intelligence services do their job," he added.

Swiss defence minister Guy Parmelin said with the new measures, Switzerland was "leaving the basement and coming up to the ground floor by international standards."

Parmelin insisted the Swiss system was not comparable "to the United States or other major powers", who have struggled to find right balance between privacy and security.

Phone or electronic surveillance of a suspect will only be triggered with approval by a federal court, the defence ministry and the cabinet, according to the law.

Bern has said these measures would be used only a dozen times a year, to monitor only highest-priority suspects, especially those implicated in terrorism-related cases.

The law was approved by parliament in 2015, but an alliance of opponents, including from the Socialist and Green parties, got enough signatures to force yesterday's referendum.

The poll was part of Switzerland's direct democracy system, in which votes are held on a wide range of national issues four times a year.

Just 43 percent of voters took part in Sunday's poll, a slightly lower mark than recent referenda when flashpoint issues like immigration were on the ballot.

Bosnian Serbs vote for statehood



Citizens of Western-Bosnian town of Laktasi cast their votes, at one of local voting stations, yesterday. Serbs in Bosnia voted on whether to keep celebrating their January statehood day, which is tied to the divided nation's 1990s war and remains contentious for its other ethnic communities. The vote is the brainchild of Milorad Dodik, nationalist leader of the Bosnian Serb-run entity Republika Srpska (RS), who hailed the high turnout and a "festive atmosphere" after casting his ballot.

Two policemen injured in Budapest bomb blast



Hungarian police officials at the site of an explosion in Budapest, yesterday

AFP

BUDAPEST: A large explosion "of unknown origin" rocked a building in downtown Budapest late Saturday night, injuring two passing police officers, authorities said.

The blast occurred at 10:30 pm local time (2030 GMT) inside or beside a ground floor shop on a major intersection, a police statement issued yesterday said.

Two police officers who were on patrol were injured and taken to hospital, said the statement.

The cause of the blast remains unconfirmed, although a news report on public television said security cameras had recorded a bag being left at the scene shortly before the explosion.

Unconfirmed sources said that an investigation had been launched into attempted murder.

Initial eyewitness accounts said the large blast sounded like a gas explosion, although Hungary's rescue agency said no fires were caused.

Eyewitnesses also posted pictures on social media of some nails scattered on the road at the scene.

A homemade bomb device was likely to have been behind the blast, an explosives expert Attila Ladocsi told M1.

According to the channel's news programme, a person was seen by security cameras placing a bag at the scene shortly before the blast. Police are to give a detailed account of the investigation later, a government spokesman Bence Tuzson told the MTI news agency.

A session of the national security parliamentary committee has been convened for today its chairperson told MTI. No information has been released on the injured police officers' condition, nor confirmation of local media reports that one of the injured was a woman.

The explosion, which was heard across large parts of the Hungarian capital, damaged ground floor walls of the building and blew out building and car windows at the scene.

"There was a big explosion, lots of smoke, and the window of the hostel I was staying in nearby was smashed," an American tourist told M1.

The surrounding area was cordoned off by police who evacuated buildings at the scene, one of the main thoroughfares of the Hungarian capital.

Forensic personnel combed the area for clues through yesterday, while police carried out door-to-door enquiries with residents.

The incident comes days before Hungary holds a referendum on October 2 on the EU's quota plan for mandatory relocation of migrants.

Two teenage girls held in Nice over 'terror plot'

AFP

PARIS: Two teenage girls from the French city of Nice are being held on suspicion of planning an attack directed by a notorious Syria-based French jihadist, a source close to the investigation said yesterday.

The suspects, aged 17 and 19, live in the same area of Nice as Mohamed Lahouaiej Bouhlel, the radicalised Tunisian man who drove the truck that killed 86 people in the city on July 14.

Searches failed to find any weapons at their homes.

The teenagers have told investigators they had been in contact with Rachid Kassim, a French jihadist based in the areas of Syria and Iraq held by the Islamic State group.

"They admitted they had been planning a violent attack under the influence of Rachid Kassim before abandoning their plans," a source in the investigation said.

The 17-year-old, who was not on the intelligence services' radar before, has admitted "hating soldiers", the source said. She was charged on September with associating with terror suspects.

The 19-year-old is known to investigators, having been in contact with another French citizen who recruits IS fighters, Omar Diaby. At the age of 17 she had planned to travel to Syria.

Kassim is emerging as a major concern for French anti-terror investigators after he was found to be in contact on messaging app Telegram with numerous people who have either carried out attacks in France or been arrested on suspicion of planning terror strikes.

Man spends 43 years in wheelchair on wrong diagnosis

AFP

LISBON: A Portuguese man spent 43 years in a wheelchair because of a mistaken medical diagnosis, finally re-learning to walk only in his fifties, a local newspaper reported yesterday.

When Rufino Borrego was 13, he was diagnosed by a Lisbon hospital as having incurable muscular dystrophy, the *Jornal de Noticias* reported.

After that he used a wheelchair to get around for more than four decades—until a neurologist realised in 2010 that he in fact suffered from a different disease that weakens the muscles, myasthenia.

The rare disease can be treated simply by taking asthma medication—and just a year after his new diagnosis, Borrego was able to walk for the first time to his usual neighbourhood cafe.

"We thought it was a miracle," Manuel Melao, owner of the cafe in Alandroal, southeast Portugal, told the newspaper.

Now aged 61, Borrego is able to live a normal life, requiring only two physiotherapy sessions a year.

He insists he harbours no ill-feelings against the hospital that made the original diagnosis, acknowledging that myasthenia was almost unknown in the medical profession in the 1960s.

"I just want to make use of my life," he said.

Spain's Basques and Galicians vote in key regional polls

AFP

SAN SEBASTIAN, SPAIN: Spain's Basque country and Galicia went to polls yesterday in regional elections that may help unblock the long-lasting national political paralysis.

The country is stuck in limbo, run by a government without full powers following two inconclusive elections which the conservative Popular Party (PP) won without an absolute majority, and which have seen parties unable to reach any coalition deal.

As such, mainstream parties are watching the regional elections closely to see if they lose ground to upstarts or nationalist groupings, and none more so than the Socialist party (PSOE), which polls said would fare badly.

A poor showing—following bad results in December's general election and again in a June repeat vote—may prompt the party's dissenting "barons", or regional presidents, to push party leader Pedro Sanchez out.

"If we don't have a good score, they will use that to try to overthrow Pedro Sanchez," a source close to the Socialist leader, who wished to remain anonymous, said.

Sanchez is unpopular among many "barons" who think the party should help put an end to Spain's nine-month deadlock by admitting defeat, allowing a right-wing coalition government led by acting Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy to come to power.

Sanchez, however, refuses to do so.

The PSOE voted against a Rajoy-led government in a parliamentary vote of confidence earlier this month, and is attempting to negotiate a left-wing coalition alternative with arch-rival Podemos, the far-left anti-austerity party.

But a weak result could put an end to this, either forcing Sanchez out or pressuring him into allowing the right-wing coalition government through by abstaining in another vote of confidence.

Polls ahead of Saturday's vote indicated that in the northwestern region of Galicia, the Socialists would lose their second place to the En Marea coalition that includes Podemos, while the ruling PP is expected to win again.

In the northern Basque Country, the PSOE was forecast to lose ground to Podemos and possibly score its worst ever result in the lush green region on the Atlantic coast.

Barcelona-based daily newspaper *El Periodico* said in an editorial that the polls would "have a domino effect on Spanish politics" and put an end "to the endless game of chess that the major Spanish parties are playing".

Polling stations opened at 9am (0700 GMT), and many voters expressed frustration at the inability of politicians to form a national government.

"We are making fools of ourselves," said Mercedes Solana, 61, a public servant, as she cast her ballot in the fashionable Basque Atlantic resort of San Sebastian.

Labour's Corbyn reasserts authority

AFP

LIVERPOOL: Newly re-elected British Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn repeated calls for unity yesterday in his deeply divided party, but risked antagonising MPs who had opposed him by promising more power to his grassroots supporters.

Corbyn was confirmed in his position on Saturday with 61.8 percent of vote among party members and supporters.

But the main opposition party remains bitterly split between left-wingers and moderates, at a time of major change in Britain as Prime Minister Theresa May's Conservative government negotiates the country's withdrawal from the European Union.

In his acceptance speech at party conference in Liverpool, northwest England, Corbyn pledged to "wipe the slate clean" after accusations of bullying and fears of an irreparable breach in the century-old movement.

He said yesterday he was "reaching out" to his critics—but his proposal to give more decision-making power to party members risks being seen as an attempt to sideline MPs.

"What I want is more power for members, more power for supporters, in order to ensure we get policies that do have support throughout the whole party," he told BBC television.

"There's a lot of thirst for change out there, people want to see things done differently."

Labour's membership has soared since Corbyn first became leader last September, and now stands at around 600,000. His victory over challenger Owen Smith was driven by the new members, exit poll data shows.

Many moderate MPs publicly accepted Corbyn's re-election and backed his call for unity, but the anonymous briefings against him continued in the Sunday newspapers.

In a sign of the entrenched divisions, Labour peer Lord Parry Mitchell resigned from the party. "Jeremy has no leadership qualities whatsoever—his little group like him and they think he's the Messiah, but he will never become the leader and prime minister of this country," he told the BBC.

Corbyn said Mitchell's comments were "unfortunate."

Man arrested for hacking Pippa Middelton's phone

AP

LONDON: London police arrested a 35-year-old man suspected of hacking the iCloud account of Pippa Middleton, the younger sister of the Duchess of Cambridge, and stealing 3,000 photographs.

The Sun newspaper said it was contacted by a purported hacker seeking to sell the images for a minimum of £50,000 ($65,000). It said the seller communicated using the pseudonym "Crafty Cockney" on an encrypted messaging service and sent sample photos showing Middleton being fitted for a wedding dress in advance of her planned 2017 nuptials.

The Sun said the hacker also claimed to possess Middleton's informal photos of sister Kate with her children, Princess Charlotte and Prince George, and naked images of her fiancé, James Matthews.

The Metropolitan Police says the man is being questioned in London.

Police nab US mall shooting gunman

Police named the suspect as Arcan Cetin, a 20-year-old resident of Oak Harbor town.

AFP



LOS ANGELES: Authorities have arrested a Turkish-born man suspected of shooting five people dead, including a teenaged cancer survivor, at a shopping mall in the US state of Washington.

Police named the suspect as Arcan Cetin **(pictured)**, a 20-year-old resident of the nearby town of Oak Harbor, saying he was arrested late Saturday about 24 hours after the killings.

The FBI office in Seattle said it had no evidence the shooting was terror-related.

The gunman opened fire with a rifle in the makeup section of a Macy's department store late Friday, killing four women and a man. He later left the store on foot, triggering an intense manhunt.

A weapon was recovered at the scene of the violence, Cascade Mall in Burlington, a town of about 8,000 people some 110 km north of Seattle.

Police are still trying to establish a motive.

The youngest victim was named as Sarai Lara, 16, who survived cancer as a young girl. Relatives named another victim as 52-year-old Shayla Martin, who worked as a Macy's makeup artist.

"We're really having a tough time right now," her sister Karen Van Horn told *The Seattle Times*.

Members of the public called in with numerous tips that helped lead to the arrest, police said, adding that Cetin's family was cooperating.

While Cetin was born in Turkey, he is a legal permanent resident of the United States, said Lieutenant Chris Cammock, criminal investigations chief for Mount Vernon Police Department. Cetin is due in court today.

A Facebook page that appeared to belong to Cetin—and which has since been taken down—said he was born in the southern Turkish city of Adana.

It also said went to Oak Harbor High School, which is about a 30-mile drive from Burlington, and had worked at a grocery store on nearby Whidbey Island.

In February, he posted a link to a "Call of Duty" first-person shooter videogame practice session, in an eerie foreshadowing of the real world violence he is suspected of perpetrating.

YouTube users posted lewd comments on that page and Cetin's Twitter page in response to the mall shooting. Police said Cetin had one prior arrest, last year, for assault.

It was the latest chapter in America's epidemic of gun violence.

Burlington Mayor Steve Sexton's voice trembled as he noted that the randomness of gun violence in America—which causes an estimated 30,000 deaths a year—had hit his small town.

"We suffered a devastating loss of five treasured members of our community who had done nothing more than what we all would have done on any given day: gone to the shopping mall," he said. "It changed those families forever. And we keep them in our prayers. It changed our community, I'm afraid, forever."

The shooting came amid fierce debate in America over gun control laws. It is a hot issue on the campaign trail ahead of the November 8 presidential election.

"We are united in knowing that the status quo is not good enough when it comes to violence in our community," said Washington Governor Jay Inslee.

"Passivity in the face of this scourge of violence is unacceptable."

The shooter had walked in without a weapon, and appeared on security cameras about 10 minutes later with a rifle.

The mall was evacuated, police swarmed the area and medics rushed to the scene after the mall was initially placed on lockdown. Local and regional law enforcement from up to 27 agencies responded to the scene, with about 200 officers on site at the height of the incident.

Five shot and one dead after fight at Illinois party

AP

CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS: One man was killed and four other people were injured in a pair of shootings yesterday, including one that happened on the University of Illinois campus.

Police believe the two shootings in the eastern Illinois city of Champaign may be related. They say the first apparently stemmed from an argument shortly after midnight at an apartment party on Green Street, the commercial heart of the campus.

"Our preliminary investigations completely points to an argument taking place at the party and the argument spilled out into the street and that's' when a fight occurred," Champaign police spokeswoman LaEisha Meaderds said, adding the reasons for the fight aren't clear yet.

Shots were fired as the fight escalated, striking four people, she said.

One of those shot, 22-year-old George Korchev, was killed, Meaderds said. She said Korchev, who was from the Chicago suburb of Mundelein, wasn't involved in the fight and wasn't a University of Illinois student. He just happened to be walking by when the shots were fired. The other three were taken to a hospital for treatment of what police called non-critical gunshot wounds.

Less than half an hour later, police received a report of another shooting a few blocks west of campus. Officers found a victim, who was taken to a hospital and treated for a non-critical wound.

Police are searching for a suspect or suspects in the shootings and for the driver of a vehicle that struck someone who was running away from the gunfire at the first scene. That person's injuries were minor.

It isn't clear how many people were at the party because many ran when the gunfire began, Meaderds said. Police are hoping to find and speak to as many as possible.

Dousing the flames



Firefighters extinguish a fire on an oil tanker of Mexican state oil company Pemex named "Burgos" off the coast of Boca del Rio in Veracruz state, Mexico.

China and Cuba agree to deepen relations

Reuters

HAVANA: Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang met with Cuban President Raul Castro during a two-day trip to Havana, and the two leaders oversaw signing of around 30 agreements on economic cooperation in various sectors.

Li is the first Chinese premier to visit Cuba since the two countries established diplomatic relations 56 years ago, although President Xi Jinping visited in 2014.

China is Cuba's second largest trading partner after Venezuela. The two countries traded $1.6 billion in the first nine months of 2015, a 57 percent increase on the same period the previous year, official Cuban data shows.

Li said in an interview to a newspaper that his trip aimed to deepen the two countries' relationship, forge new areas of economic cooperation and "intensify the mutual political trust."

The two countries signed agreements on collaboration in science, environmental, industry, energy, public health and agricultural sectors. China also agreed to extend lines of credit for certain projects, it added, but did not specify how much.

Cuba has become a hot destination for tourists, foreign investors and leaders alike since the government embarked on business-friendly reforms and Havana and Washington announced a detente nearly two years ago after decades of hostility.

Earlier this week, Shinzo Abe became the first Japanese prime minister to visit Communist-ruled Cuba, saying he wanted to deepen the two countries' relationship.

Protesters keep marching after cops release shooting video

Reuters

CHARLOTTE: Nearly a week of recurring protests over the police killing of a black man in Charlotte, North Carolina, showed no signs of abating yesterday after police released videos of the shooting that did not resolve the question of whether the victim had a gun.

Hundreds marched through the centre of Charlotte on a fifth night of demonstrations that stretched into yesterday morning, including white and black families protesting police violence.

One sign read "Stop police brutality" and another showed a picture of a bloody handprint with the phrase #AMINEXT, a social media tag about the fear of becoming a victim of police.

For the first time in three nights, police enforced a curfew, saying they would arrest violators. A crowd gathered outside police headquarters dispersed without any violence shortly after midnight. The streets were quiet yesterday morning.

Charlotte police released two videos on Saturday showing the fatal shooting on Tuesday of Keith Scott, 43.

The controversial death has made Charlotte, North Carolina's largest city and a financial centre, the latest flashpoint in two years of tense protests over US police killings of black men, most of them unarmed.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Chief Kerr Putney acknowledged that the videos themselves were "insufficient" to prove that Scott held a gun but said other evidence completed the picture.

Britain's Prince William & Kate visit Canada

AFP

VICTORIA, CANADA: Britain's Prince William and his wife Kate arrived in British Columbia early yesterday for an eight-day trip during which they will view spectacular nature sites and meet with refugees and indigenous Americans.

William, holding his son George by the hand, and Kate, with daughter Charlotte in her arms, stepped off their plane at around 4 pm (2300 GMT).

George, 3, more interested in a helicopter hovering overhead than by protocol, and his year-old sister, wearing a smocked dress for her first foreign trip, climbed aboard a car with their parents headed for a gorgeous Victorian home where they are staying for the visit.

The royal family was received an hour later at a ceremony with military honours and a 21-gun salute on the lawn in front of the westernmost Canadian province's legislature on Vancouver Island.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau remarked that this visit would be quite different for the royals, now that they are parents of two young children, compared to their last trip to Canada five years ago.

"As any parent who has travelled with children knows, it's a whole different experience when you bring your family with you," said Trudeau, who has three young children of his own and joined many official visits when his father, Pierre Trudeau, was prime minister.

"Let me caution you from my own experience, if they're anything like our kids, getting them back on a plane after a visit to our beautiful west coast will really be a challenge."

Trudeau was received by the British and Canadian head of state, Queen Elizabeth II, at Buckingham Palace early this year.

"As Canada approaches its 150th anniversary next year, we're excited to meet and interact with the young people who will lead this country into its next few decades," William said, speaking to an enthusiastic crowd.

"And in the year of the queen's 90th birthday, I feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to thank the people of Canada for the warmth and generosity they've extended to my grandmother throughout her reign."

After a children's chorus sang the Canadian national anthem, William and Kate exchanged greetings with locals.

This time, the prince and his wife will take in the natural beauty of Canada's Pacific coast, heading as far north as the rugged Yukon territory, and will also meet with indigenous people.

George and Charlotte will stay with their nanny in Victoria, the capital of British Columbia.

Royal fever has taken hold in the city of Victoria, where the provincial parliament has been decorated to welcome the British couple.



Britain's Prince William, and Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, attend a welcome ceremony at the British Columbia Legislature in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada,

Hillary and Trump to clash for first debate

AFP

WASHINGTON: Who is going to win? Who is going to choke? The pressure is intense for Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Hillary Clinton—phenomenally different candidates—who clash in their first debate today.

Stakes are as high as they get since there are just six weeks until the November 8 election. Polls show a close race, with Clinton, 68, enjoying an edge.

As many as 90 million Americans, some estimate, will be glued to their television to catch the showdown.

Many analysts say debates usually don't win a candidate the election but can well lose it for them. A single sentence, or the slightest slip, can do serious damage.

Plenty of American voters will have made a decision by now, to be sure. Most have. But nine percent by some estimates still don't know who to vote for, after a long campaign in which bitter attacks have often replaced substance.

And this year has been like none in the past, with Trump using social media around the clock in combative fashion, while often making mistakes, misstatements and blunders without troubling his base.

On Saturday, the *New York Times* endorsed Clinton, who ahead of the debates has been cloistered with aides and her papers at home in Chappaqua, north of New York, even practicing with relatives playing Trump.

She has been focusing on his psychological profile, with a goal to get Trump to crack, to show that he can't control himself and lacks the even-handed temperament a president needs.

If he reacts by attacking, Trump also risks losing women's votes; he already has a harder time with women voters, and they make up 53 percent of those who turn out. And any slip is sure to be a TV news sound bite.

Clinton's campaign released a long list of lies it attributes to Donald Trump ahead of the debate.

Trump in turn says preparations are "going very well," trying to at least appear relaxed. Friday he won the endorsement of former conservative rival Senator Ted Cruz.

Trump took Friday to prepare, and still had to work on the debate. But he continued with campaign rallies on other days, including Saturday night in Roanoke, Virginia.

Trump seems unwilling to train with a Hillary stand-in. But he has watched videos of his opponent in previous debates.

Supporters in Roanoke said they hoped Trump could keep his cool.

"I expect him to be more presidential but still tough," said Amanda Phillips, 36, and a social worker. She said she was "not 100 percent for the wall (with Mexico), and hopes Trump will be "more humane and not too hardcore."

Clinton, making her second presidential bid, is an old hand at debates and considered solid. In some ways, she may have more to lose.

After almost 40 years of public service, she is very well versed on the issues, and 88 percent of Americans believe she is smart.

But 65 percent say they do not find her honest. And 52 percent have a negative opinion of a woman they see as cerebral, distant or cold.

Her image has been sullied by Trump attacks over her email scandal, the Clinton Foundation's alleged pay-to-play donations, and her ties to Wall Street.

The Peninsula
Local focus, Global vision

PRAYER TIMINGS

FAJR	04.08 am	ZUHR	11.25 am	MAGHRIB	05.29 pm
SHOROOK	05.24 am	ASR	02.51 pm	ISHA	06.59 pm

WEATHER Minimum: 29° C Maximum: 38° C

HIGH TIDE 01:00 - 14:00
LOW TIDE 06:15 - 21:15

Expected strong wind and low horizontal visibility at places by afternoon. Hot daytime with slight dust to blowing dust at places, becomes hazy by night.



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MOST READ

1. Qatar Rail completes digging tunnels for Doha Metro
2. Leader of Nigeria's Boko Haram says he is alive in video
3. Jordanian writer shot dead before cartoon trial

TWEET OF THE DAY



INSTAGRAM OF THE DAY



Emir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani met Qatari students in the US State of California.

QR900,000 RAF aid for Mali children

The Peninsula

DOHA: Sheikh Thani bin Abdullah Foundation for Humanitarian Services (RAF) has provided fresh aid worth QR900,000 to create educational opportunities to the children dropped out or could not attend schools due to poverty in Mali.

The initiative is part of the ongoing project 'Al Ghaza W Al Nur (Food and Light)' being executed by RAF, in collaboration with Unicef and UN World Food Program (WFP).

Some 400 students of 200 poor families benefited from the project. The plan is to provide basic food items to needy families on monthly basis so that they could send their children to school.

RAF provided food baskets, school supplies including bags, stationeries and uniforms to beneficiary children and their families. The food baskets include rice, edible oil, millet, milk, sugar and beans.

The phase-1 project was lauched in Lasa, Koulikoro region of Mali in collaboration with Al Farouq organisation, the local partner of RAF.

The most deserving families were selected based on certain criteria like extreme poverty, lack of fixed income, those unable to access the education. A team from RAF made a field visit to provide first hand information about the beneficiary families in a bid to keep in touch with them to get updated about their social status before and after the project.

The local authorities have appreciated the move. "The initiative of RAF is considered a war against poverty, illiteracy and diseases", said Kulibali, an official from the social development department at the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Solidarity and the Elderly of Mali.

"It is best remedy to cure all three things because they are connected with each other, said the official.

The project is very important to curb illiteracy by providing food supplies to poor families for a year and creating educational opportunities for them by building schools, said Director General of Al Farouq organization, Al Sheikh Ibrahim Kuntaw. What should be better than this income generation projects for poor families, like opening supermarkets, so that they could send their children to school not for work, added Kuntaw.



Beneficiaries at their classroom at a school built by RAF under its project 'Al Ghaza W Al Nur (Food and Light)' in Mali.

"We are grateful to RAF for implementing such educational projects. I have six children. However, only three were going school but thanks to the project as all of them joined school", said Ali Sulaiman Kunta, a beneficiary.

My husband died seven months ago leaving five children behind him. With the help of the project every one go to school except the youngest infant, said Hasna Tori, a widow.

The project aimed at creating educational opportunities for 45,000 children in 20 African and Asian countries who have dropped out or could not attend schools due to poverty.

The plan in the first phase is to provide basic food items to 15,000 needy families on monthly basis for one year so that they could send their children to school. Ten new schools will be built in poor countries to support educational infrastructure.



FROM LEFT: Aney Mathew, a contributor to Qatar Foundation's publications; Tarek Bazely, Science and Technology Editor of *Al Jazeera English*; Rosalynn Carter, former US First Lady; Sultana Afdhal, WISH Partnerships and Outreach Manager; Buthaina Mohammed Al Janahi, columnist at *Al Arab* Newspaper and Kathy Hearn, a TV producer for *Al Jazeera English*, in Atlanta, Georgia.

QC provides school supplies to 1,000 orphan kids in Albania

The Peninsula

DOHA: Qatar Charity (QC) has provided school supplies to 1,000 orphan children under its sponsor in Tirana, capital of Albania.

The supplies costing QR600 for each child included a school bag, textbooks, stationery and school uniform,comprising two trousers, two shirts, two jackets, sportswear and shoes.

QC implemented the project in the beginning of the school year, under the auspices of Albanian Minister of Labour Blend Clausa and Qatari Chargé d'Affaires Awad Habbabi.

Qatari philanthropists and sponsors of the orphans financed the project implemented by QC under the 'Rofqa'a' initiative. The project aimed at providing orphan children with monthly expenditure, healthcare services and social support.

Special programmes were also conducted for top students.

Clausa saw the school kits provided by QC and expressed satisfaction with quality and variety.

Habbabi expressed gratitude to cooperation between QC and the Qatari Embassy in Albania on one hand and between QC and Albanian ministries and relevant agencies on the other hand to serve community development goals related to the Albanian people.

The Orphan Sponsorship Project is one of the oldest and was implemented by QC in Albania in the early 1990s. QC conducts weekly and periodical programmes in the educational field for 2,100 orphans under its sponsorship. The programmes include weekly forum on Saturdays and Sundays. It includes teaching the Holy Quran, public morality and the illustrious biography of the Prophet (PBUH) and Hadith.



An orphan student receiving school supplies at a Qatar Charity distribution centre in Tirana.

Four scribes get RCJF training in Atlanta

The Peninsula

DOHA: The World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH) selected four Doha-based journalists to participate in the Rosalynn Carter Fellowships for Mental Health Journalism (RCJF), a programme brought to Qatar through a partnership between WISH and the Carter Center.

The training took place at The Carter Center, in Atlanta, Georgia, last week. The fellowship provides journalists with valuable insight into mental health, offering them a unique opportunity to enhance their reporting on some of the greatest health challenges facing the world today.

Buthaina Mohammed Al Janahi, a Qatari columnist at Al Arab Newspaper, Tarek Bazely, Al Jazeera English's Science and Technology editor, Aney Mathew, a contributor to Qatar Foundation's publications and Kathy Hearn, a TV producer for Al Jazeera English, participated in the programme.

Egbert Schillings, Chief Executive Officer of WISH, said, "Under the guidance of H H Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Qatar is taking a proactive approach towards increasing support for those coping with mental health issues. Unfortunately, the stigmatisation of mental health issues can often deter individuals from seeking treatment and support. Because the media plays a key role in combatting negative views of mental illnesses, we are delighted to be working with The Carter Center to help journalists report sensitively and accurately."

QCS to host conference on breast cancer

The Peninsula

DOHA: Qatar Cancer Society (QCS) will host special conference on breast cancer under the theme 'present standards and new perspectives' at Doha Sheraton in October. It will be held under the patronage of Prime Minister and Interior Minister H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani.

Dr Abdul Azim Abdul Wahab Vice Chairman of the Qatar Cancer Society said, "The special conference on breast cancer is designed to attract healthcare practitioners from all specialties and it will provide information to enhance quality of breast cancer care."

"Participants will be able to exchange knowledge and latest technologies used in breast cancer care," he added. Speakers at the conference will be from Qatar, GCC and other countries such as Austria, Canada, USA, and Egypt. Also an exhibition will be held on the sidelines of the Breast cancer conference. "There will be a specialised healthcare exhibition which is an important opportunity companies to showcase their latest innovations in breast cancer care," said Dr Abdul Wahab.

CLJS workshop on bogus companies starts today

The Peninsula

DOHA: The Center of Legal and Judicial Studies (CLJS) at the Ministry of Justice will be holding a three-day workshop on "bogus companies and their impact on economics of the countries" starting from today. The event is being organised by the Ministry in collaboration with Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance and Training (OPDAT) at US Department of Justice.

The workshop aims to train the participants how to curb the illegal and criminal practices of bogus companies like money laundering and cheating, said Fatima Abdul Aziz Belal, Head of the CLJS.

10 food outlets shut

The Peninsula

DOHA: Doha Municipality closed down ten food outlets and registered 150 violations during the 1,430 inspection visits last month.

The closure varied between one week to one month. The food outlets were found violating Law No. 8 of 1990 on Regulation of Human Food Control.

Umm Salal Municipality also conducted 70 inspection campaigns last month. It destroyed 250kg of expired frozen chicken and destroyed two whole animals, and 350 animal parts.





Meanwhile, the Technical Monitoring section at the Municipality conducted 92 inspection visits and registered 32 violations related to building permits, while the Public Monitoring Section at the Municipality registered 123 abandoned vehicles.



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GCC electronic manufacturing industry grows

▲ QE	10,435.17	+22.67 PTS
▼ DOW	18,261.45	-131.01 PTS
▼ FTSE100	6,909.43	-1.97 PTS
▼ BRENT	$44.59	-$1.84

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US guidelines on self-driving cars get good G-7 reception



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Opec needs to cut supplies to put prices above $50

By Satish Kanady
The Peninsula

DOHA: The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec), which pumps about one third of the world's oil supply, needs to cut production to sustain a rise in crude prices above $50 a barrel.

Participating in an Industry Survey released ahead of Wednesday's crucial Opec and non-Opec talks in Algeria, top industry experts said 'the world's biggest oil producers must slash supply to support a protracted price rally'.

"It doesn't matter if the world's biggest oil producers agree to freeze output when they meet in Algiers later this week because they must slash supply to support a protracted price rally." This was the view of two-thirds of the 250 international energy executives operating across the Gulf who participated in the Gulf Intelligence GIQ poll on September 22. Meanwhile 20 percent of the survey respondents said crude oil prices will fall and test new cycle lows as they did earlier this year if Opec and its non-Opec peers fail to agree to at least cap production at current levels.

Top industry experts say 'the world's biggest oil producers must slash supply to support a protracted price rally'.

Opec and non-Opec producers are scheduled to meet on September 28 in Algeria in a bid to reach a deal to boost prices by limiting oil production.

In April, oil producers met in Qatar to discuss the proposal but failed to agree on a cap after Iran, which wants to boost exports after years of sanctions, refused to join in. Opec last reduced supply in 2008 when the global economic crisis crippled demand.

"This is the right time for action as all stakeholders are ready," Dr. Falah Alamri, Director General, Opec Governor, Iraq, said in reaction to the survey results. "We have to do something as the lower price isn't acceptable to anybody, not for producers or consumers — even developed economies are hurting from this."

Brent futures fell almost 4 percent on Friday to close at $45.89 a barrel, less than half the price two years ago. Crude oil rallied last month on speculation Opec and Russia might announce an agreement in the Algerian capital, but prices have since retreated on doubts there will be any serious steps to reduce the world oil surplus.

The bad news is the IEA reported earlier this month that crude oil inventories stored in OECD countries have "smashed through" 3.1 billion barrels during the first half of this year, which amount to about 300 million barrels above the 5-year average.

However, the good news is that BP reported that the market has reached a tipping point as stocks have started to draw down.

Still, the GIQ survey respondents were quite divided on how fast it would take for inventories to drawdown sufficiently so that they would no longer impose downward pressure on oil prices, with 36 percent saying it wouldn't happen until 2018, while 32 percent of the Gulf industry executives polled were of the view that stocks would decline adequately by the end of 2017. That said, 57 percent of those polled shared the view that Brent crude oil would average in the $50s next year.

The current oil markets are a little like a traffic jam with no policeman – chaos!" Dr. Fereidun Fesharaki, Founder & Chairman, Facts Global Energy, said after reviewing the results of the GIQ industry survey. "We all need that policeman to come back."

Ooredoo's campaign to boost small businesses



The Peninsula

DOHA: Ooredoo is running a series of campaign for small businesses to raise awareness about its solutions. Ooredoo's #BusinessInstincts campaign is designed to promote growth of Qatar's small and medium companies, highlighting the success of a number of home-grown brands and the role that ICT services can play in enabling that success.

In addition, Ooredoo has launched a dedicated website with case studies about some of these successful brands that other companies can learn from, as well as an online survey about the requirements of small businesses in Qatar.

Yousuf Abdulla Al Kubaisi **(pictured)**, Chief Operating Officer, Ooredoo Qatar, said: "Companies in Qatar are looking to hone their competitive edge by deploying innovative solutions to reduce costs and boost their connectivity."

"Ooredoo is looking to be the business partner of choice for ICT solutions, which is why we have focused so heavily on engaging with the business community in recent months," he said.

The #BusinessInstincts initiative was complemented by Ooredoo's Ignite Customer Conversation campaign, which has seen Ooredoo engage with hundreds of business customers and provide free consultancy sessions over the summer.

Sessions are held directly at customers' places of business, providing a comprehensive introduction to Ooredoo's portfolio of ICT solutions as well as on-site analysis of customers' distinct business communication needs.

Other successful initiatives have included the opening of new dedicated Business Desks in Ooredoo Shops, which have received thousands of visitors per month.

For full details of all business solutions available, business customers can arrange a meeting with their account manager.



RasGas LNG cargo vessel.

RasGas awarded five-star rating by British Safety Council

The Peninsula

DOHA: RasGas Company Limited (RasGas) has been awarded a five-star rating by the British Safety Council subsequent to an Environmental Audit, and the Occupational Health and Safety Audit.

RasGas' Chief Marketing & Shipping Officer, Khalid Sultan R Al Kuwari, stated: "At RasGas, we are deeply committed to delivering cleaner energy to our customers in a manner that is safe, efficient and preserves the environment. This is a fundamental corporate goal, and the British Safety Council's rating is testament to the success of our efforts to maintain these rigorous standards."

This impressive achievement was attained after a quantified, objective evaluation of the environmental, and occupational health and safety management systems of the shipping and LNG transportation functions. The Environmental Audit measured the Shipping Department's performance against set criteria, including a number of key environmental management indicators, providing a worldwide benchmark of the department's environmental management performance, policies, processes and procedures; while the Occupational Health and Safety Audit measured performance against key safety management indicators.

These audits have, since 2013, included two additional indicators, Leadership and Continuous Improvement, thereby placing greater emphasis on occupational health, employee well-being, the safety culture, allocation of resources to health and safety, and planning for change. All of these are now considered best practice factors.

The British Safety Council's Five Star Environmental, and Occupational Health and Safety audits offer a structural path for continuous improvement, and RasGas' five-star grading in both is the highest possible rating that can be achieved.

The British Safety Council is a government-regulated awarding organisation primarily concerned with ensuring 'no-one is injured or made ill in the workplace'.

RasGas' world-class shipping fleet comprises long-term LNG charter vessels that efficiently serve to meet the needs of a global customer-base.

Umm Al Houl power plant gets mega gas turbine from Siemens

By Mohammad Shoeb
The Peninsula

DOHA: The German engineering giant Siemens yesterday announced that they have received the 1000th (F-class) gas turbine for the upcoming Umm Al Houl combined cycle power plant in Qatar.

The state-of-the-art SGT5-4000F gas turbine weighing 300 metric tonnes, which is equivalent to nearly four A320 aircraft of Airbus, reached Qatar after a journey of thousands of miles from the Siemens factory in Berlin, the fifth of six 11-meter-long turbines has made it to the plant that will supply around a quarter of Qatar's power generation capacity.

The event was attended by Adrian Wood, CEO of Siemens in Qatar; Gianluigi Di Giovanni, Senior Executive Vice President, Power Generation Service, Middle East and North Africa at Siemens; Fahad Al Mohannadi, Chairman of Umm Al Houl and General Manager and Managing Director of Qatar Electricity and Water Company (QEWC); Jamal Al Khalaf, CEO of Umm Al Houl Power Company and John Chang, Executive Vice President of Global Business and Operations at Samsung C& T.

"Qatar is witnessing rapid industrial, economic and population growth. With that comes greater demand for electricity and water supply. Our innovative gas turbine technology will help ensure the Umm Al Houl power plant, an essential component of the country's future power infrastructure, will operate reliably and efficiently for many years to come," said Wood.

The turbine has travelled from the Siemens factory to Berlin's Westhafen port and then to Rotterdam. Upon arriving at the Rotterdam seaport, it was loaded onto a heavy cargo vessel, before voyaging through the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea via Gibraltar. It subsequently entered the Red Sea through the Suez Canal, making its way around the Arabian Peninsula, and finally reaching its destination in Qatar. One SGT5-4000F turbine has a capacity of 300 megawatts, which translates into electricity for 1.8 million people.



Adrian Wood (right), CEO of Siemens in Qatar with Fahad Al Mohannadi, Chairman of Umm Al Houl and CEO of Qatar Electricity and Water Company during the event in Doha yesterday. Pic: Baher Amin/The Peninsula

Al Mohannadi (of QEWC), said: "As our country makes big strides towards industrialisation and developing its infrastructure, this power plant will be integral to boosting its future electricity supply."

GCC electronic manufacturing industry grows

With a compound annual growth rate of 4.8 percent, industry's estimated value increased to $476m in 2015 from $395m in 2011.

By Sachin Kumar
The Peninsula

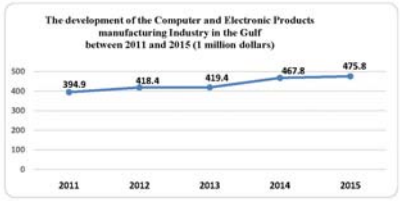
DOHA: The GCC electronic manufacturing industry, which includes computer products, has witnessed remarkable growth during the last few years. With a compound annual growth rate of 4.8 percent, industry's estimated value increased to $476m in 2015 from $395m in 2011.

The industry accounted for only a small percentage (0.12 percent) of the total investments, estimated at $393.7bn, in the GCC industrial sector in 2015, said The Gulf Organization for Industrial Consulting (GOIC) in a report yesterday.

The computer and electronic products manufacturing industry sector is still relatively a new industry in the GCC industrial sector and it is still in its early stages despite the presence of a huge domestic market in the Gulf countries, report added.

The past few years were marked by an upward global trend for the establishment and improvement of communication networks, increase of the number of users of mobile phones, transfer of information devices and the Internet.

This trend has resulted significantly and clearly in a growing demand for computer and electronic equipment, since they are considered as high-tech industrial products and among the technical industries constituting the backbone of the knowledge-based economy and relying constantly on technological advances and advanced studies and research.



Computer Electronic products manufacturing industry is characterised by the wide range of uses in modern day lifestyles such as electronics, computers, communication devices and equipment, software, semiconductors and measuring and control equipment.

GOIC Secretary General Abdulaziz bin Hamad Al Ageel **(pictured)** shed light on the urgent need for the GCC countries to elaborate national plans and policies to strengthen the enabling environment for the information and communications technology that will increase the private sector investments in the information and communications technology like computers and electronic devices manufacturing industry.

He said it is also important to promote joint investments and cooperation between GCC countries and to launch research and development projects relating to this industry on the regional level.



In addition to that, GCC countries should focus on computer and electronic equipment to manage various activities related to economy, trade, production, finance, marketing and human resource management as well as education and training. Therefore, they become the pillar of the strategy aiming at achieving economic sustainable development in the GCC countries, he added.

According to GOIC data, Saudi Arabia is taking lead among the rest of the GCC countries in investing in computer and electronic products manufacturing industry.

These investments amounted to $376m in 2015, accounting for about three quarters of the total GCC investments in the computer and electronic products manufacturing Industry in the Gulf. The UAE ranked second with 14 percent of the investments.

The investments in computer and electronic devices manufacturing industry were distributed in 2015 among 75 factories out of 16,890 factories in the GCC industrial sector, which represents 0.4 percent of the total number of factories.

Computer and electronic devices factories showed an increase by 9.6 percent a year between 2011 and 2015.

The computer and electronic devices industry created 7,147 job opportunities in the GCC markets in 2015, which represents 0.4 percent of the total job opportunities in the gulf industrial sector amounting to 162,800 job offers.

Business France team to visit Qatar this week

The Peninsula

DOHA: Business France, the national agency supporting the international development of the French economy, will organise B2B meetings in Qatar and the UAE, between September 25 and 29, to introduce a selection of 10 French companies specialising in high-end, luxury hotel and interior design. A French delegation of hotel furniture and interior design suppliers including some Living Heritage Company (EPV label) will visit the luxury hotel construction sites in Doha, Dubai and Abu Dhabi in September.

Positioned in the high-end luxury sector, their know-how is acknowledged in the fields of traditional craftsmanship in aquatic furniture & underwater environments, interior design & furniture, household equipment, handmade cutlery & tableware, wooden doors and cupboards, glass and mirror engraving.

Internationally renowned, these companies bring a combination of economic vitality and the French 'Art of living'. Over five days, they will meet with local professionals, including interior designers and decorators, procurement centres and design departments of hotel groups, real estate developers, importers, distributors, agencies and local authorities. Andrea De Rosetto, Head of Art de Vivre Department at Business France, stated: "As the host of Expo 2020 and FIFA World Cup 22, it is considered that the provision of luxury accommodation will double as we'll welcome unprecedented numbers of tourists".



Trust Exchange Company officials and its customers at Regency Shopping Complex in Umm Salal Ali.

Trust Exchange relocates outlet

The Peninsula

DOHA: Trust Exchange Company, the leading money exchange and remittance company in Qatar, yesterday relocated its Grand Hamad branch to a more spacious and a conveniently accessible location at Regency Shopping Complex in Umm Salal Ali.

The relocated branch was inaugurated by the senior management of Trust Exchange Company.

"We are pleased to move to this new location. The new branch's location and amenities allows us to better serve our esteemed customers and is in line with our continued efforts to enhancing our customer service and improving the overall financial services experience," said KNS Das, Trust Exchange Company.

"The Umm Salal Ali branch relocation comes with the company's strategy to reinforce its growing presence in local markets while reaching out to its wide range of customers and providing state of the art and easy access to its wide range of services," he said.

Trust Exchange has over the years emerged as a preferred exchange house providing fast and reliable money transfer worldwide and foreign exchange services to a cross-section of society, powered by a vast network, reputed partners and high standards of customer care.

The Umm Salal Ali branch will be Trust Exchange's first outlet which will go live with the eSigning facility. The facility allows customers to verify the details of the transaction and digitally sign on the receipt presented to them on the e-tablet present on the counter, which then automatically sends the copy to customer's email address. Customers are also provided the physical copy of the receipt with their signature. Trust Exchange had earlier in the year implemented the automated ID scanning facility, which eases the KYC norms, thereby allowing more convenience to its customers.

Customer satisfaction being their ultimate goal, Trust Exchange thoroughly analyses the budding customer needs and wants and takes all such measures to cater to their demands. Company's eight branches across Qatar serves as a proof of success.

"We are constantly evaluating our branches in Qatar and moving at par with the growing needs of our esteemed customers. Further development across all of our branches is in the pipeline, in line with the strategy of the company and we will constantly stay on top of our game in the exchange and remittance business," said Das.

Eight luxury watches on offer in QNB MasterCard campaign

The Peninsula

DOHA: QNB, the leading financial institution in the Middle East and Africa, and MasterCard, a leading technology company in the global payments industry, yesterday announced the launch of an exclusive campaign offering customers the chance to win one of eight luxury watches — comprising six Audemars Piguet and two Mont Blanc watches.

QNB MasterCard credit cardholders can be part of this exclusive campaign and stand a chance to win these luxury watches by using their QNB MasterCard credit cards for purchases from now until October 31, 2016.

Every cumulative spend of QR10,000 during the campaign period will give cardholders one entry into the lucky draw when spent locally and three entry for overseas transactions including purchases made on international websites.

The spend amount does not include cash advances, donations, fees and charges.

QNB and MasterCard have partnered on multiple strategic campaigns with the aim of rewarding their mutual customers with unique prizes and experiences. This latest campaign is a follow-through from the recently concluded Summer Campaign where a total of 100 winners were awarded with QAR10,000 each for making purchases using their QNB MasterCard credit card.

"QNB strives to bring the best of products, services and campaigns to its customers. We are proud to launch such a high-value campaign which will bring exclusive luxury gifts to our valued cardholders," commented Heba Al Tamimi, General Manager- Retail, QNB Group. "We aim to use this campaign as a strategic motivational tool in line with our long-term goal of replacing cash transactions with electronic forms of payment, which offer customers a smarter and safer alternative," she added

Raghav Prasad, General Manager - Gulf Countries, MasterCard, said, "We are delighted to collaborate with QNB to bring this exciting campaign to our cardholders in Qatar.

Rewarding our customers with amazing benefits is our way of thanking them for their loyalty, and we remain committed to offering them smarter, more innovative and safer ways to pay."

In addition to the exciting prizes offered under the campaign, cardholders will continue to be rewarded with QNB Life Rewards for every transaction performed using their QNB cards. QNB credit cards are known to offer best-in-class product features and benefits to cardholders.

QNB Group's presence through its subsidiaries and associate companies extends to more than 30 countries across three continents, providing a comprehensive range of advanced products and services. The total number of employees is more than 27,300 operating through more than 1,200 locations, with an ATM network of more than 4,300 machines.

QSE holds BCP exercise

The Peninsula

DOHA: As part of its regular business continuity plan (BCP) procedures, Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE) in cooperation with the market regulator QFMA, brokers and business partners successfully conducted an industry-wide BCP exercise on Friday.

A business continuity plan is a plan to continue operations if a place of business is affected by adverse physical conditions, such as a storm, fire or crime. Such a plan typically explains how the business would recover its operations or move operations to another location.

The exercise involved a proposed scenario in which a major disaster striking QSE primary data center during the continuous trading phase of the trading session. During the simulated outage, QSE moved all critical IT operations and relocated key staff to the secondary DR site and BCP office space while brokers and business partners shifted their connectivity to the same, allowing for the resumption of a safe and orderly trading session within 90 minutes. At the end of the BCP test, connectivity moved back to the primary site, thereby ensuring the normal resumption of trading on the next business day following the exercise.

The QSE expressed its satisfaction with the positive outcome of this BCP test and thanked all brokers, business partners, and the participating QSE staff for this success as well as the QFMA for their supervision of the event.

"The QSE believes that enhancements to our trading platform now allow us to fail-over trading operations and to resume trading with all previous trades and open orders standing. It is a clear indication of our willingness to ensure business continuity in case of major BCP events for the benefit of the local and international investor community", a statement issued by the bourse noted yesterday.

New appointment at Oryx Rotana

DOHA: Oryx Rotana, the five-star luxury business hotel in Doha, has appointed Ferhad Zohny as business development director. Ferhad will be responsible for identifying and leading strategic business development, alliance and acquisition opportunities for the hotel.

Prior to joining Oryx Rotana Doha, Ferhad was the Director of Sales & Marketing at Hyatt Regency Maryland, USA. He was responsible for marking activities for the hotel to improve positioning. Much of Ferhad's early career was spent in the Hyatt, IHG, Viceroy, Conrad, Hilton properties in Egypt, the UAE and the USA where he held roles in sales and marketing, logistics as well as food and beverage operations.

He holds a Masters Degree from University of Wales, and a Bachelor's Degree in Food & Beverage.

Ooredoo bags two awards

The Peninsula



DOHA: Ooredoo announced yesterday it has won the 'Leading Corporate for Investor Relations Qatar' and the 'Best Investor Relations Professional in Qatar' awards at the Middle East Investor Relations Society (MEIRS) Awards.

Held on Wednesday, September 21, in Dubai, the awards ceremony recognises the region's best investor relations (IR) teams and IR professionals. The conference is now in its eighth year and is the largest event focused on investor relations in the Middle East.

Ooredoo has been featured on the MEIRS' nomination list for best practice in IR since the society's first awards ceremony in 2009 when Qatar Telecom (Qtel – Ooredoo's former brand name) was named Qatar's Best Company for Investor Relations, demonstrating Ooredoo's long-standing commitment to fair, timely and ongoing disclosure and its promotion of transparency.

The MEIRS' Conference and Awards event brings together listed and unlisted companies, investors, analysts, advisors and representatives from regional governments, stock exchanges and regulatory bodies to educate attendees about the value of investor relations and celebrate best-in-class IR programs and professionals.

Each year, buy-side fund managers and sell-side analysts are invited to survey the performance of listed companies' IR programs in the region in partnership with market survey expert Extel. The winners of this survey are announced following the annual conference.

Ezdan's Al Gharafa complex renovated

Maintenance and renovation of 251 houses and facilities completed.

The Peninsula

DOHA: Ezdan Real Estate Company, a subsidiary of Ezdan Holding Group, has announced the completion of maintenance and renovation works in its residential compound No. 1 in Al Gharafa area.

The revamps covered 251 units and included interior and exterior paint jobs, maintenance of each of children's playgrounds, gyms, sport courts, the swimming pool, banquet halls, in addition to the replacement of air-conditioning units in 198 villas and 53 apartments.

Ezdan Real Estate Company had started comprehensive refurbishment operations during the last quarter of 2015, which involved all compounds and villages in Al Wakrah, Al Wukair and Doha belonging to the Group. It embarked on a campaign to change furniture in Al Wukair Villages then gradually moved to Doha compounds, and completed multi-development works in its compound No. 1 in Al Gharafa, covering all its facilities, such as sport courts and spaces, recreation amenities, painting the buildings' interior and exterior in addition to ACs replacement in all units in the compound.

These measures are part of Ezdan Holding Group's overall strategy to strengthen its position and demonstrate its leadership in the real estate sector. The Group aims to achieve that by constantly working towards meeting the needs and desires of tenants and responding in time to their demands to have comfy and furnished units, in line with the Group's commitment to rationalisation standards, preservation of environment, and providing services of the highest quality.

In the forthcoming phase, the company plans to carry out a comprehensive overhaul in a number of its compounds in Doha because of their paramount importance to the real estate market and their strategic location in the heart of the capital. This phase will include buildings, facilities, furniture and appliances as well as the launch of other development packages covering facilities, maintenance, and the introduction of new services.



Ezdan Real Estate Company's residential compound in Al Gharafa area.

Earlier this year, Ezdan Real Estate Company launched "Sakin" Centre for integrated services, an important communication channel that serves to monitor customers' requirements and identify their needs in terms of maintenance and renewal. This has helped the company to direct its efforts towards improving its services and looking for new ways to communicate with the public. The goal behind Sakin is to combine and converge all customer services such as maintenance and leasing in two main unified and convenient centres.

This year Ezdan Real Estate Company also completed large-scale development works in 25 villages in Al Wakrah and Al Wukair, in conjunction with its preparations to launch two important projects in the region, namely Ezdan Mall Al Wakrah and Ezdan Mall Al Wukair. The latter is providing diverse shopping services for residents of the villages and compounds.

In this context, the Group has completed the conversion of all its residential units into water-saving entities through the introduction and installation of around 262,000 devices to rationalise water consumption in more than 15,000 housing units with a capacity to save up to 60 percent of total water used.

EY ranked top for delivering business transformation in GCC

The Peninsula



DOHA: EY is the number 1 ranked organisation among all major management consultancy firms in the GCC for the quality of its business transformation capabilities, according to a recent report published by Source, which gathers feedback from clients on their perceptions of all consulting organisations operating in the GCC.

Source is a provider of research on the management consulting market in Europe and the Middle East, which assesses and compares the reputation of consulting firms as seen by clients. The assessment is based on over 500 responses from executives, directors, and senior managers across the GCC, all of whom have extensively used consulting services in the past year and represent a wide range of industries and business functions.

Gerard Gallagher **(pictured)**, Mena Consulting Leader, EY, said: "We are really proud of being number 1 in delivering successful end-to-end business and risk transformational projects at a time when it really matters to our clients. In times of economic change, governments and companies alike look to transform their strategy, people, processes and technology in order to enhance their performance and manage risk. Our legacy of more than 90 years in the region, is built on helping our clients delivering their most pressing challenges."

EY was consistently the highest ranked organisation for value and overall quality of services, particularly in financial management.

Over and above being the number one transformer in the GCC, in terms of likelihood to be recommended to others, EY is ranked within the top three companies for data & analytics, sales & marketing (including customer experience), HR & change management, and digital technology & transformation.

"We are one of the only organizations that appear in the top ranks of both quality and value. Out of the Big 4, GCC clients rated EY the highest in terms of the quality of its capabilities across all services, demonstrating consistency in all of the services provided. We have always focused on helping businesses transform and navigate the changes in the region's economic landscape. We will soon launch a suite of specialised on-demand packaged global solutions that are tailored and scaled for fast growing companies in the emerging markets," Gerard added.

Indonesia keen on enhancing cooperation with Qatar

The Peninsula

DOHA: Special Envoy of the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Dr. Alwi Shihab, stressed yesterday his country's keenness to strengthen relations of cooperation with the State of Qatar in all economic sectors.

This came during a meeting held in Qatar Chamber (QC) headquarters between a number of businessmen from both countries.

The meeting was aimed at developing relations of cooperation and in particular, ways to enhance trade cooperation between Qatari and Indonesian private sector, QNA reported.

Dr. Shihab underscored the important role which could be played by Qatar and Indonesian Chambers of Commerce and Industry in achieving convergence between businessmen in the two countries and engaging in effective partnerships that would serve the interest of their economies.

He called on Qatari businessmen to invest in his country and invited them to actively participate in the 31st Trade Expo Indonesia 2016 and the Islamic Forum due to be held in Jakarta in October 2016.

For his part, Vice-Chairman of QC Mohammed bin Ahmed bin Towar Al Kuwari, said QC encourages Qatari businessmen to promote cooperation and exchange experiences with their Indonesian counterparts thanks to the stable investment climate in both countries.

He hailed the bilateral historical ties between Qatar and Indonesia, pointing out to the investment opportunities announced by the President of the Republic of Indonesia during his recent visit to Qatar which would open new prospects for future cooperation between the two countries.

During the meeting, the Indonesian delegation made a presentation on the investment climate and opportunities in Indonesia and the most important sectors in which Qatari businessmen can invest.

The visiting delegation also made a presentation on Indonesia Trade Fair 2016, which will showcase best Indonesian export products ranging from industrial, mining, agricultural to Craft sectors.

The volume of trade exchange between Qatar and Indonesia has risen over the recent period to $1.6bn while Qatari exports of oil and natural gas rose to $1.2bn.

Chinese investments in US moving up



The $1bn condominium and hotel development dubbed Fig Central is being built by Beijing-based Oceanwide Holdings near the Staples Center in downtown Los Angeles. From real estate, to high-tech firms to entertainment giants, Chinese investments in the United States, notably California, are moving at a dizzying pace and are on course to smash records again this year.

Barwa Bank announces 11th Thara'a draw winners

The Peninsula

DOHA: Barwa Bank announced the winners of the 11th round of its Thara'a, Shari'ah compliant savings account, draw at the bank's headquarters. Abdulla Ali A B Al Khulaifi, Elasyed Salem, Alia Mikaty and Shaikha Zayed S M Al Naimi, each won a cash prize of QR10,000.

A cash prize of QR5,000 was awarded to Abdulasees Chevidikkunnan Koyamu, Jamal Abdu A H Al Ammari, Ghalya Zayed Frhowd Z M Alhajri, Maryam Shafi B Al Dosari, Ahmed Mohamed Maher ElGoweini, Mohd Alawi S A Alyafei and Jassim Eisa J M Al Subaey. The draw was conducted under the supervision of a representative of the qualitative licence and market control department at the Ministry of Economy and Commerce.

Thara'a offers account holders the chance to benefit from cash rewards up to QR1m. Based on several criteria, Thara'a account holders are eligible for a number of periodic draws for cash prizes. Thara'a cash rewards totalling QR3m are distributed on both a monthly and biannual basis to customers holding a minimum balance of QR10,000. On a monthly basis, there are seven winners per draw for the cash prize of QR5,000, as well as four winners per draw for the cash prize of QR10,000. Additionally, twice-a-year there are four winners per draw for the cash prize of QR25,000 prize, two winners per draw for the cash prize of QR50,000 and one winner per draw for the grand prize of QR1m. Rewarding 102 winners in total with cash prizes up to QR3m.

In addition to the cash prizes and reward scheme, Thara'a has many value-added benefits and services.

US guidelines on self-driving cars get good G-7 reception

AP

TOKYO: US Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx **(pictured)** said yesterday that his counterparts in the Group of Seven nations welcomed US guidelines on regulating self-driving cars and have agreed to work together on creating such standards to maintain safety.

"There was actually a very enthusiastic reception to the policy," he said. "We did a good job of inventorying what each country is doing and laying out areas that we want to explore further."

Such issues include cybersecurity, ethics and privacy, wireless spectrum questions and many other issues, he said, while noting that reaching a resolution might take years, meaning the technology would be moving faster. Foxx called the US guidelines released earlier this month the most comprehensive on autonomous vehicles, coming out ahead of the rest of the world.



Foxx and other transportation officials from the G-7 met over the weekend in the Japanese resort town of Karuizawa. Foxx stressed road tests on autonomous vehicles must continue to encourage innovation.

US electric car maker Tesla's Model S that was using the semi-autonomous mode crashed in May. The driver died after crashing into a tractor-trailer. Tesla is introducing improvements to its Autopilot system to make it safer.

"One of the things I think that autonomous vehicles suffer from is that they get compared to perfection, and not to the 94 percent of car crashes that are attributable to human factors. We have to make the right comparisons," Foxx said, while declining comment on the ongoing investigation on Tesla. "These vehicles will not be absolutely perfect in terms of having no accidents, but by comparison they can be markedly better."

Many automakers besides Tesla are testing or have rolled out automated vehicles, including Ford Motor Co, based in Dearborn, Michigan, and Nissan Motor Co and Toyota Motor Corp of Japan.

The new US guidelines are meant to bring order to the technology's development. Proponents say such technology can make cars safer because machines can react faster and they are less prone to human error. But even experts remain cautious.

Among the recent forays into self-driving technology are the partnership between Chinese-owned Volvo Cars and the Swedish-based automotive safety group Autoliv Inc, as well as Volvo teaming up with US ride-hailing company Uber. Ford has announced a $75m investment in Velodyne Inc, which makes laser sensors. BMW Group, Intel Corp and Mobileye have joined together to develop and sell autonomous driving technology.

Hans Greimel, Asia Editor for Automotive News, believes the new US guidelines are an important "proactive" step in seeking powers to approve autonomous vehicles before they're brought to market, marking a departure from the past, when regulators enforce rules after the cars are already sold.

"They are a clear step toward clearing the way for the next-generation of automobiles. The technology of autonomous vehicles is mostly there. What is lacking is a clear guideline for how the technologies should be applied," said Greimel.

QE INDICES SUMMARY

QE Index	10,435.17	0.22 %
QE Total Return Index	16,883.41	0.22 %
QE Al Rayan Islamic Index	3,932.12	0.55 %
QE All Share Index	2,876.99	0.02 %
QE All Share Banks & Financial Services	2,865.14	0.43 %
QE All Share Industrials	3,142.71	0.87 %
QE All Share Transportation	2,460.02	0.09 %
QE All Share Real Estate	2,466.99	0.66 %
QE All Share Insurance	4,578.5	0.82 %
QE All Share Telecoms	1,200.94	0.60 %
QE All Share Consumer Goods & Services	6,345.02	0.19 %

QE MARKET SUMMARY COMPARISON

	25-09-2016 Today	22-09-2016 Previous day
Index	10,435.17	10,412.50
Change	22.67	159.60
%	0.22	1.56
YTD%	0.06	0.16
Volume	3,790,624	6,478,646
Value (QAR)	178,108,265.86	286,806,072.05
Trades	2,136	4,159

Up 15 | Down 23 | Unchanged 02

WORLD STOCK INDICES

Index	Day's Close	Pt Chg	% Chg	Year High	Year Low
All Ordinaries	5466.321	36.907	0.68	5691.8	4762.1
Cac 40 Index/D	4498.96	89.41	2.03	4607.69	3892.46
Dj Indu Average	18293.7	163.74	0.9	18668.4	15450.6
Hang Seng Inde/D	23759.8	89.9	0.38	24364	18278.8
Iseq Overall/D	6152.88	58.39	0.96	6791.68	5286.65
Karachi 100 In/D	40135.31	363.89	0.91	40542.64	29785
Nikkei 225 Index	16807.62	315.47	1.91	18951.12	14864.01
S&P 500 Index/D	0	0	0	2193.81	1810.1

EXCHANGE RATE

Currency	Buying	Selling
US$	QR 3.6305	QR 3.6500
UK	QR 4.6898	QR 4.7846
Euro	QR 4.0498	QR 4.1440
CA$	QR 2.7394	QR 2.8060
Swiss Fr	QR 3.7150	QR 3.8090
Yen	QR 0.0359	QR 0.0366
Aus$	QR 2.7455	QR 2.8194
Ind Re	QR 0.0539	QR 0.0551
Pak Re	QR 0.0344	QR 0.0351
Peso	QR 0.0744	QR 0.0768
SL Re	QR 0.0247	QR 0.0252
Taka	QR 0.0460	QR 0.0470
Nep Re	QR 0.0338	QR 0.0345
SA Rand	QR 0.2682	QR 0.2735

GOLD AND SILVER

GOLD QR156.5780 per gramme

SILVER QR2.3334 per gramme

QATAR STOCK EXCHANGE

Company		Offer Volume	Offer Price	Bid Price	Bid Volume	Open	High	Low	Last Trade Price	Prev Close	Chg	% Chg	Trades	Volume	Value
QNB	▼	3,250	156.90	155.10	5,997	157.00	157.00	155.00	155.10	157.00	-1.90	-1.21	58	81,271	12,645,668
Qatar Islamic Bank	▲	2,000	105.20	105.00	1,150	103.20	105.40	103.10	105.00	103.50	1.50	1.45	60	51,950	5,421,366
Comm. Bank of Qatar	▲	4,294	38.50	38.00	894	38.20	38.50	38.00	38.50	38.35	0.15	0.39	25	129,006	4,919,103
Doha Bank	▼	1,300	37.25	37.15	509	37.35	37.35	37.15	37.15	37.35	-0.20	-0.54	11	3,644	135,846
Ahli Bank	⇔	650	41.60	40.15	1,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	40.05	40.05	0.00	0.00	0	0	0
Intl. Islamic Bank	▼	2,970	64.70	64.40	500	65.00	65.00	64.20	64.40	64.50	-0.10	-0.16	33	13,394	864,067
Rayan	▲	10,425	35.50	35.35	1,400	34.95	35.50	34.95	35.50	35.25	0.25	0.71	221	423,343	14,930,550
Al Khalij Commercial Bank	▼	300	17.95	17.22	3,014	17.05	17.05	17.05	17.05	17.97	-0.92	-5.12	1	150	2,558
* Qatar First Bank (QFC)	▼	4,110	10.91	10.86	28,289	10.93	10.95	10.82	10.86	10.93	-0.07	-0.64	60	220,984	2,406,513
Qatar Insurance	▼	10,000	89.00	88.00	7,215	90.00	90.00	88.00	88.00	88.90	-0.90	-1.01	55	19,471	1,732,059
Doha Insurance	⇔	514	21.40	20.23	1,742	0.00	0.00	0.00	20.25	20.25	0.00	0.00	0	0	0
General Insurance	▼	250	45.00	44.30	1,000	44.00	44.80	44.00	44.80	45.00	-0.20	-0.44	9	4,599	203,026
Al Kaleej Takaful	▲	955	22.88	22.20	3,000	22.88	22.88	22.88	23.88	22.10	0.78	3.53	1	1,000	22,880
Islamic Insurance	▼	833	54.40	54.00	1,115	55.20	55.60	54.00	54.00	54.70	-0.70	-1.28	15	2,919	159,940
Ind. Manf. Co.	▼	1,892	42.60	41.60	1,500	42.00	42.60	42.00	42.00	42.60	-0.60	-1.41	27	67,495	2,834,795
National Cement Co.	⇔	1,300	87.00	86.50	1,000	87.50	87.50	86.00	87.50	87.50	0.00	0.00	10	3,641	317,313
Zad Holding Company	⇔	600	86.80	80.60	150	0.00	0.00	0.00	82.50	82.50	0.00	0.00	0	0	0
Industries Qatar	▲	2,605	104.80	104.70	1,400	102.90	105.00	102.10	104.70	102.90	1.80	1.75	233	332,224	34,385,159
United Dev. Company	▼	7,350	19.80	19.77	400	19.58	20.00	19.58	19.80	19.82	-0.02	-0.10	53	52,855	1,045,476
Qatar German Co. Med	▼	3,000	10.73	10.60	28,800	10.65	10.65	10.51	10.60	10.63	-0.03	-0.28	14	11,333	121,997
The Investors	▲	400	49.45	49.30	184	49.90	49.90	48.80	49.30	49.00	0.30	0.61	185	1,045,865	51,790,624
Ooredoo	▼	3,660	99.50	98.10	15,780	98.80	99.50	98.00	98.10	98.90	-0.80	-0.81	129	84,718	8,358,111
Electricity & Water	▲	85	213.60	209.20	50	216.00	216.00	213.40	213.60	212.00	1.60	0.75	15	3,337	713,392
Salam International	▼	4,743	11.32	11.31	576	11.16	11.32	11.16	11.31	11.32	-0.01	-0.09	20	39,126	441,526
National Leasing	▼	995	16.33	16.10	1,300	16.20	16.35	16.00	16.02	16.26	-0.24	-1.48	16	40,603	655,123
Qatar Navigation	▼	435	86.60	86.10	981	86.90	86.90	85.90	86.60	86.90	-0.30	-0.35	9	2,601	225,311
Medicare	▼	100	90.80	90.00	127	91.80	91.90	89.70	90.10	91.00	-0.90	-0.99	58	28,758	2,597,792
Cinema	⇔	750	33.05	30.05	365	0.00	0.00	0.00	30.05	30.05	0.00	0.00	0	0	0
Qatar Fuel	▼	222	150.80	149.40	150	150.10	150.80	149.00	150.80	151.00	-0.20	-0.13	30	24,309	3,639,616
Widam	▲	1,000	64.50	63.70	1,021	63.10	63.70	63.10	63.70	63.60	0.10	0.16	8	1,259	79,834
Gulf warehousing Co	▼	747	54.40	53.60	800	53.50	53.60	53.30	53.60	54.00	-0.40	-0.74	11	9,300	497,317
Nakilat	▲	6,810	23.60	23.45	59,776	23.05	23.45	23.01	23.45	23.39	0.06	0.26	82	205,882	4,817,791
Dlala	▲	5,282	22.90	22.65	2,280	22.15	22.94	22.10	22.90	22.15	0.75	3.39	68	116,968	2,617,483
Barwa	▼	876	34.40	34.35	3,000	34.50	34.50	34.20	34.40	34.55	-0.15	-0.43	254	346,963	11,922,641
Mannai Corp.	⇔	826	84.70	81.30	135	0.00	0.00	0.00	82.50	82.50	0.00	0.00	0	0	0
Aamal	▲	844	14.83	14.73	1,774	14.88	14.88	14.70	14.83	14.60	0.23	1.58	19	9,855	146,400
Qatar Oman	▼	2,978	10.90	10.81	2,642	10.80	10.81	10.80	10.80	10.99	-0.19	-1.73	8	3,933	42,496
Ezdan Holding	▲	1,994	17.39	17.33	1,206	17.16	17.42	17.16	17.39	17.20	0.19	1.10	25	19,081	330,476
Islamic Holding	▼	1,897	63.20	62.00	12	62.20	63.90	62.00	63.20	63.90	-0.70	-1.10	21	9,075	563,808
Gulf International	▼	200	34.70	34.55	2,000	34.60	34.65	34.40	34.45	34.80	-0.35	-1.01	28	13,298	458,667
Vodafone Qatar	▲	1,482	10.83	10.82	5,000	10.88	10.88	10.70	10.83	10.80	0.03	0.28	96	176,654	1,907,752
Mesaieed	▼	300	17.16	17.10	13,258	17.10	17.17	17.01	17.10	17.19	-0.09	-0.52	91	96,176	1,644,484
Al Meera	⇔	5,459	209.00	207.50	668	206.10	209.00	206.10	209.00	209.00	0.00	0.00	30	6,300	1,307,671
Mazaya Qatar	▲	2,097	13.85	13.81	200	13.90	13.90	13.61	13.85	13.81	0.04	0.29	47	87,084	1,201,635

Algeria plans bank privatisations

The plan will open the door for foreign investors to acquire controlling stakes in banks.

Reuters

ALGIERS: Algeria plans to allow its dominant state banks to list on the local stock exchange to help develop its financial markets and diversify sources of funding after the oil price slide, a senior financial official said.

The plan will open the door for foreign investors to acquire controlling stakes in banks, reversing a rule requiring Algerian firms to keep a majority shareholding in any partnership with foreigners, the official said. Algeria's six government-run banks account for most of the sector's assets. French companies such as Societe Generale and BNP Paribas have the strongest presence among foreign-owned banks already working in the country.

Opec member Algeria's economy has been largely based on a state-run and centralised system since its independence from France in 1962 and it remains reliant on an energy sector that still provides 60 percent of its budget.

But the oil price drop since 2014 has put Algeria under financial pressure, forcing the government to trim spending and search for alternative financing sources.

"The era of $100 a barrel is over. We have no choice but to change our policy," the official said, asking not to be named because they were not authorised to speak to the media. "Reforms will move slowly, but there will be no step backwards."

With more than $130bn in foreign exchange reserves and little foreign debt, Algeria is in better shape than other oil producers such as Venezuela.

However, it has been forced to push up taxes and increase subsidised petrol and diesel prices, scaling back a vast welfare system that has in the past helped ease social tensions.

Advocates of the 51/49 ownership rule and tight foreign exchange controls say they helps protect Algeria's strategic sectors after an experimentation with privatisation in the 1990s. But critics say such curbs stifle growth and investment.

The government has been keen to promote the expansion of its agriculture, health, manufacturing and tourist sectors but cumbersome bureaucracy has put off investors. It is also not the first attempt at selling off the banks. The government scrapped previous plans for a bank privatisation in 2007, just two days before the deadline for the submission of bids, citing an international banking crisis at the time. That plan was to sell a majority state in Credit Populaire d'Algerie (CPA) — two years before the introduction of the new rule limiting ownership for foreign firms to 49 percent in any partnership deal.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank have since repeatedly urged Algeria to reform the underdeveloped banking sector and modernize its stock exchange to help attract investment. However, it is not clear how much appetite there will be for the banks. Plans to float cement producer Societe des Ciments de Ain El Kebira were dropped in June because of a lack of demand for the shares on offer.

The new bank proposal is included in the 2017 budget law draft currently in parliament for debate and must be approved by lawmakers and by President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. Under the new plan, state banks that want to list on the Algiers bourse will still have to get "prior green light" from the central bank before any step to sell a stake in excess of 49 percent, the official said.

The other state banks consist of Banque Nationale d'Algerie, Banque Exterieure d'Algerie, Banque de Developpement Local, Banque de l' Agriculture et du Developpement Rural, the largest in terms of its network, and the Caisse Nationale d'Epargne et de Prevoyance.

Officials have previously said Algeria is preparing to allow foreign investors to buy shares on its stock exchange, where authorities hope the number of listed companies will rise from five to 50 in the near future. But the Algiers stock market, smaller than those in neighbouring Morocco and Tunisia, struggles with very low levels of liquidity.

Tencent to donate 2% of profit as Chinese online charity grows

Reuters

HONG KONG: Chinese billionaire Pony Ma Huateng, the founder of internet group Tencent, said his company would donate 2 percent of its annual profit to charity and flagged growth in the use of mobile internet in China's philanthropy sector.

Ma's pledge follows China's introduction of new laws earlier this month that provided a legal framework for approved internet companies to raise and manage funds for charity.

It also comes days after Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and his wife Priscilla Chan said they would donate more than $3bn toward a plan to "cure, prevent or manage" all disease.

Ma said China's first charity law provided a missing legal framework in Chinese philanthropy operations and allowed more flexibility in their administration.

China's self-made tech billionaires have in recent years topped the nation's philanthropist list. Ma and Tencent co-founder Chen Yidan were named in a report by the Hurun Research Institute in June as the nation's top two givers in the past year.

Ma, who in April pledged 100 million company shares worth more than $2bn to a personal charity fund in April in one of China's largest philanthropic pledges, has vowed to use technology to transform China's public welfare efforts.

Ma said China has been a world leader in drawing the social benefits of mobile internet technology and cited philanthropy as one key area of change. "For example, three years ago, 90 percent of the donations made on our online platform were done from PC, now it is 90 percent mobile," Ma said at an event on Friday.

In 2014, Alibaba cofounders Jack Ma and Joe Tsai pledged share options worth about US$3 billion at the time to charity. In December 2015, Facebook's Zuckerberg made one of the largest pledges in history when he and his wife said they would donate 99 percent of their company shares to charity. Tencent is China's largest social media network and entertainment company and operates the popular messaging app WeChat. Ma said the company set an internal target to commit around 1 percent of annual profit to charity when it established its charity foundation in 2007.

Sudan needs swift reforms to revive ailing economy: World Bank

AFP

KHARTOUM: The World Bank yesterday urged Sudan to undertake swift structural reforms to revive its ailing economy, which a top Sudanese official insisted had been adversely impacted by US trade sanctions.

Rising inflation and the loss of nearly 75 percent of oil earnings following the north-south split in 2011 have led to a steady decline in the country's economic growth over the past few years.

The decline comes on top of an economy already damaged by US trade sanctions imposed since 1997, making international banking transactions cumbersome when it comes to doing business with Sudan. "It is essential that Sudan undertakes a combination of institutional, macro-economic and sectoral reforms to reach a stable growth path," said a World Bank report released in Khartoum.

"While the authorities have succeeded in reducing inflation and slightly recovering from the negative growth rates of 2011 and 2012, more must be done to ensure a more stable medium-term outlook," said the report's lead author, Michael Geiger.

Sudan's average gross domestic product growth between 1998 and 2008 was above six percent, after which it steadily declined to around three percent in recent years.

Previous efforts at economic reform have proven controversial.

An attempt in September 2013 to cut fuel subsidies led to bloody confrontations between anti-austerity protesters and security forces that left dozens dead in Khartoum.

The World Bank report said that removing exchange restrictions to unify official and black-market exchange rates of the Sudanese pound against the US dollar could help revive the east African country's sluggish economy.

The official rate is 6.50 Sudanese pounds to the dollar, but it trades for about 15.50 on the black market. "Given the ever-changing black market rate... gradual and ongoing devaluation" is a key to help growth, the report said.

It said a stable exchange rate will help in formulating monetary and fiscal policies that support economic stability and competitiveness.



World Bank Country Director for Ethiopia, Sudan and South Sudan, Carolyn Turk, at a press conference in the capital Khartoum yesterday.

Washington imposed a trade embargo on Sudan in 1997 over Khartoum's alleged backing for radical Islamist groups and over the conflict in the western region of Darfur. In recent months, Sudan has called for the United States to relax the sanctions.

More than 300,000 people have died in Darfur and 2.5 million have been displaced since 2003, according to UN figures.

Geiger suggested that although decisions on whether to lift sanctions were "political and the World Bank had no role in it", easing these measures could certainly help Sudan's economy.

"There is an issue in access to foreign exchange... there is an issue in transferring money to different countries through the formal banking system... all this certainly plays a role" in slowing the economy, Geiger said.

A senior finance ministry official insisted that the dilapidated state of the economy was primarily because of the US measures. "America's unilateral sanctions imposed without any reasons pushed the country into economic problems," Makki Mohamed Abderahim said.

"We want the World Bank to join us in removing the sanctions."


Serena Williams

Serena will be back, warns new No.1 Kerber

AFP

WUHAN: Newly-minted world number one Angelique Kerber warned yesterday that Serena Williams will come back strong after the German stripped her of her long-held position atop the rankings.

"I am sure that she (Williams) will (be) coming back strong," Kerber said in Wuhan, China. Williams was gunning for her 23rd Grand Slam title at the US Open -- that would have taken her past the record she shares with Steffi Graf -- when she was cut down by 11th-ranked Karolina Pliskova in the semis.

The Czech's victory ensured that Kerber, who had been snapping at Williams' heels for weeks, would rise to number one.

The German then went on to beat Pliskova in the final to claim her second Grand Slam title of the year.

Williams' slip from the number one spot in September also denied her a second record: the American veteran had topped the rankings for 186 weeks – a run Graf also matched. And that double slight is sure to motivate Williams' to come back strong, said Kerber.

"She will try to win some more Grand Slams and write history for sure," she said.

Williams pulled out of the Wuhan Open and next week's China Open in Beijing on Friday, almost guaranteeing that Kerber will end the year as world number one.

But the 28-year-old -- the oldest ever women's player to debut at the top of the rankings -- isn't letting the pressure of her new position get to her.

"The ranking... it's just a number," she said. "I was always telling myself if that day will come... then that would happen, but (I was) not putting too much pressure on myself." That was also a tip she was given by mentor Graf, who Kerber met for a few days in Las Vegas, where the tennis idol lives with her husband Andre Agassi, after her Australian Open triumph.

"Actually she was just telling me to enjoy everything, to work hard and believe in yourself. So actually nothing new but it's of course a little bit different to hear it from her," said Kerber.

For now, for the left-hander, the plan is more of the same.

"This is my game... this is also what brings me (to) where I am right now. I will not change it."


Angelique Kerber

Wozniacki ends title wait with Tokyo win

Former World No.1 outwits Japan's Osaka in Pan Pacific Open final to clinch her first trophy since February 2015

AFP

TOKYO: Former world number one Caroline Wozniacki overpowered Japan's Naomi Osaka 7-5, 6-3 to capture the Pan Pacific Open yesterday, her first tournament victory since February 2015.

The Dane, who has battled back from a wretched run of injuries this year, weathered an early storm from her teenage opponent before running out a comfortable winner, claiming a second Tokyo title and the 24th of her career.

"I'm very proud to win the tournament," Wozniacki told reporters.

"Somebody just told me I've won a tournament every year since 2008. That's a nice little streak and hopefully I can keep it going and keep moving forward."

Wozniacki, the Pan Pacific champion six years ago, survived a health scare after dropping serve to go down 4-3 in the first set.

After feeling a twinge in her left thigh, she left the court for treatment and returned with her leg heavily bandaged.

But it appeared to have little adverse effect as Wozniacki took complete control, ripping a fierce backhand down the line to take the set.

Wozniacki, who reached the US Open semi-finals earlier this month to signal her return to form, roared into a 5-0 lead in the second set as Osaka's game unravelled in the Tokyo sunshine.

Playing with the roof open after a week of typhoon rains, Osaka paid for her youthful exuberance, her strategy of attempting to hit the fur off the ball on every shot backfiring badly against a vastly more experienced opponent.

The 18-year-old, who called a medical timeout of her own for a sore right shoulder after losing the first set, produced some spirited resistance to avoid the dreaded 'bagel', but it was too little too late.

Wozniacki completed victory with a crisp backhand which forced Osaka into yet another wild shot, giving the 26-year-old her first title since Kuala Lumpur last year. "I hurt my groin a little bit in the first set, but I tried to stay aggressive and stay calm," said Wozniacki, who had seen her world ranking plunge to 74th after suffering wrist and ankle injuries.

"To be honest I was just trying to fight for every point. It was tough at the end but I was just happy to close it out."

The Dane is set to climb to 22 or 23 in the new rankings when they are released on Monday.

Osaka, born of a Japanese mother and Haitian father, will break into the top 50 after her fairytale run but confessed her inexperience had cost her.

"Everything is a bit new to me," she said. "I was thinking too much about the whole situation. When she took a medical break I should've been more focused on my game.

"I'm sort of taking everything as it comes," added Osaka, who had lost all her previous five finals on the WTA satellite circuit.

"I will try to fix things I did wrong today but honestly I'm happy how I've played this year."


Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark holds the winning plate during an awarding ceremony after the Pan Pacific Open final against Naomi Osaka of Japan in Tokyo, Japan, yesterday.

Vinci downs gold medallist Puig in Wuhan first round

AFP

WUHAN: Roberta Vinci downed Olympic gold medallist Monica Puig in the first round of the Wuhan Open yesterday.

Italy's Vinci took just one hour and 20 minutes to defeat the Puerto Rican in two sets, 6-3, 6-3.

Vinci, last year's US Open finalist who halted Serena Williams' bid for a rare calendar-year Grand Slam, served eight aces en route to the second round of the $2.6 million hard-court event.

Puig had a fairytale run at the Rio Olympics, bringing her island its first-ever gold medal and taking her to a career-high ranking of 33.

She then fell in the first round of the US Open, but made it to the quarter-finals in Tokyo last week, eventually losing to world number four Agnieszka Radwanska.

"It was a tough first round. I didn't necessarily play my best tennis," Puig told reporters after the Wuhan match.

"It's kind of hard when you have to focus on other things, other tournaments, and everybody keeps bringing you back to Rio," the 22-year-old added.

American qualifier Louisa Chirico was handed a pass to the second round after US Open quarter finalist Timea Bacsinszky became ill and retired in the second set.

Teenager Belinda Bencic also pulled out in the second set with a lower back problem, allowing world number 10 Svetlana Kuznetsova of Russia through to face either Briton Heather Watson or Madison Brengle of the USA.

WUHAN OPEN RESULTS

First round: Yanina Wickmayer (BEL) bt Shelby Rogers (USA) 6-3, 7-6 (7/1); Yaroslava Shvedova (KAZ) bt Saisai Zheng (CHN) 6-0, 6-3; Roberta Vinci (ITA x13) bt Monica Puig (PUR) 6-3, 6-3; Katerina Siniakova (CZE) bt Timea Babos (HUN) 6-3, 7-5; Lucie Safarova (CZE) bt Varvara Lepchenko (USA) 7-5, 6-3; Laura Siegemund (GER) bt Danka Kovinic (MNE) 6-7 (7/9), 7-5, 6-4; Irina Begu (ROM) bt Elizaveta Kulichkova (RUS) 4-6, 7-6 (7/4), 6-2; Louisa Chirico (USA) bt Timea Bacsinszky (SUI x12) 6-3, 4-3 (ret); Svetlana Kuznetsova (RUS x9) bt Belinda Bencic (SUI) 6-3, 3-4 (ret); Ekaterina Makarova (RUS) bt Sabine Lisicki (GER) 6-1, 6-2.



US experience, Europe dominance mark out Ryder Cup

Reuters

CHASKA: Home advantage for an experienced United States line-up versus European dominance -- just one of many compelling matchups to savour in next week's Ryder Cup between two star-studded teams at Hazeltine National.

The Americans have been meticulous in their preparations for the 41st edition of the biennial competition and appear to have several factors in their favour as they strive to end a remarkable run by the Europeans over the past two decades.

Holders Europe have won three consecutive Ryder Cups, and eight of the last 10, through a mixture of shrewd captaincy, consistently good team chemistry, often stellar play and an uncanny knack of sinking key putts at crucial moments.

This week, however, they will field six rookies in their 12-man team while the Americans have just one Cup debutant in Brooks Koepka (or perhaps two pending the final wild-card pick to be announced later on Sunday by US captain Davis Love III).

Either way, this is a ratio of experience that US fans can only hope will help pave the way for a much-needed home victory.

"We didn't really look at rookies versus experience," Love told reporters when asked if his more seasoned team held any advantage over Europe. "We looked at adding to our team to build the best that we could.

"Experience is good. We know what to expect. We know how to handle it, how to deal with it. We're going to learn from our mistakes in the past and build on it.

"We have a plan we've been working on for a year and a half ... we know what happened in the past but we're looking to the future now and building. I think our experience is really going to help us."

While Europe are happy to embrace the underdog tag on US soil, their captain Darren Clarke has complete faith in the ability of his six rookies to thrive in the pressure cooker atmosphere of a Ryder Cup.


Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland (centre) is seen with Team Europe after retaining the Ryder Cup in Gleneagles, Scotland, in this September 28, 2014 file photo.

"It's unquestionable that it's going to be a very, very big task ahead of us," said the 48-year-old Northern Irishman, a veteran of five Ryder Cups as a player. "You'd have to say America would be favourites ... if you're going to look off world rankings, etc. But it's 12 guys against 12 guys in match play, and anything can happen. "There are six (rookies for Europe) but the talent that they all possess, I've got no worries at all about the strength of that team. I'm proud of that team. We're going to do everything we possibly can to bring that trophy back home again."

Asked to explain Europe's recent dominant run at the Ryder Cup, Clarke replied: "The Europeans have had the run of the greens. They have made a lot of big putts at the right time.

"The gap in the quality of the players is so small, that if somebody knocks in a 20-footer at the right time or something, that can make a huge difference.

"Davis is doing everything he possibly can to get that 20-footer going in on his side. I'm obviously trying to do the same ... it's going to be a closely-contested contest, as it has been."

Since 1981, there has been generally very little to choose between the two teams in terms of matchplay grit and ability. Holing putts at the right time under intense pressure has been the decisive factor. The Americans last won the Ryder Cup at Valhalla in 2008 when their captain Paul Azinger shrewdly inspired team cohesion with a four-man 'pod' system and prepared the venue with very little rough and fast greens to suit his power hitters.

Ultra-long Hazeltine National measures a daunting 7,628 yards off the back tees and while Love has certainly taken a leaf or two out of Azinger's play book, he is looking well beyond driving distance with his Ryder Cup strategy.

"It (Hazeltine) is big and long and it's a bomber's course but we've broken it down a little bit," said Love. "Just hitting long drives isn't the whole key to this. "It's strokes gained, ball-striking, who can hit it closer to the hole with all their clubs, and who can make the most putts."

Europe have triumphed 10 times in the last 15 editions but they face a challenging task on American soil where the US have lost only four times since the matches began in 1927. The 41st Ryder Cup starts on Friday morning with the opening foursomes matches.

Veteran Mancebo sees Doha Worlds as perfect showcase



The UCI Road World Championships Doha 2016 will begin on October 9.

The Peninsula

UCI CHAMPIONSHIP TO RUN FROM OCTOBER 9 TO 16

DOHA: The UCI Road World Championships Doha 2016 will begin in just three weeks. The event, pinnacle of the cycling season, is set to also become a milestone for cycling in the Middle East, a region that is creating its own sport culture this century.

It's been three years since the UAE's Al Alhi Sports Club created the SkyDive Dubai cycling team.

Supported by respected brands of the bike industry such as Cervelo and Giordana, it is arguably the highest-level cycling squad that has ever existed in the Middle East.

Enrolled in the team as a sporting leader and team captain is Paco Mancebo (1976, Navaluenga – Avila). The Spanish rider is a veteran, respected rider within the peloton.

In the past decade, he has stood on the podium of the biggest cycling events in the world, such as the Tour de France and the Vuelta a España.

After fulfilling his sporting goals, Mancebo has worked to help the growth of cycling in countries where it is in the early stages of development.

It's with this philosophy that he joined SkyDive Dubai – to closely observe the evolution of cycling in the Middle East and teach the riders from these countries his vast knowledge of this sport.

Over these years, Mancebo has perceived that cycling in the region has improved "one step at a time. Every season the level of both riders and races is a bit higher. The fact that this year we are holding the first UCI Road World Championships in Doha, and in 2017 the first ever UCI WorldTour events will take place in Qatar and Abu Dhabi, is quite telling."

The Spanish rider points to the geography and the climate of the Middle East as key factors for the development of cycling in the region.

"Pedalling in the Middle East is quite pleasant during autumn and winter."

Notwithstanding, he acknowledges that any Middle-Eastern rider willing to make it to the top level of the sport needs "to jump over the cultural barrier and settle himself in any of the sport's heartlands," as the Qatari national team has done these last few months.

"Luckily, they are already doing it. Several Middle-Eastern riders are already capable of performing in the world's best races," said the veteran.

Mancebo has noticed a gradual yet meaningful improvement in the cycling scene in the region. "Every year there is more racing. We are getting to a point where a team will be able to do its full racing schedule in the region, thus being less expensive than in the current situation where it has to travel abroad to race. This will favour the creation of more teams and the professionalisation of more riders as a consequence."

Mancebo considers the upcoming UCI Road World Championships Doha 2016 as a landmark event for Middle-Eastern cycling. "It is going to be awesome, very different to any previous UCI RWC, with pan-flat courses where the crosswinds are going to be a deciding factor.

It will not only portray the growth of cycling in the Middle East, but showcase the beauties of Qatar before the whole world," he added.

The UCI Road World Championship Doha 2016 will be held in Qatar's capital between 9 and 16 of October 2016.

Bringing together the world's best male and female road cyclists in the Elite, Under-23 and Junior categories for the time trial and road race, Doha 2016 is the first ever UCI Road World Championship to be held in the Middle East.

As many as twelve titles of UCI World Champion will be awarded during the historic event.

South Africa thrash Ireland by 206 runs

Reuters

BENONI: A century on his One Day International debut from Temba Bavuma and four wickets from part-time spinner JP Duminy helped South Africa secure a one-sided 206-run victory over Ireland at Willowmore Park yesterday.

Bavuma, dropped on one, scored 113 as South Africa reached 354 for five with Farhaan Behardien hitting 50 off 22 deliveries and Quinton de Kock (82) and Duminy (52 not out) also contributing runs.

Ireland lost captain William Porterfield to the second ball of their innings, trapped lbw by Kagiso Rabada, and were always up against it chasing a run rate of over seven an over.

Kevin O'Brien (41) and Paul Stirling (40) provided some resistance as Ireland reached 148 before being bowled out with 19 overs to spare. Duminy returned career-best figures of 4-16.

Ireland, given a rare chance to play against top tier opposition, next play Australia at the same venue, on the outskirts of Johannesburg on Tuesday. Australia and South Africa will then embark on a five-match ODI series, starting on Friday.

SCOREBOARD

SOUTH AFRICA	
Q de Kock b O'Brien	82
T Bavuma c Poynter b Young	113
F du Plessis c Porterfield b Young	21
J Duminy (not out)	52
D Miller c Wilson b O'Brien	14
F Behardien c Porterfield b Young	50
Extras (LB-9, NB-1, W-12)	22
Total (for 5 wkts in 50 overs) 354	
Fall of wickets: 1-159, 2-221, 3-227, 4-267, 5-354.	
Bowling: Young 10-0-81-3 (3w); Chase 10-0-86-0 (1nb, 4w); Murtagh 10-0-56-0; Dockrell 10-0-55-0 (1w); O'Brien 10-0-66-2 (3w).	
IRELAND	
W Porterfield lbw Rabada	0
P Stirling lbw Phangiso	40
J Anderson c Rabada b Parnell	5
G Wilson c De Kock b Pretorius	3
K O'Brien c Parnell b Duminy	41
S Terry c Bavuma b Parnell	16
S Poynter c Phangiso b Duminy	8
G Dockrell b Phangiso	16
T Murtagh (not out)	13
C Young b Duminy	0
P Chase c Miller b Duminy	0
Extras (W-6)	6
Total (all out in 30.5 overs) 148	
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-26, 3-41, 4-77, 5-101, 6-115, 7-122, 8-147, 9-148.	
Bowling: Rabada 4-1-22-1 (3w), Parnell 6-1-36-2 (2w), Pretorius 5-0-19-1, Phehlukwayo 4-0-22-0, Phangiso 7-0-33-2, Duminy 4.5-0-16-4 (1w).	

India scent victory as Kiwis face uphill task

Visitors 93-4 at stumps after the hosts set 434 runs to win; Ashwin claims 200th Test wicket

Reuters



India's Ravichandran Ashwin (left) celebrates the wicket of New Zealand's captain Kane Williamson with Murali Vijay during the fourth day of their first Test in Kanpur, yesterday.

KANPUR: India set New Zealand an improbable 434-run victory target and then blew away the visitors' top order in yesterday's final session to close in on a resounding win in the first Test.

Resuming day four on 159 for one, India's positive batting over two sessions yielded 218 runs before home captain Virat Kohli declared on 377 for five at Kanpur's Green Park Stadium.

Needing to pull off the biggest successful chase in the history of Test cricket for an unlikely win, New Zealand wobbled early and were reeling at 93 for four at stumps, still trailing the massive target by 341.

Luke Ronchi (38) and Mitchell Santner (eight) will return on Monday hoping to resist or at least delay India's victory march in the first match of the three-Test series.

Ravichandran Ashwin (3-68), who dismissed four frontline Kiwi batsmen in the first innings, proved once again why he is considered India's premier spinner.

The off-spinner had Martin Guptill caught at silly point for a duck with the first ball of his second over and trapped Tom Latham (two) leg before with the fifth.

Ashwin claimed his 200th Test wicket when he dismissed New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson (25) leg before. Ross Taylor (17) then ran himself out to compound the tourists' misery.

"The game's not over yet," Ashwin told reporters after becoming the second fastest bowler to take 200 wickets, achieving the feat in his 37th Test. "Kane Williamson is not a bad 200th scalp. I had a few good wickets in my career. AB de Villiers in Nagpur was very well set up," a delighted Ashwin told reporters.

He is just behind former Australian leg-spinner Clarrie Grimmett who took 36 Tests to achieve the feat, and ahead of greats Waqar Younis of Pakistan and Australia's Dennis Lillee who both took 38 Tests.

"We should have got them five or six down today itself. I'm bit disappointed," Ashwin added.

Earlier in the morning, Williamson attacked with spin from both ends and his slow bowlers did not let him down.

Left-arm spinner Santner trapped Murali Vijay lbw for 76, ending the right-hander's second century-plus stand of the match with Cheteshwar Pujara (78).

Kohli fell to off-spinner Mark Craig and Ish Sodhi struck the next blow with a beauty of a delivery that spun from outside leg, took the outside edge of Pujara's bat and nestled into Taylor's waiting hands at slip.

Ajinkya Rahane (40) missed his fifty but Rohit Sharma and Ravindra Jadeja smashed unbeaten half-centuries and featured in an unbroken century stand to virtually bat New Zealand out of the contest.

Sharma, who made 35 in the first innings, remained unbeaten on 68.

Jadeja, who scored 42 not out in the first innings and claimed five wickets with his left-arm spin, continued to have a good match.

The left-hander clobbered three sixes en route to his second Test fifty before breaking into a bat-twirling celebration.

"Still six wickets to go," New Zealand bowling coach Shane Jurgensen said.

"If you get a partnership you can score at a decent rate. More importantly, you can bat for time. That's our goal, to fight for as long as we can," he said.

SCOREBOARD

India (I innings):	**318**
New Zealand (I innings):	**262**
India (II innings):	
L Rahul c Taylor b Sodhi	38
M Vijay lbw Santner	76
C Pujara c Taylor b Sodhi	78
V Kohli c Sodhi b Craig	18
A Rahane c Taylor b Santner	40
R Sharma (not out)	68
R Jadeja (not out)	50
Extras (B-1, LB-8)	9
Total (for 5 wkts)	**377**
Fall of wickets: 1-52, 2-185, 3-214, 4-228, 5-277.	
Bowling: Boult 9-0-34-0; Santner 32.2-11-79-2; Craig 23-3-80-1; Wagner 16-5-52-0; Sodhi 20-2-99-2; Guptill 4-0-17-0; Williamson 3-0-7-0.	
New Zealand (II innings):	
T Latham lbw Ashwin	2
M Guptill c Vijay b Ashwin	0
K Williamson lbw Ashwin	25
R Taylor (run out)	17
L Ronchi (batting)	38
M Santner (batting)	8
Extras (LB-2, NB-1)	3
Total (for 4 wkts)	**93**
Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-3, 3-43, 5-56.	
Bowling: Shami 4-2-6-0; Ashwin 16-1-68-3; Jadeja 14-10-8-0; Yadav 3-0-9-0.	

Akmal returns to Pakistan one-day squad

AFP

KARACHI: Pakistan yesterday recalled dashing batsman Umar Akmal to their one-day squad for the upcoming series against West Indies after he was sidelined for 18 months over disciplinary problems.

The 26-year-old played the last of his 111 one-day internationals in March during the 2015 World Cup in Australia and New Zealand.

Negative comments about Akmal's behaviour by former head coach Waqar Younis and ex-manager Intikhab Alam almost derailed his career.

He was recalled to the Twenty20 squad earlier this month after being passed over for five months. Pakistan lead the current three-match Twenty20 series against the West Indies 2-0, with the final game on Tuesday.

The first one-day international is in Sharjah on Friday, followed by another at the same venue on October 2 and one in Abu Dhabi on October 5.

They will also play three Tests after the limited-over series.

Pakistan lost their last one-day series in England 4-1 and are currently ninth in the one-day rankings.

SQUAD

Azhar Ali (captain), Sharjeel Khan, Babar Azam, Asad Shafiq, Shoaib Malik, Sarfraz Ahmed, Umar Akmal, Mohammad Rizwan, Mohammad Nawaz, Imad Wasim, Yasir Shah, Rahat Ali, Mohammad Amir, Wahab Riaz, Hasan Ali, Sohail Khan.

Bangladesh down Afghanistan by seven runs

AFP

DHAKA: Bangladesh beat Afghanistan by seven runs to take a 1-0 lead in a three-match one-day international series at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Dhaka yesterday.

Tamim Iqbal made 80 runs while Mahmudullah added 62 to guide Bangladesh to 265 runs while batting first.

While defending the target, Taskin Ahmed grabbed 4-59 to help the hosts dismiss Afghanistan for 258.

Hashmatullah Shahidi (72) and Rahmat Shah (71) put on 144 runs for the third wicket to give the hosts a scare in the opening match.

However, a dramatic late order collapse saw the visitors lose their way in chasing a challenging total.

The second and third match will be held at the same venue on September 28 and October 1.

SCOREBOARD

BANGLADESH	
T Iqbal c Haq b Ashraf	80
S Sarkar c Shabir b Dawlat	0
I Kayes b Nabi	37
Mahmudullah c Ashraf b Nabi	62
S Al Hasan c Najibullah b Dawlat	48
M Rahim b Rashid Khan	6
S Rahman lbw b Rashid Khan	2
M Mortaza c Rashid b Haq	4
Taijul Islam c Rahmat b Dawlat	11
Taskin Ahmed b Dawlat	2
Rubel Hossain (not out)	1
Extras (B-1, LB-1, W-10)	12
Total (all out in 50 overs)	**265**
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-84, 3-163, 4-203, 5-215, 6-227, 7-246, 8-254, 9-260.	
Bowling: Dawlat 10-0-73-4 (w5), Naveen-ul Haq 10-0-62-1 (w2), Nabi 10-0-40-2 (w1), Mirwais 10-0-51-1 (w1), Rashid 10-0-37-2 (w1).	
AFGHANISTAN	
Shabir Noori lbw S Al Hasan	9
M Shahzad c M Rahim b M Mortaza	31
Rahmat Shah st M Rahim b S Al Hasan71	
H Shahidi c S Sarkar b Taijul Islam	72
Mohd Nabi c S Rahman b T Ahmed	30
N adran c M Rahim b M Mortaza	7
A Stanikzai c Mahmudullah b T Ahmed	10
Rashid Khan b Rubel Hossain	7
Mirwais Ashraf lbw T Ahmed	3
D Zadran c S Rahman b T Ahmed	2
Naveen-ul-Haq (not out)	0
Extras (B-1, LB-2, W-13)	16
Total (all out in 50 overs)	**258**
Fall of wickets: 1-46, 2-46, 3-190, 4-210, 5-230, 6-243, 7-245, 8-253, 9-255.	
Bowling: Mashrafe Mortaza 10-0-42-2 (1w); Taskin Ahmed 8-0-59-4 (5w); Shakib Al Hasan 10-0-26-2 (2w), Rubel Hossain 9-0-62-1 (3w); Taijul Islam 10-0-44-1 (1w); Mahmudullah 3-0-22-0.	

Celtic confident ahead of City clash

AFP

GLASGOW: Celtic manager Brendan Rodgers says his side's confidence is high ahead of their Champions League clash against Manchester City following their thrashing of Kilmarnock.

The Hoops warmed up for Wednesday's Group C match with a comprehensive 6-1 defeat of Killie in Glasgow's East End to maintain their unbeaten start to the domestic season.

Rodgers' side are top of the Scottish Premiership, five points clear of Hearts with a game in hand, and booked a League Cup semi-final clash with rivals Rangers next month following their defeat of third-tier Alloa Athletic in midweek. However, the Hoops will face a much tougher test on Wednesday when Pep Guardiola's City visit Celtic Park. The English Premier League leaders continued their 100 percent start to the season with a 3-1 victory at Swansea City on Saturday but Rodgers insisted his side's win over Killie had been the perfect preparation for the daunting clash.

Celtic lost 7-0 in their opening Group C fixture away to Barcelona as their defence was torn apart by the Spanish champions' forward line of Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez and Neymar. The Hoops defenders will now have to find a way to cope with Sergio Augero, who returned from a three-match ban to bag a double in the win over Swansea to take him to 28 goals in his last 27 Premier League games.

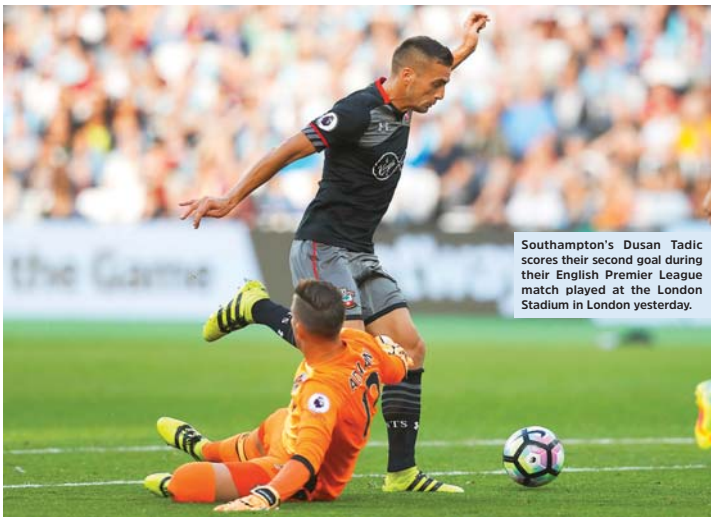
"It is a difficult game of course. I have come across Aguero many times. I know his qualities and the level he is at," admitted the former Swansea and Liverpool manager.

"His first goal in English football was against my team Swansea when he came on a substitute and he actually cost more than our stadium at Swansea.

"He is a big talent, one of the leading strikers in the world, but I think as a team they are working at a really high level."

Celtic may be without goalkeeper Dorus de Vries for the match against City after the Dutchman failed to reappear after the break in the win over Killie.

However, Rodgers says he has no worries about pitching in former number one Craig Gordon for the match against the English giants.



Southampton's Dusan Tadic scores their second goal during their English Premier League match played at the London Stadium in London yesterday.

Saints stroll to leave West Ham helpless at home

Fourth successive Premier League loss leave Hammers languishing in the relegation zone

AFP

LONDON: Southampton condemned West Ham to another miserable experience at their new London Stadium as Charlie Austin and Dusan Tadic inspired the visitors' 3-0 victory yesterday.

West Ham's move from Upton Park to the former Olympic Stadium just across east London was supposed to herald the start of a successful new era.

But instead they have been beset by problems on and off the pitch and a fourth successive Premier League loss left Slaven Bilic's side languishing in the relegation zone.

The series of ugly brawls that broke out during a recent defeat by Watford raised fears about fan safety in the arena and, although there was no repeat of the crowd problems against Southampton, the lacklustre efforts of Bilic's players ensured the supporters would continue to feel uncomfortable in their new surroundings.

Austin put Southampton ahead before Tadic and James Ward-Prowse wrapped up Southampton's fourth successive win in all competitions.

West Ham were left to count the cost of a third defeat in six matches in their new abode and, with the worst defensive record in the league, they look destined for a season of struggle.

After conceding 11 goals in their last three league games, West Ham were in dire need of a vibrant performance, but it was Southampton who seized the initiative.

Hojbjerg had time and space to pick his spot, but Angelo Ogbonna made up the ground with impressive speed and stuck out a leg to block the strike.

West Ham winger Michail Antonio has scored 10 headed Premier League goals in 2016 and his aerial prowess was acting as a magnet whenever his side attacked.

However, seeking out the lanky Antonio with high crosses proved a dubious strategy, with Southampton's towering centre-back Virgil van Dijk winning virtually every headed duel.

West Ham's injury problems meant Bilic was forced to deploy Havard Nordtveit out of position at right-back and the Norway midfielder was exposed when Southampton illuminated a drab first half with their 40th minute opener.

Tadic slipped a perfectly-weighted pass behind the hesitant Nordtveit and Bertrand surged away down the left flank before crossing to Austin, who guided a fine first-time finish low into the far corner.

It was the Southampton striker's fifth goal in his last four appearances.

Puel's team had a golden opportunity to double their lead soon after half-time when Cedric Soares found the unmarked Tadic 10 yards from goal. This time Adrian came to his side's rescue as he palmed away a Tadic strike that lacked the precision required to beat the Hammers goalkeeper.

But West Ham's creaky defence crumbled again moments later and this time Tadic didn't let them off the hook.

A total lack of communication and organisation in the Hammers rearguard proved fatal in the 62nd minute when Cheikhou Kouyate lost possession in midfield and Austin's deft pass sent Tadic clear to round Adrian and slot into the empty net.

West Ham's lone spell of pressure saw them denied a penalty when Sofiane Feghouli's shot hit Ryan Bertrand on the hand.

And it was clear the Hammers were certain to end empty-handed when Simone Zaza's shot was cleared off the line by van Dijk.

Ward-Prowse rubbed salt into West Ham's wounds as he came off the bench to drill home from close-range in stoppage-time.



El Jaish players in action during a practice session in this file photo.

AFC Champions League: El Jaish set for Al Ain semi

The Peninsula

DOHA: Qatar's El Jaish left Doha yesterday, ahead of their historic AFC Champions League semi-final encounter against UAE side Al Ain, which will be played at the Hazza Bin Zayed Stadium tomorrow.

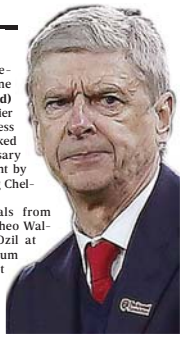
Sabri Lamouchi's side has been handed a boost ahead of the tie, welcoming back Brazilian Lucas Mendez back into the squad after serving his one match ban in the 1-0 quarter final victory over Al Nasr.

The club has also confirmed that summer signing Seydou Keita has recovered from an injury received in Jaish's 4-3 win over Al Arabi in the Qatar Stars League.

The former Malian international was substituted early in the first half as a precaution.

Wenger hungry for more after ending Chelsea hex

AFP



LONDON: Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger **(pictured)** said he was hungrier than ever for success after his side marked the 20th anniversary of his appointment by stylishly defeating Chelsea 3-0.

First-half goals from Alexis Sanchez, Theo Walcott and Mesut Ozil at the Emirates Stadium on Saturday swept Arsenal to a first league victory over their London rivals in 10 encounters.

It was Arsenal's biggest win over Chelsea since a 3-0 victory in Wenger's first meeting with them in April 1997 and the 66-year-old said he was now even more eager for success than when he arrived.

"I'm hungrier because I know I have not got 20 more years in front of me," smiled Wenger, whose team rose to third place in the Premier League table.

"I also feel a responsibility. You can't be 20 years somewhere and not care. I'm more conscious about what Arsenal is all about and I feel the weight of keeping people happy, and making people happy."

Wenger felt his side's football had been "nearly perfect" in the first half and said their overall display was "one of our best performances of recent years".

Chelsea have held something of a hoodoo over Arsenal in recent times. Sanchez's 11th-minute goal, after a mistake by Gary Cahill, was the first league goal Arsenal had scored against Chelsea since January 2013.

Chelsea dealt Wenger a humbling 6-0 defeat in his 1,000th game at the Arsenal helm in March 2014 and he said Saturday's win could mark an important mental breakthrough.

"We had to deal with some inconvenient facts before the game. They were we couldn't beat Chelsea for years," said the Frenchman, whose side host Basel in the Champions League on Wednesday.

"To get that out of the system was also at stake today. I think what was important for me was the psychological hurdle standing in our way. We mustn't make too much of it, but we can't ignore it.

The one black spot for Wenger was a first-half knee injury sustained by Francis Coquelin.

The French midfielder, who was replaced by Granit Xhaka, left the stadium with his leg in a brace and will undergo tests in the coming days.

Chelsea have gone three league games without victory and while beaten manager Antonio Conte refused to single out individuals for blame, he had strong words of criticism for his team.

Griezmann rescues Atletico against 10-man Deportivo



Atletico Madrid's Antoine Griezmann (centre), Angel Correa and Deportivo Coruna's goalkeeper German Lux (right) in action during their Spanish La Liga game played at Vicente Calderon Stadium in Madrid, Spain yesterday.

AFP

MADRID: Antoine Griezmann was Atletico Madrid's hero once more with the winner as last season's Champions League finalists moved third in La Liga with a 1-0 win over 10-man Deportivo la Coruna.

Moroccan winger Faycal Fajr undid a fine opening 45 minutes for the visitors on Sunday when he picked up two quickfire yellow cards just before the break.

Atletico passed up a host of chances in the second half, but finally made the breakthrough 20 minutes from time when Griezmann tapped home his fifth goal of the season.

Diego Simeone's men now trail leaders Real Madrid by just two points and move to within a point of Barcelona.

However, the hosts' victory was overshadowed by an anterior cruciate ligament injury suffered by midfielder Augusto Fernandez before half-time that will keep him out for much of the remainder of the season.

Jose Maria Gimenez also had to be replaced in the first-half with a groin injury and is set to miss Wendesday's huge Champions League clash with Bayern Munich.

Deportivo have now lost on their last 11 visits to the Vicente Calderon, but frustrated Atletico until Fajr's moments of madness left the Galicians with an almost impossible task.

Griezmann had the hosts' best chance of a first half disrupted by the injuries to Fernandez and Gimenez when he slotted wide from Angel Correa's cross.

Fajr eased Atletico's route to victory when he dived in late on Nicolas Gaitan in first-half stoppage time to leave Deportivo with 10 men.

The visitors still had a great chance to take a shock lead at the start of the second period when Lucas Hernandez headed clear from under his own crossbar with Florin Andone waiting to turn the ball home.

Yannick Carrasco and Correa then saw great chances saved by German Lux, while Filipe Luis fired just wide as the chances began to flow for Atletico.

However, it took until 20 minutes from time for the goal to come as substitute Kevin Gameiro latched onto Juanfran's pass and his low cross was turned home by his French international teammate Griezmann.

Earlier, Valencia's upturn under caretaker coach Voro continued as they came from behind to beat Leganes 2-1, but were grateful once more to Brazilian goalkeeper Diego Alves's fantastic record of saving penalties.

Alexander Szymanowski headed the hosts into the lead, but Nani levelled with his first Valencia goal 10 minutes before half-time.

Nani's cross was turned home by Mario Suarez to put Valencia in front. However, Szymanowski had the chance to give Leganes a deserved share of the points when Alves upended Alberto Martin half an hour from time.

Yet Alves produced his 20th save from 43 penalties he's faced in Spanish football to ensure Valencia's second win in four days. Voro has now won eight of the 10 games he has taken charge of in four caretaker spells.

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Veteran Mancebo sees Doha Worlds as perfect showcase





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Mirza to lead Qatar Under-19 at Division two Asia Qualifiers

The Peninsula

DOHA: All-rounder Hamad Mirza Baig will lead the Qatar juniors at the Division two Asia Qualifiers for the ICC Under 19 Cricket World Cup 2016 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The 10-nation tournament will start today and will conclude on October 6.

Qatar will meet Singapore in their opening fixture at the Royal Selangor Club Oval in Kuala Lumpur tomorrow.

The top two teams of the tournament will be promoted to the Division one ICC Asia Qualifier to be held next year.

The Division one tournament is also the pathway to 2018 ICC Under 19 Cricket World Cup.

The participating teams are, hosts Malaysia, Bahrain, Hong Kong, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Thailand and The United Arab Emirates.

DIVISION TWO ASIA QUALIFIERS: QATAR SQUAD

Hamad Mirza Baig (C), Jassim Khan, Omar Sayeed, Visakh Roji, Shubh Agarwal, Obaid Hassan, Dhruv Atul Patel, Milan Ashvinbhai Bhva, Darren Alton D'Souza, Asif Khan, Fawaz Suhail Khan, Hussain Khan, Khalid Moiz Siddiqui, Ahmed Mushtaq, Coach : Arjuna De Silva

"This tournament will give all the teams and the administrators in Asia, an opportunity to establish the ranking of the 10 participating teams" said Bandula Warnapura, ICC Asia Consultant and former ICC Asia Regional Development Manager.

"We are privileged and honored to be hosting the first tournament of ICC Asia. MCA will certainly do the very best to stage a successful tournament," said Clarence Selvam, Malaysian Cricket Association General Manager.

The matches will be played at Kinrara Oval, Club Aman Oval, Bayuemas Oval and Royal Selangor Club Oval.



Captains of the participating teams pose for a photograph.

Marquez shines at Aragon

MotoGP world championship leader extends his dominance to claim fourth win of the season

AFP

ALCAÑIZ, Spain: Marc Marquez extended his lead in the MotoGP world championship as he beat out title rivals Valentino Rossi and Jorge Lorenzo to claim victory at the Aragon Grand Prix yesterday

Spain's Marquez started on pole, but had to overcame a minor error early in the race that saw him briefly slip down to fifth before claiming his fourth win of the season.

Defending champion Lorenzo passed Yamaha teammate Rossi with five laps to go to take second.

Marquez now leads Rossi by 52 points with just four races remaining. Lorenzo is a further 14 points adrift in third. Victory for the two-time world champion ends a record run of eight different winners in the last eight races and was only Marquez's second win since April.

"I'm very happy because step-by-step Rossi was gaining points and now we've stopped (that run)," said Marquez.

Nine-time world champion Rossi has still never won in Aragon, but, despite starting from sixth on the grid, led with 15 laps to go after Marquez ran wide on lap three to slip down the field.

Marquez had been dominant all weekend, though, and again proved he had the fastest bike on the circuit as he reeled in Rossi before overtaking the Italian with 12 laps to go.

"I said stay calm, don't wear the front tyre because I had the hard one and then step-by-step I got a good rhythm," added Marquez.

"With Valentino I pushed for two laps and then when I saw the distance was enough (to pass) I just tried to keep that rhythm in front."

Lorenzo suffered a crash in the warm-up before the race, but believes that misfortune ultimately aided him as he switched to a hard rear tyre at the last moment.

"Probably the crash from this morning made me finish second today," he said.

"With the soft one I didn't feel so good, so instinct told me to choose the hard one and that instinct made me a good result.

"I am very proud, we did our maximum in the race and finally we finished closer than we expected to the winner."

Rossi was delighted with his start as he shot through the field. However, he didn't have the pace to hold off Marquez and a breaking error two laps from the end ensured he couldn't maintain the pressure on Lorenzo for second.

Earlier, Brad Binder became South Africa's first motorcycle world champion for 36 years in the Moto3 category.

Binder finished second to Jorge Navarro, but did enough to extend his advantage to an unassailable 106 points with just four races remaining.

Defending Moto2 champion Johann Zarco retains his championship lead by just a point over Spaniard Alex Rins after finishing eighth.

ARAGON MOTOGP RESULTS

1. Marc Marquez (Spain) Honda - 41:57.678
2. Jorge Lorenzo (Spain) Yamaha - 42:00.418
3. Valentino Rossi (Italy) Yamaha - 42:03.661
4. Maverick Vinales (Spain) Suzuki - 42:05.916
5. Cal Crutchlow (Britain) Honda - 42:10.899

MOTOGP STANDINGS

1. Marc Marquez (Spain) Honda - 248
2. Valentino Rossi (Italy) Yamaha - 196
3. Jorge Lorenzo (Spain) Yamaha - 182
4. Dani Pedrosa (Spain) Honda - 155
5. Maverick Vinales (Spain) Suzuki - 149
6. Cal Crutchlow (Britain) Honda - 105
7. Andrea Dovizioso (Italy) Ducati - 104
8. Andrea Iannone (Italy) Ducati - 96
9. Pol Espargaro (Spain) Yamaha - 96
10. Hector Barbera (Spain) Ducati - 84



Repsol Honda Team's Spanish rider Marc Marquez celebrates after winning the Moto GP race of the Aragon Grand Prix at the Motorland racetrack in Alcaniz yesterday.

UCI Worlds will raise Qatar's profile to new heights, says Al Hemaidi

The Peninsula



DOHA: Preparations are in full swing to host a successful UCI Road World Championships Doha 2016 which is just few weeks away.

All major competitions are made up of innumerous little details, the moving parts that make the event machinery work. Multiple problems can be expected to crop up, with little or no warning.

Under such circumstances, it is imperative to have a veteran troubleshooter on board to get things back on track. For the Local Organising Committee of the UCI Road World Championships Doha 2016, that person is Executive Director Ahmed Abdulla Al Hemaidi **(pictured)**.

Al Hemaidi, one of the longest serving officials at the Qatar Cycling Federation, has been an integral part of every decision related to the Road World Championships in Doha.

"This is the competition's first visit to the Middle East and it's a big honour for us to be chosen to host it. It brings with it a lot of added value for our country. We'll yet again prove we're up to the challenge of hosting any kind of sporting event," Al Hemaidi said. "Once the event begins, the world's collective focus will be on Qatar and we'll do everything possible to showcase our country. We are on target with preparations. We are working hard to ensure the competition is unlike anything seen before."

Al Hemaidi also said that Doha has always been an excellent host for international events.

"Our sporting legacy truly began with the hosting of the 2006 Doha Asian Games. Since then, there has been no turning back. The country organised key events in many disciplines, including the AFC Asian Cup football, Arab Games and the IAAF Indoor Athletics World Championships. Now it is our turn to contribute to the country's growing legacy in sports. The UCI Road World Championships Doha 2016 is arguably the biggest international event in the last decade," he added.

Al Hemaidi also said that the international event is arguably the biggest single-discipline competition Qatar has ever held.

Having won the bid to host the event during the 2012 UCI Road World Championships in Netherlands, Qatar has been preparing and counting down days to this event.

"This competition will raise Qatar's profile to new heights in the world of cycling," he added.

"We pride ourselves on the wealth of local expertise we have created by organising major cycling events. Races like the Tour of Qatar, Ladies Tour of Qatar and the Tour of Zubarah helped us build a strong organisational base, in terms of staff and volunteers. It'll stand us in good stead during the UCI Road World Championships Doha 2016."

Commenting on the difference of this race from the Tour of Qatar and other events in the past, Al Hemaidi said that it will be a totally different experience.

"Each year, the Tours bring together a limited number of teams, over five or six race days. But the UCI Road World Championships is much wider in scope, with a far greater number of national teams and cyclists. We are expecting around 1,000 riders from 75 countries to take part," Al Hemaidi went on to say.

Final round of FIM Superbike worlds at Losail track

The Peninsula

DOHA: The Losail International Circuit will host the final round of the MOTUL FIM Superbike World Championship for the third consecutive year from October 27 to 30.

Since the Losail International Circuit is back in the WSBK calendar, the Qatari track will host the final round of the prestigious championship, the Qatar Round.

As previous years, the event will be held at night under the floodlight sysem of the circuit and it is sure to be an excited and unpredictable last round.

Also, this season, the Qatari rider Saeed Al Sulaiti is taking part in the WorldSBK class and he expects the support of the home crowd at his home track in Losail.

On Friday, WorldSBK and WorldSSP Free Practices are scheduled from 16:30 until 22:00 and on the following day, both Superpoles will be from 17:30 to 19:10.

With the new format implemented this season, on Saturday, October 29, Race 1 of the WorldSBK starts at 20:00, so the fans will have the change to feel the adrenaline of the races during the two-days of quality racing action.

The final day will be dedicated to Warm Up sessions before the WorldSSP Race starts at 19:15 and the WorldSBK Race 2 is at 21:00.