The Peninsula
Local focus, Global vision





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MoPH signs pacts for Health Program in Workplace

FAZEENA SALEEM
THE PENINSULA

As part of its ongoing efforts to reduce non-communicable diseases in the country, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has partnered with two private organisations on promoting healthy living among the employees.

MoPH signed agreements with Qatar Financial Markets Authority and Qatar Gas Transport Company (Nakilat) to implement the 'Health Program in the Workplace,' initiative yesterday.

"Health Program in the Workplace, is in line with achieving the goal of reducing the number of premature deaths (death below 65 years) due to non-communicable diseases. Focus of the program is on how to prevent chronic non-communicable diseases through healthy lifestyle in and out of the workplace, and cessation of tobacco consumption, with increased awareness of how to overcome daily stress," said Dr Sheikh Mohammed bin Al Thani, Director of Public Health at MoPH.

"We are glad to work with companies who are keen on taking care of their employees. They are not just saving them from injuries or trauma but focusing on their lifestyle and reducing the negative impact which non-communicable diseases can make," he added.

Ahmad S Sultan, Director, Public Relations and Communication Department, Qatar Financial Markets Authority; Rashid Hamad Al Marri, Chief Administration Officer, Nakilat, and Dr Khuloud Al Mutawaa, Senior Consultant Community Medicine and Head of Non-Communicable Disease, Communicable Disease Department, MoPH, were also present during the event.

MoPH has been working with different ministries and governmental institutions on the Health Program in the Workplace initiative and the new partnership is the first of its collaboration with private organisations.

The program is in line with achieving the goal of reducing the number of premature deaths (death below 65 years) due to non-communicable diseases. Focus of the program is on how to prevent chronic non-communicable diseases through healthy lifestyle in and out of the workplace and cessation of tobacco consumption, with increased awareness of how to overcome daily stress.

The initiative will be implemented in two phases. In the first phase, employees of Qatar Financial Markets Authority and Qatar Gas Transport Company will be answering a questionnaire which is sent via e-mail and treated confidentially.

Phase II of the program, includes a comprehensive health campaign to detect the risk factors for chronic non-communicable diseases such as diabetes high blood pressure, cholesterol and obesity.

During the campaign, simple measurements such as weight, height, blood pressure, blood glucose and fat level will be measured. A team from the MoPH will visit the institutions and will evaluate the cafeteria, stairs and gym if available.

"The team of the program will submit reports and recommendations on the visit, questionnaire non-communicable diseases. The program is based on an integrated plan that includes needs assessment, a results-based work plan in collaboration with the beneficiary, implementation of the activities and follow-up of evaluation on an ongoing basis," said Dr Al Thani. ➔P3

Deputy Prime Minister meets Jordan's PM



Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of Jordan Dr Omar Al-Razzaz met yesterday with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs H E Dr. Khalid bin Mohamed Al Attiyah. They discussed bilateral relations and means of developing them and the latest regional and international developments. ➔P2

AZF station a leading model for stadium cooling

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation (Kahramaa) announced yesterday that Aspire Zone Foundation (AZF) cooling plant is a leading model for cooling stadiums due to district cooling system technology's ability to cool stadium innovatively and in environmentally friendly way.

Kahramaa added that the system is the most efficient and energy saving system which provides an ideal atmosphere in the stadium by reducing the temperature by 10 degrees Celsius through intelligent air handling and control units.

Kahramaa said the Department of District Cooling Services conducted a field tour of the district cooling station, which is operated by AZF as part of its sustainable development strategy. It currently supplies Khalifa International Stadium, the expansion of the Aspire Academy and AZF's main building with cooling services.

Kahramaa has planned in the future to provide the station with 12 other buildings in the Aspire Zone area, part of the department's mission and its role in monitoring and regulating the work of district t cooling services in the State.

Kahramaa team followed up the operation of Khalifa International Stadium and Aspire Zone area which features a design capacity of 81,600 tonnes of cooling capacity and current operating capacity of 52,200 tonnes of cooling. It is also equipped with state-of-the-art control and control systems that are good for energy efficiency and it is also designed and equipped to use directly treated water.

This increases the sustainability of water resources as Kahramaa is working to strengthen water security in the country by shifting the use of treated wastewater rather than using drinking water in all district cooling stations, which a leading model and living example that AZF for other sports and non sports facilities to follow.

Through regulating and supervising district cooling, Kahramaa aims to provide electricity, drinking water, sustainable water resources, environmental conservation and all new technologies in district cooling services in line with the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030.

QA wins 'Top Employer Brand' Award

THE PENINSULA
DOHA



This award is a testament to our team's innovation towards developing the pool of talent here in Qatar, and is also a significant step towards achieving Qatar's National Vision 2030, which strives to support social development which includes increasing employment and career opportunities for all citizens."

Qatar Airways' recruitment team has been named 'Top Employer Brand' by Bayt.com, at a ceremony that took place earlier this month at the Grand Hyatt Doha Hotel.

The 'Top Employer Brand' award recognises outstanding employers who add exceptional value to the talent market within Qatar. Qatar Airways is the most popular in Qatar on the recruitment website Bayt.com, an endorsement of the hard work that our HR professionals put into the company and the Qatari market.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, Akbar Al Baker, said: "We are very pleased that our outstanding recruitment team has been recognised for their efforts in helping us become the 'Top Employer Brand' by Bayt.com. This award is a testament to our team's innovation towards developing the pool of talent here in Qatar, and is also a significant step toward achieving Qatar's National Vision 2030, which strives to support social development which includes increasing employment and career opportunities for all citizens."

The award builds on recent successes by Qatar Airways Recruitment team in 2018, which also won the 'Best Employer Brand' and 'Best Recruiter' awards in October 2018 at the LinkedIn Talent Awards 2018.

Bayt.com, connects job seekers with employers in the MENA region. Every day, thousands of new job vacancies are listed on the award-winning platform by the region's top employers. With more than 35,200,000 professionals and 40,000 leading organisations using Bayt.com's recruitment platform across all industry categories and career levels, Bayt.com is the single largest marketplace for professionals and companies in the region.

Qatar Airways has received a host of accolades in 2019, including 'World's Top 10 Airline', 'World's Best Business Class', 'Middle East Best Airline', 'Middle East Best Major', 'Middle East Best Business Class', and 'Middle East Best Economy Class' by TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice Airline Awards 2019. Qatar Airways has also been awarded with several PAX International Readership Awards 2019 including 'Best Cabin Interior Passenger Experience'.

Qatar Airways was named 'World's Best Business Class' by the 2018 World Airline Awards, managed by international air transport rating organisation Skytrax. It was also named 'Best Business Class Seat', 'Best Airline in the Middle East', and 'World's Best First Class Airline Lounge'.

Qatar Airways currently operates a modern fleet of more than 250 aircraft via its hub, Hamad International Airport (HIA) to more than 160 destinations worldwide. ➔P3

QFFD provides relief to over 100,000 cyclone victims in Mozambique

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD) announced the provision of an urgent humanitarian assistance to 100,000 victims, in addition to providing direct food assistance to 12,076 residents of the affected area, as part of the State of Qatar's solidarity with the friendly Republic of Mozambique that was devastated by a cyclone.

QFFD, in coordination with the Standing Committee for Rescue, Relief and Humanitarian Assistance, have sent a relief aircraft to the affected areas, to deliver 32 tonnes of relief supplies including medicine, food, baby milk, tents, and other relief materials.

The Fund works also in coordination with the World Food Program (WFP) to deliver food baskets to persons in desperate need in submerged and severely damaged areas, including cereals, pulse food, vegetable oil, soybean meal, ready-to-eat food and high-energy biscuits.

The State of Qatar expressed its deepest condolences over the loss of lives, and express its commitment to stand in solidarity with the Republic of Mozambique to overcome this humanitarian crisis, wishing the People of Mozambique further progress and prosperity.

It is worth mentioning that the tropical cyclone, Idai, hit several provinces and districts in Mozambique, including Sofala, Zambezia, Tete, Nyasa, Manica and Inhambane, causing widespread devastation, killing at least 600 people, and leaving several injured, including people trapped by the cyclone.

The population is suffering also from widespread food shortage and lack of medicines caused by this humanitarian disaster.

OFFICIAL NEWS

Amir condoles with German President and Chancellor

DOHA: Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Thani sent yesterday cables of condolences to President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, and German Chancellor Dr Angela Merkel on the victims of a tourist bus crash in Portuguese island Madeira, wishing the injured a speedy recovery. Prime Minister and Interior Minister H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani sent yesterday a cable of condolences to German Chancellor Dr Angela Merkel on the victims of a tourist bus crash in the Portuguese island Madeira, wishing the injured a speedy recovery. QNA

Amir sends condolences to President and Prime Minister of India

DOHA: Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Thani sent yesterday cables of condolences to the President of the Republic of India, Ram Nath Kovind, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on the victims of rain in three states in northwest of India, wishing the injured a speedy recovery. Prime Minister and Interior Minister H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani also sent a cable of condolences to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the victims of rain in three states in northwest of India, wishing the injured a speedy recovery. QNA

Amir condoles with President and Prime Minister of Pakistan

DOHA: Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Thani sent yesterday cables of condolences to the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Dr Arif Alvi, and Prime Minister Imran Khan on the victims of rain in northwest of Pakistan, wishing the injured a speedy recovery. Prime Minister and Interior Minister H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani also sent yesterday a cable of condolences to Prime Minister Imran Khan, on the victims of rain in Pakistan, wishing the injured a speedy recovery. QNA

Amir congratulates President of Zimbabwe

DOHA: Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Thani and Prime Minister and Interior Minister H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani sent yesterday cables of congratulations to the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Emmerson Mnangagwa, on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. QNA

Qatar condemns Mogadishu explosion

DOHA: The State of Qatar expressed its strong condemnation and denunciation of the car bomb on a main road in the Somali capital Mogadishu, which led to deaths and injuries. In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated the State of Qatar's firm position on rejecting violence, terrorism and criminal acts, whatever the motives and reasons. The statement expressed the condolences of the State of Qatar to the families of the victims, the Government and the people of Somalia, wishing the injured a speed recovery. QNA

Qatar, Jordan discuss enhancing cooperation

QNA
AMMAN

The Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Dr Omar Al Razzaz, met here yesterday with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs H E Dr Khalid bin Mohamed Al Attiyah, during his official visit to Jordan.

During the meeting, they discussed bilateral relations and means of developing them, and enhancing cooperation between the two countries in various fields. The latest regional and international developments were also discussed.

The meeting was attended by the Head of the Authority of Colleges and Institutes, Major General Hamad bin Ahmed Al Nuaimi; the Commander of the Joint Special Forces, Major General Hamad bin Abdullah Al Fetais Al Marri; the Charge d'Affaires at the Embassy of the State of Qatar in Jordan, Abdulaziz Mohammed Al Sada; the Military Attache of the State of Qatar to Jordan, Brigadier General Shafi Mohammed Al Shafi, and a number of ranking officers at the Qatari Armed Forces. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs also visited the National Center for Security and Crises Management in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, during his official visit to the Kingdom. The visit aims to identify the Jordanian experience in crisis management and exchange expertise in this field between the two countries.

The Deputy Prime Minister was briefed on the role of the centre in managing crises, its future vision and the strategic plans on which it operates.



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs H E Dr Khalid bin Mohamed Al Attiyah at the National Center for Security and Crises Management in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, during his official visit to the Kingdom, yesterday.

MIA and NMoQ welcome Princess Dana Firas





Princess Dana Firas on a tour around the museums' facilities and immersive galleries.

QNA
DOHA

Princess Dana Firas, Unesco Global Ambassador and President of Petra National Trust, visited the National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ) and Museum of Islamic Art (MIA), for a tour of the museums' facilities and immersive galleries.

During her visit at the National Museum of Qatar, Princess Dana was welcomed by the Director of the National Museum of Qatar, Sheikha Amna Al Thani, who introduced her to the museum's collection.

Princess Dana toured different galleries of the museum that display various stages of the geological formation of the Qatar Peninsula and its natural surroundings, petroglyphs and monuments in the archaeological sites, and the lives of the people of Qatar on land and coasts, as well as the digital gallery.

Meanwhile at the Museum of Islamic Art, Princess Dana was briefed by the museum's Director Dr Julia Gonnella on 'Syria Matters' expo, and toured the various sections of the museum and its various wings. She toured the museum's collection which embraces masterpieces of Islamic art, including metal, wooden, porcelain, jewellery, textiles and glass. She also saw artefacts collected from three continents dating back to 14 centuries. Princess Dana received a brief about the MIA, its establishment phases, its role in spreading science and culture and encouraging creativity and communication with the cultures and arts of the world.

Italian Vice-Minister highlights international development cooperation challenges

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

Emanuela Claudia Del Re, Italian Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation spoke about current and future challenges of international development cooperation, highlighting her vision for "shared development."

She was speaking before students, faculty, staff, members of the Education City community and professionals working in international development during a talk on "Development Cooperation: The Italian Approach" hosted by Education Above All Foundation (EAA) and Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q) and organized in cooperation with the Italian Embassy in Doha.

Our goal, she said, is to create a two-way donor-beneficiary relationship instead of a one-way project, and build with our partners a privileged relationship of shared values which can generate mutual benefits and long-term structural solutions.

She shared Italy's best practices and talked about the reform of the Italian system of development cooperation which enabled a more effective and integrated governance structure, including a new Italian Agency for Development Cooperation as well as more consistency in implementation. Del Re also elaborated on the pressing challenge of conflicts and migration, and on the positive role of diaspora communities in bridging countries of origin and countries of residence. She also called for a greater involvement of the private sector in development cooperation strategies and programs, praising the leverage of the private sector for social and economic inclusion.

On specific thematic priorities, she said: "Italy considers education to be one of the principal sustainable development goals of the UN 2030 Agenda and looks forward to further develop partnerships in this field with Qatar".

Remarking on the importance of promoting interaction between students and representatives of government and policy makers, Dr Ahned Dallal, GU-Q Dean, commented: "Our students go on to be future leaders and diplomats, and learning how to be fair, thoughtful, and innovative in their future roles requires seeing first-hand how leaders behave, present their ideas, garner support, and encounter challenges, and we are pleased to give them the opportunity to engage with world leaders and diplomats such as Vice-Minister Del Re."

Temporary diversion at Hamad Port Interchange

THE PENINSULA/DOHA

The Public Works Authority, 'Ashghal', announced yesterday the closure of the southbound Collector/Distributor Road at Hamad Port Interchange exit loop towards Mesaieed, starting from today until June 7, to enable the completion of permanent road works around Hamad Port Interchange.

During this traffic change which is designed in coordination with the General Directorate of Traffic, road users heading towards Mesaieed through Hamad Port Interchange will be diverted to Umm Al Houl Interchange and will have to follow directions according to their destination.

Road users coming from Al Majd Road and heading towards Mesaieed will be required to use the first exit loop to get onto Mesaieed Road heading northbound towards Al Wakra, they will be required to travel for 3 km until reaching Umm Al Houl Interchange. At Umm Al Houl Interchange road users can take the first right exit and continue straight towards the northern entrance of Hamad Port, where they can do a U-turn and head back towards Umm Al Houl Interchange and use the exit loop onto Mesaieed Road heading southbound towards Mesaieed.



The Public Works Authority will install road signs advising motorists of the closure and requests all road users to abide by the 80kph speed limit and follow the road signs to ensure their safety.

AMU Alumni Association to hold free medical camp

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

The AMU Alumni Association Qatar (AMUAAQ), alumni of Aligarh Muslim University in Qatar, will organise a free medical camp in association with IMARA Medical Centre Qatar at Imara Medical Centre, opposite Grand Mall, in Asian Town today from 7:30am to 1pm.

The camp will offer consultations in general physician, family medicine, gynaecology, paediatric, cardiology, radiology, oral hygiene, dental check-up, dietetic, blood pressure, blood sugar, BMI, cupping therapy (Hijama) and physiotherapy by the team of dedicated doctors and medical field professionals.

The camp will also create awareness about organ donation among the participants.

The camp is expected to benefit nearly 500 people including families and workers from various locations and companies in Doha, Al Wakra, Al Khor and Industrial Area. Medical Team Help Desk and volunteers from community organisations will also be at the camp to address the concerns and queries of expatriates.

According to AMUAAQ President Jawed Ahmad, Qatar's elite state medical institutions like Sidra Medicine, Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) and prominent private hospitals will offer their services at the camp including with AMU Alumni Doctors from mentioned organisations.

The Ambassador of India, P Kumaran, will inaugurate the camp. On spot registrations will be followed for those visiting the camp on the day.

QU holds National Identity Conference 2019

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

Qatar University (QU), represented by its Social and Economic Survery Research Institute (SESRI), organised the National Identity Conference, which discussed both national identity and the role of education in promoting national identity in Qatar.

The event was attended by Minister of State H E Dr Hamad bin Abdulaziz Al Kawari; the Chairman of the Planning and Statistics Authority, H E Dr Saleh bin Mohammed Al Nabit; Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education Dr Ibrahim bin Saleh bin Khalifa Al Nuaimi; President of QU Dr Hassan Al Derham; and Director of QU's SESRI Dr Hassan Abdulrahim Yousef Al Sayed, as well as a number of researchers from QU, students, faculty, government agencies and other interested participants.

Dr Al Kawari spoke at the event and discussed the importance of identity in determining the role of each individual person. He says identity is a modern concept and involves a system of cultural values shared by a group of people and a sign of their affiliation with each other. This also includes language as an essential vessel to preserve heritage.

Dr Al Nuaimi spoke about the role identity plays in safeguarding the conscience of the nation. He said various ministries and institutions in the State of Qatar work hard to cultivate and promote intrinsic values.

In his welcoming address Dr Al Derham said: "I am pleased to launch this National Identity Conference in Qatar University, which is organized by SESRI, one of the leading research centers in QU. The topic of the conference is a pivotal issue as national identity is the basis for societies today, where it sets the nation apart in as a cultural, social and political 'code' or 'cultural imprint'."



Minister of State H E Dr Hamad bin Abdulaziz Al Kawari; the Chairman of the Planning and Statistics Authority, H E Dr Saleh bin Mohammed Al Nabit; Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Dr Ibrahim bin Saleh bin Khalifa Al Nuaimi; President of QU Dr Hassan Al Derham and other dignitaries during the event.

The conference comes one decade after the establishment of the SESRI research institute in QU. The institute has conducted more than 100 survey projects that tackle different aspects, including economic, social, health, education and sports.

Dr Al Sayed spoke about the importance of the National Identity Conference in identifying what makes up the Qatari national identity in order to support decision makers when designing national policies related to identity.



MoPH signs pacts for Health Program in Workplace

FROM LEFT: Ahmad S Sultan, Director, Public Relations and Communication Department, Qatar Financial Markets Authority; Dr Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad Al Thani, Director of the Public Health Department, Ministry of Public Health; Rashid Hamad Al Marri, Chief Administration Officer, Nakilat; and Dr Khuloud Al Mutawaa, Senior Consultant of Community Medicine and Head of Non-Communicable Disease, Communicable Disease Department, MoPH; addressing the media prior to the MoU signing held at the Ministry in Doha yesterday. PIC: SALIM MATRAMKOT/THE PENINSULA



QA wins 'Top Employer Brand' Award

Qatar Airways recruitment team receiving the award. Qatar Airways' recruitment team has been named 'Top Employer Brand' by Bayt.com, at a ceremony that took place earlier this month at the Grand Hyatt Doha Hotel.

Embassy of India advises parents to stop waiting further for afternoon shift

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

The Embassy of India has advised Indian parents not to wait further for admission of their children in afternoon shifts in Indian schools.

"It is unlikely that approval will be accorded by the concerned authorities, for Indian schools in Qatar to start afternoon shifts," the Embassy tweeted yesterday. "Please make alternative arrangements and do not continue to wait, in the hope that it will be approved," it said.

Some Indian schools which received the go-ahead from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to start the second shift had started registration of the admission in afternoon shift for the academic year 2019-20 but after a while they put the admission procedure on hold asking the parents to wait for the final decision from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

By the end of February, The MES Indian School, which was one of the four to receive the go-ahead to start the second shift, posted on its social media platform that they had suspended the admission to the evening (second) shift and advised the parents to wait for further instructions from the ministry.

The Ideal Indian school had also posted on their official website that the "evening shift is on hold until further confirmation from the Ministry of Education. Registration and admission tests are being cancelled."

According to parents, the schools returned the registration fees for admission for afternoon shifts.

Arrangements are under way to welcome Qatar's Deputy PM and FM, says Sudan

QNA
KHARTOUM

The Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs denied yesterday reports circulated by a satellite TV channel claiming that Sudan refused to receive a Qatari delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokesman, Ambassador Babiker Al Siddiq, told Sudan News Agency that arrangements are under way for the visit of the high-ranking Qatari delegation to Khartoum.

Qatar Airways Holidays offers packages for CONMEBOL Copa América Brasil 2019

THE PENINSULA
DOHA



Qatar Airways Holidays, the leisure division of Qatar Airways Group, is offering exclusive travel packages for the CONMEBOL Copa América Brasil 2019, giving fans the chance to follow the Qatar National Football Team to Brazil this summer.

Qatar Airways Holidays is offering exclusive travel packages until April 29, which include return flights to São Paulo with Qatar Airways, domestic flights within Brazil, hotel accommodation and official match tickets to the CONMEBOL Copa América Brasil 2019 that will take place from June 14, to July 7 2019 in Brazil.

Qatar Airways Senior Vice President Marketing and Corporate Communications, Salam Al Shawa, said: "Qatar Airways is delighted to provide exclusive travel packages for the CONMEBOL Copa América Brasil 2019. Nothing compares to watching a thrilling match live, and Qatar Airways Holidays' travel packages will bring football fans to the heart of the action in Brazil, enabling football fans to cheer on the Qatar national team in person.

"As an airline, we believe in the power of sports to bring people together, and we look forward to providing our passengers with the ultimate CONMEBOL experience, from the moment they start their journey with us to the final match of the tournament in Brazil."

Members of Qatar Airways' frequent flyer programme, Privilege Club, holding Platinum, Gold or Silver status can also enjoy an exclusive 5 percent discount on all CONMEBOL Copa America packages. Privilege Club members can enjoy this discount when they quote their membership number at the time of booking for the discount to be applied.

Football fans can show their support for Qatar's national football team by selecting a package that includes one or all three group games. From the opening game of the tournament to Qatar's Group matches, these exclusive travel packages can be booked by calling +974 4423 7938 or by visiting the Qatar Airways Holidays shop.

Qatar Airways Holidays provides a comprehensive range of travel packages that enable passengers to choose from an extensive range of dates, destinations and matches, offering the best possible mix of football and travel for an unforgettable experience. Customers are encouraged to visit the platform: www.qatarairwaysholidays.com/FollowQatarTeam for more information and to download the full Copa America Travel Packages Brochure that provides details on all travel packages, prices and inclusions for a seamless experience. Only a limited number of travel packages will be available for purchase on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Qatar Airways is proud to sponsor premier sporting clubs around the world and is the official airline sponsor of the Copa CONMEBOL Libertadores, Copa CONMEBOL Sudamericana and the CONMEBOL Recopa. The multi-year agreement will provide Qatar Airways with maximum exposure in South America, while further strengthening the airline's global sponsorship portfolio.

IBPC to hold Vibrant Goa 2019 promotion event

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

In order to spread awareness about the upcoming Vibrant Goa Global Expo and Summit (VGGES) 2019 scheduled to be held in Goa from October 17 to 19, a promotion event titled "Vibrant Goa 2019" will be held in Doha on April 23, 2019.

P Kumaran, the Ambassador of India to the State of Qatar, will be the Chief Guest on this occasion. Vibrant Goa Foundation in partnership with Global Network and in association with Goa Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Goa State Industries Association and Goa Technology Association will organize the event in Doha in collaboration with the Indian Business & Professionals' Council (IBPC) Qatar.

The event will highlight the salient features of Goa in key areas such as innovation, sustainability, industries, MSMEs, technology, youth, skill development and knowledge sharing and networking. The VGGES 2019 will offer an ideal platform to meet, interact, network and discuss business proposition for importers, exporters, investors, customers and experts.

The knowledge summit will be organised concurrently with the Expo with the objective to bridge the gap between Goan industries and other national as well as international players.

Real estate trading volume exceeds QR1.8bn in a week

QNA / DOHA

The trading volume of registered real estates between March 3 to March 7 at the Ministry of Justice's real estate registration department stood at QR1.8bn. The department's weekly report said that the trading included empty lands, residential units, residential buildings, residential complexes, multipurpose buildings and multipurpose empty lands.

Most of the trading took place in Al Rayyan, Doha, Al Daayen, Al Da'ayen, Umm Salal, Al Wakra, Al Khor and Al Thakhira. The trading volume of registered real estates between March 31 to April 4 was QR333.48m.

Sudan arrests Bashir's brothers

"The arrests are ongoing of the ousted regime's figures in addition to those who are suspected of corruption," Military council spokesman General Shams Eddin Kabashi said, adding that authorities are looking for a number of wanted fugitives. He said the detainees will be held in prisons in Khartoum and other cities.

AP
KHARTOUM

Protesters in Sudan called yesterday for new street demonstrations to pressure the ruling military council to speed up the transition of power to a civilian government as the new rulers announced the arrests of former president Omar Hassan Al Bashir's two brothers on corruption charges.

Military council spokesman General Shams Eddin Kabashi was quoted by the official *Suna* news agency as saying that Abdullah and Abbas Al Bashir were taken into custody, without providing additional details or saying when it happened. The arrests were part of a broad sweep against officials and supporters of the former government.

The Sudanese military ousted Omar Al Bashir last week, after four months of street protests against his 30-year rule marred by conflict, civil war and corruption.

"The arrests are ongoing of the ousted regime's figures in addition to those who are suspected of corruption," Kabashi said, adding that authorities are looking for a number of wanted fugitives. He said the detainees will be held in prisons in Khartoum and other cities.

The English-language Sudan Tribune said the brothers and al-Bashir's wife are suspected of having accumulated illegal wealth through the years of al-Bashir's rule.

The brothers' detention was likely another concession by the military to the protesters, who have demanded that all key figures and ranking officials from the former president's circle be arrested. A number of Al Bashir's close associates and former government officials have already been taken into custody since the military overthrew al-Bashir last Thursday. A number of them are also wanted by the International Criminal Court.

The military council that now runs the country said the former president was transferredon Tuesday to Koper Prison in the capital, Khartoum, a facility notorious for holding political prisoners under Al Bashir.



Protesters shouting slogans while carrying a Sudanese military officer outside the Army Complex in the capital Khartoum, yesterday.

Meanwhile, the Sudanese Professionals Association, which has been spearheading anti-government street protests since mid-December, released on Wednesday together with several opposition groups a proposed blueprint for the transfer of power from the military to a civilian government.

Though the street protesters were overjoyed at al-Bashir's ouster, they were not happy with the military taking over and have demanded a swift handover of power to civilian rule. The military council has said it plans to rule for a maximum of two years as the country prepares for new elections.

The protesters fear the army, dominated by Al Bashir appointees, will cling to power or select one of its own to succeed him. They have vowed to continue to protest, focusing on a sit-in outside the military headquarters in Khartoum, until the transfer of power is complete. The two-page blueprint posted online envisages a civilian presidential council made up of "revolutionary figures" and a defense minister, the only representative from the military.

It also proposes the formation of a Cabinet of technocrats to run daily affairs of the state and a legislative council to draft laws and oversee the Cabinet until a new constitution is written.

Pro-Haftar forces lose strategic airport

AGENCIES
TRIPOLI

Libya's UN-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA) yesterday claimed to have wrested the strategic Tamanhint airbase from forces loyal to renegade military commander Khalifa Haftar.

On its official Facebook page, the GNA's Southern Protection Force said it had taken control of the airbase, which is located some 30km east of the city of Sabha.

The reported gain comes amid a counteroffensive by pro-GNA forces aimed at stopping an ongoing campaign by Haftar to capture Tripoli, where the GNA is headquartered.

Following two weeks of intermittent fighting on the capital's outskirts that have left scores dead, Haftar's forces — affiliated with a rival government based in eastern Libya— have so far failed to capture the capital.

Libya has remained beset by turmoil since long-serving leader Muammar Gaddafi was ousted and killed in a bloody Nato-backed uprising in 2011.

Since then, the country has seen the emergence of two rival seats of power: one in eastern Libya, to which Haftar is affiliated, and another in Tripoli, which enjoys UN recognition.

Meanwhile, the UN's Libya envoy warned of "a widening conflagration" in the North African country, saying international divisions had encouraged strongman Khalifa Haftar to launch his assault on Tripoli.

But for now, Ghassan Salame said in an exclusive interview, there was "deadlock" in fighting south of the capital between Haftar's self-styled Libyan National Army (LNA) and the internationally recognised government. "After the very first successes of the Libyan National Army two weeks ago, we are witnessing a military deadlock," he said.

Fighting broke out on April 4 when Haftar and his LNA, based in the country's east, launched an offensive to take Tripoli, the western seat of the UN-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA).



The members of Libyan internationally-recognised government forces are seen in Al Swani area in Tripoli, Libya, yesterday.

Rouhani calls on Mideast states to 'drive back Zionism'

AFP/TEHRAN

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani called on Middle East states to "drive back Zionism", in an Army Day tirade against the Islamic republic's archfoe Israel.

Speaking flanked by top generals before troops began their annual march-past, Rouhani also sought to reassure the region that the weaponry on display was for defensive purposes and not a threat.

"The region's nations have lived alongside each other for centuries and never had a problem... If there is a problem, it is caused by others," he said in the speech broadcast live on state television.

"Let us stand together, be together and rid the region of the aggressor's presence."

Rouhani assured neighbouring countries that Iran's armed forces are "never against you or your national interests" but are "standing against the aggressors."

"The power of our armed forces is the power of the region's countries, the Islamic world." he said. "If we have a problem in the region today, its roots are either with Zionism or America's arrogance."

Rouhani called on Muslim nations to band together and "restore the historical right of the nation of Palestine," saying that "Zionism... has been committing crimes in the region for the past 70 years", "The final victory will surely be with the righteous," he said.

195,000 suspected cholera cases in Yemen since Jan

ANATOLIA/SANA'A

At least 195,000 suspected cases of cholera have been registered in Yemen since January 1 of this year, while more than 3,000 people have died of the disease since 2016, according to an international aid NGO.

"Some 195,000 people are suspected to have contracted the disease so far this year, of whom more than 38,000 are in districts that are hard for aid agencies to reach," Oxfam, a UK-based umbrella of charity organizations, said in a statement. "More than 3,000 people have died since the outbreak began in 2016," it added.

The NGO went on to assert that, at its height in June 2017, "7,000 suspected cases were being identified every day with the outbreak being described by the World Health Organization as the worst in human history". Oxfam Yemen Country Director Muhsin Siddiquey is quoted as saying: "The international community urgently needs to ensure safe, secure and unimpeded access to humanitarian aid for all people in need across the country."

Yemen has been wracked by violence since 2014 when Houthi rebels overran much of the country, including capital Sana'a. The crisis escalated in 2015 when a Saudi-led military coalition launched a devastating air campaign in Yemen with the ostensible aim of rolling back Houthi gains.

Nigerian court finds top judge guilty of graft

AFP/ABUJA

An ethics court found Nigeria's former chief justice guilty of corruption yesterday and banned him from office for 10 years in a case the opposition said was politically motivated.

Walter Onnoghen was suspended from his post as the country's top judge by President Muhammadu Buhari just weeks before elections in February, prompting outrage and claims Buhari was trying to manipulate the judiciary.

A request to remove the chief justice normally has to be approved with a two-thirds majority of the Senate, but the head of state did not follow that process. Onnoghen was tried for allegedly failing to divulge cash in five foreign bank accounts in contravention of rules governing the declaration of assets by public officials. "The defendant has clearly contravened the Code of Conduct for Public Officers, and he is hereby convicted," said Danladi Umar, chairman of the country's ethics court, the Code of Conduct Tribunal, which rules on cases involving officials.

UN envoy: Troop withdrawal in Hodeidah within weeks

REUTERS
DUBAI

Yemen's warring parties could start withdrawing forces from the main port city of Hodeidah within weeks, a move needed to pave the way for political negotiations to end the four-year war, the UN special envoy said yesterday.

Martin Griffiths said he had received on Sunday the formal acceptance of the Saudi-backed government and the Iran-aligned Houthi group to implement a first phase of troop redeployments, while discussions were still under way for the second phase. The United Nations has struggled to implement a pact agreed at talks last December in Sweden, the first major breakthrough in peace efforts to end the war that has killed tens of thousands and pushed Yemen to the brink of famine.

"The two parties agreed formally to the concept of operations for phase one. What we are doing now is... moving on as planned from there to agree on phase two," Griffiths said in a telephone interview without elaborating, adding that talks would "intensify" in coming days. "So we don't have an exact date at the moment for the beginning of this physical redeployment," he said. "It's got to be weeks... hopefully few weeks."

Sources have told Reuters the first phase would see the Houthis leave the city's ports and pro-government forces leave some areas on the city's outskirts. In the second phase, both sides would pull troops to 18 km from the city and heavy weapons 30 km away.

The Hodeidah deal was a trust building step aimed at averting a full-scale assault on Hodeidah by the Saudi-led coalition trying to restore the internationally recognised government of Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, and paving the way for political talks to set up a transitional government.

Danish general Michael Lollesgaard, head of the UN observer team in Hodeidah, chairs a Redeployment Coordination Committee (RCC) tasked with hammering out details not spelled out in the pact.

A ceasefire in Houthi-held Hodeidah has largely held but violence has escalated elsewhere in the country.

The troop withdrawal was due to have been completed by Jan. 7 but stalled over disagreement on who would control the Red Sea port city.

Several thousand foreign children languish in Syria camp: UN

REUTERS
GENEVA

Around 2,500 foreign children are stuck in a guarded section of a Syrian camp after fleeing Islamic State's last stronghold, a senior United Nations official said yesterday, urging governments not to abandon them.

The children's plight at the Al Hol camp in northeast Syria is a dilemma for nations who saw citizens leave and fight for the jihadist movement in Syria and Iraq only to find themselves in limbo after the fall of their self-proclaimed "caliphate."

Panos Moumtzis, UN humanitarian coordinator for the Syria crisis, said home nations must take responsibility for repatriating their citizens, prosecuting where necessary.

"Really nobody should be rendered stateless and every effort should be made to find a solution for these people," he told a Geneva news briefing.

The children are among 10,000 non-Syrian and non-Iraqi nationals kept in a "restricted" section of the sprawling, Kurdish-run camp where 75,000 people live in total. Some 211 children were among at least 260 people who died of malnutrition or disease en route to the camp since December, the latest UN figures show. Britain revoked the citizenship of a teenager who left at 15 to join IS in Syria, while Austria and Switzerland have said they will not help bring home adults who joined IS.

But Moumtzis said states had a legal responsibility, especially for children, many of whom were born in IS camps. "Children should be treated first and foremost as victims" and "irrespective of family affiliation," he said.

The situation is further complicated because most states lack the capacity to offer consular services or access their nationals in the area. "There has to be a concerted effort, this is not about blaming or 'naming and shaming', but it's really about being practical and finding a way forward that would find a solution," the UN official said.

Quranic meaning of patience

MANSOOR ALAM

The Quran says to believers They believe in the unseen. "Who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them" (2:3), This belief in the unseen is for every effort. Obviously, the result of any effort does not appear right away. It takes time. One has to toil and struggle persistently. The result does appear – but only after some time.

The people who have faith in the efficacy of this law — Allah's Law of Requital — continue to work hard and continue to believe that the results will appear in due course. They do not get tired. They neither get frustrated nor get disappointed nor resign in the middle of their effort. This is what the Quran has called Sabr or patience. "Except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience" (103:3).

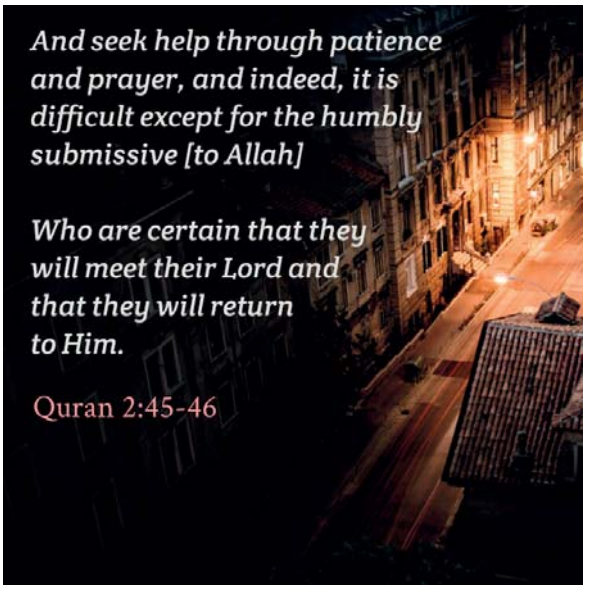
The Quranic Sabr does not mean that when nothing works; when frustration sets in; when people get disappointed; and when they think that nothing is happening then they are told: So, dear brothers and sisters! Do Sabr. What can be done?! Whatever was written in the kismet will happen anyway! Nothing can be done now!! This is not the right meaning of Sabr.

But in the Quran Sabr is something what a farmer goes through day in and day out for months at a time with perseverance and steadfastness. This whole process is what is defined as Sabr according to the Quran and the one who perseveres through this process is called Saabir. Quran said that this faith in the unseen — (Bil Ghaib) requires Sabr; that believers must have full faith and conviction in this whole process of Sabr. When the Quran says (6:21) – But verily the wrong-doers never shall prosper. This means oppressors and tyrants won't flourish; that they will eventually fail. This is the Law of Requital that the Quran proclaims. And this law is unchangeable (6:34).

Tyrants and oppressors must remember that this law is bound to produce its consequence, no matter what. But how it will happen? It will happen according to this Quranic law of requital that what you sow is what you reap; that tyrants will fail; and that if others join hands with tyrants then the speed of failure will increase. And it must be borne in mind with 100 percent surety that oppression is bound to fail ultimately. In any case, this is the belief (in the unseen results of his actions) that keeps a farmer working hard; and he knows that each seed when nourished properly and taken care of will produce hundreds of grains.

No action produces quick result

Whatever laws the Quran has given regarding humans, they also have this characteristic that they do not produce results quickly. The complaints we keep hearing are: that Allah is just; that He does justice to everyone; that He won't let tyrants succeed. But we observe daily that tyrants flourish; that dishonest keep on piling wealth upon wealth; that no business succeeds if done honestly. Then what is this?! Why the laws of Allah are not working? Actually, they are working but we do not have faith in them. We are not like the farmer who works hard and perseveres months after months, follows the laws of farming; then only he gets the fruits of his labor after a long time. We, on the other hand, sit at home and say: Since Allah's law is that from one seed will grow hundreds of grains then the day when hundreds of grains grow we will go and get them. This is not (2:3) – the faith in the unseen. According to the Quran the faith in the unseen means: that every worker; every labourer; every technician who has the conviction that whatever I am working on —maybe it may take one month or six months or a year, but one day it will work; that one day the result of the effort will bear fruit for which the worker is persevering day and night even while suffering hardships and hunger. This is the steadfast belief in the mission's objective followed by continuous action and 100 percent conviction in the unchangeable law of requital of the Quran that the result is bound to come out for sure – at the proper time. We have belied this belief. The truth is that people do not have faith in the law of requital. People may say: Allah's law of requital does not work; that we see that dishonest succeed; that dishonest businessmen flourish. When this situation becomes common in society; when fear and anxiety abound – then how would people be motivated to work honestly?!



In the Holy Quran Sabr (patience) is something what a farmer goes through day in and day out for months at a time with perseverance and steadfastness. This whole process is what is defined as Sabr according to the Quran and the one who perseveres through this process is called Saabir.

Fear and Anxiety

The Quran says (67:12), which is normally translated as "those who are afraid of their Lord". What is this "fear" and what is meant by being "afraid of"?

The Quran says that a nation raised on the basis of its laws as well as its followers will have no fear nor suffer from any anxiety (2:112; 2:62; 2:274; 2:277). We, on the hand, right from childhood, sow fear of Allah in the hearts of children. To children then Allah becomes a symbol of fear and trepidation. In fact, humanity gets crushed with fear. There is nothing in this to fear Allah. Whenever, the Quran uses for example: (23:57) then it means: being careful from the adverse consequences of violating the law of requital, being afraid of the consequences that are bound to occur if one does not follow the message of Allah; that when one violates His laws then one will suffer their destructive consequences. This is what is meant by fear. This is a fear of the unseen destructive results of bad actions which do not appear right away.

Period of respite is Allah's mercy

The Quran mentions that those who opposed the Prophet (PBUH) used to taunt him: Why don't you bring the destruction that you keep on warning us about all the time?! On this, Allah told that they do not recognise His mercy; i.e., they do not realise that He does not punish people right away after committing wrong; that there is a period of respite between the wrong action and its consequence. This respite has been bestowed by Him so that people might realise their mistake and correct themselves and thus be saved from destruction.

The Quran says that if you correct yourselves then it is good for you only. The period of respite is also an essential part of the law of requital and, indeed, is a mercy from Allah. Because, if we eat unhealthy food and if we get a disease (e.g. cancer) right away then no one will be saved. In this period of respite, small symptoms appear as warning signs. If we pay attention to these symptoms and are able to see a connection between continuing unhealthy food habit and the symptoms, then due to this period of respite embedded in the process, there is hope; there is possibility for treatment and cure. If, on the other hand, there were immediate punishment for wrong action, then no human being in the world would be saved.

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The two pillars of patience

ASLAM ABDULLAH

In the intricate path of life, when difficulties and hardships confront a person, it is patience that acts as a light for Muslims, that keeps them safe from wandering, and saves them from the muddy mire of disappointment, desperation, and frustration.

Patience is such a basic quality that Muslims require it to shape their life in this world. Only when armed with patience should they attend to work. They should make it a torchlight for guiding their way, else they will suffer defeat in the field of life. They should prepare themselves to tolerate hardships and difficulties, and should not complain unduly. They should not sit idly. They should not run away from responsibilities, whatever they may be. No doubts and misgivings, no hardship or trouble should prompt their intellect to indulge in violence. They should have plenty of self-confidence. They should not be frightened by the dark clouds appearing on the horizon of life; nay, they should be fully sure that these clouds of adversities and hardships will disappear, and the clear and bright atmosphere of success and glory will appear again. Therefore, the demand of wisdom and farsightedness is that its coming should be awaited with patience, peace, and conviction.

Almighty God stresses the point sufficiently that people cannot escape tests and trials, so that they may remain alert and ready at the time when these hardships and difficulties descend on them. They should not be frightened by these tribulations, and need not be disappointed and disheartened: "And verily We shall try you till We know those of you who strive hard (in the cause of Allah) and the steadfast, and till We test your record." (Quran 47: 31)

An Arab poet has echoed the same idea in these words: "We had anticipated the hardships of the night before their coming. So when they descended, there was no addition to our knowledge." Undoubtedly, if people face accidents and debacles with clear sight and full preparation, they will stabilize their conditions and consolidate their positions.

Patience relies on two important realities. The first reality is concerned with the nature of this worldly life. Its details are: Allah has not made this world a house of peace and satisfaction or of rewards and recompense, but He has made it a house of trials. The time that people spend in this world is really a time for unending experience. They come out of one trial in order to undergo another which is harder; that is, people are tested once by one thing and again by its opposite, as iron is first heated in the fire and then plunged into water. Similarly, people are tested by favourable as well as opposing means.

When Allah blessed Prophet Sulaiman (peace and blessings of God be upon him) with a grand and magnificent empire, he knew about these natural laws of the world. He said: "This is of the bounty of my Lord, that He may try me whether I give thanks or am ungrateful. Whoever gives thanks, he only gives thanks for (the good of) his own soul; and whoever is ungrateful (is ungrateful if only to his own soul's hurt). For surely, my Lord is absolute in independence, bountiful." (Quran 16:40)

The causes of trial through sadness and hardship are vague and unfixed. However, we can understand them properly by the example of the soldiers fighting in the battlefield. In the battlefield some groups are made to fight till they have to lose their valuable lives, so that the lives of other groups may be saved. The security of others is dependent on the remaining groups being made to fight in new battles. This strategy is followed for the wider interest of the society and for greater advantages, by the great leadership of the army. In this fighting the individual life of one person has no importance, because the problem is much wider. So it is with luck or fate. People may be put to different kinds of trials, till they fall down defeated, as there is no other way for them, except that they should greet the hardship that has arrived with patience and submission. Since this life is a testing ground, we should strive hard for success in it.

What is the trial or examination of life ? It consists of the hardships and difficulties that confront people, and which open before them the paths of fright, terror, and frustration. Examination comes in the name of plaguing defects that prompt people to be jealous and to nourish rancor against their sincere friend. Examination is the name of the tyranny in which sometimes a nation occupies the place of God and people offer their blood as sacrifice for retrieving their usurped rights.The history of life on this earth from the first day till today is very sorrowful. The right thing is that people should make their own way in this life, though they can be sure that the way to their destination is full of thorns and murk.

The second reality is concerned with the nature and temperament of faith. Faith is the name of the relationship between human beings and their Lord. As in the relationship of people, true friendship and sincerity can only be judged when it is confronted with unfavorable and bitter conditions, when they have to deal with the hardships brought about by the vagaries of time, and when they are surrounded by various problems. At such a time a person's real worth and sincerity are known. Exactly, similar is the case of faith. To find out the truth and sincerity about faith, it is necessary that Muslims be tried. They should be put in the crucible of fire to see whether they come out glowing like gold or whether they will be burnt away with impurities.

"Do people imagine that they will be left (at ease), because they say We believe and will not be tested with affliction? Verily, We tested those who were before you. Thus, Allah knows those who are sincere and knows those who feign." (Quran 29:2-3)

Undoubtedly, Allah's knowledge covers all manifest and concealed matters, and from this examination there will be no addition to His knowledge, because He knows all the conditions from the beginning till the end. Divine knowledge cannot be made a basis for human beings' reckoning. Their reckoning will be on the basis of their own personal deeds. If some criminals deny their crimes, then on the day of judgment sufficient proof can only be brought against them by God's tribunal in which peoples' own body may give evidence against them.

About such people the Quran has this to say: "And on the day We gather them together, We shall say to those who ascribed partners (to Allah), 'Where are (now) those partners of your make believe?'Then they will have no contention except that they will say "By Allah, our Lord, we never were idolaters." See how they lie against themselves, and (how) the thing which they devised has failed them. "(Quran 6:22-24)

How can the reckoning of such criminals be taken in the light of divine knowledge? Their justifiable retribution will be proper only when all their misdeeds are placed before them. Their efforts and striving to create corruption and mischief among others and all their misdeeds will be reviewed before them.

On these two bases the foundation of patience has been set. And for this reason religion demands it, but those who shut their eyes from reality by force of their nature are dumfounded when they have to face hardships, and their hands and feet become inactive when they have to fight difficulties. Their rashness dislike waiting and patience, and they are unable to tolerate them. Therefore, when anything untoward happens, or they have to suffer some kind of failure, or when they meet with an accident, the earth with all its great vastness becomes narrow for them, and the conditions become exasperating. They want to come out of these conditions in the twinkling of an eye, but it is obvious that in this effort they will not be successful, for it is against the temperament of the world and religion. It is proper for a Muslim to learn to be patient, to wait, and to wait long.

"Man is made of haste. I shall show you my signs, but ask Me not to hasten." (Quran 21:37)

Excerpted from the book "Morals and Manners: An Islamic Perspective" by the author.

Allah has not made this world a house of peace and satisfaction or of rewards and recompense, but He has made it a house of trials. The time that people spend in this world is really a time for unending experience. They come out of one trial in order to undergo another which is harder; that is, people are tested once by one thing and again by its opposite, as iron is first heated in the fire and then plunged into water. Similarly, people are tested by favourable as well as opposing means.

Millions vote in 2nd round of LS polls

IANS
NEW DELHI

Millions voted across 95 Lok Sabha seats in 12 states and the Union Territory of Puducherry yesterday in the second phase of the staggered battle for a new Parliament, marred by stray violence in West Bengal and Jammu and Kashmir and EVM glitches in seven states.

An electorate of 15.7 crore voted to elect 95 Lok Sabha members out of the 1,606 contestants yesterday.

Except for some incidents of clashes between stone pelters and security forces, polling ended peacefully in the Srinagar Lok Sabha seat yesterday while eliciting overwhelming voter turnout in the Udhampur constituency.

Clashes broke out between security forces and stone pelters who tried to disrupt the voting process in Batmaloo area of Srinagar city, Pandach area of Ganderbal district and at four other places in Badgam district in the Srinagar seat, officials said.

One civilian and four policemen, including two officers, were injured in these clashes but the security forces said they exercised maximum restraint to ensure that the violence did not overshadow the voting in Srinagar.

Except for some incidents of clashes between stone pelters and security forces, polling ended peacefully in the Srinagar. In all other places it was reportedly peaceful although complaints of glitches in electronic voting machines came from several states.

While the turnout in Srinagar was nearly 15 percent, in Udhampur, over 65 percent people cast their votes, including a newly-married couple who turned up in their wedding finery.

Polling in all other places was reportedly peaceful although complaints of glitches in electronic voting machines (EVMs) came from several states, briefly halting the electoral process.

Over 76 percent of the electorate cast their votes in the three northern West Bengal constituencies in the second phase of the Lok Sabha elections yesterday, amid several incidents of violence including an attack on CPI-M MP and candidate Mohammad Salim in Raniganj and the smashing of an EVM in a clash inside a polling booth in Darjeeling.

Unfazed by the summer heat and dust, voters turned out in large numbers in Karnataka. There was over 60 percent polling in 14 of the state's 28 parliamentary constituencies, that went to polls in the first phase with the main fight between the ruling Congress-JD-S alliance and the BJP.

Over 63 percent polling was recorded in Tamil Nadu where people elected 38 of 39 Lok Sabha members — voting in Vellore has been postponed —and 18 members to the state Assembly in by-polls.

After initial dull moments, the voting picked up dramatically in Odisha, which is electing five Lok Sabha and 35 Assembly members, to reach around 64 per cent.

In Bihar, over 62 percent voting was reported in five of 40 Lok Sabha seats that went to polls in the phase. According to officials, polling was peaceful, save a reported incident of a paramilitary trooper at a polling booth opening fire and clashes between supporters of different parties.

People in about a dozen villages in all five constituencies boycotted the elections to protest against lack of development.

Uttar Pradesh's voting percentage was 62.3 percent in all eight constituencies: Mathura, Hathras, Amroha, Agra, Fatehpur-Sikri, Aligarh, Nagina, Bulandshahr.

After a dull start, voting zoomed in Maharashtra which will elect 10 of the 48 Lok Sabha members yesterday to around 57 percent though it was expected to go up and voters were still in queues.

A voter smashed the EVM while casting his vote in the state's Akola Lok Sabha constituency.

The voter, Shrikrishna Ghyare, was taken into custody. The motive behind the action was not immediately known, police said.

On the fate of the votes already cast, the EC official explained that Ghyare had only broken the ballotting unit and the control unit or the VVPAT, placed a foot away with the election officials were safe.

In Chhattisgarh, Mahasamund, Rajnandgaon and Kanker, which went to polls on Thursday, recorded nearly 71 percent turnout.



Voters queueing up to cast their votes at a polling station in Siliguri, West Bengal, yesterday.

Bangladeshi film star sorry after Indian expulsion

AFP
DHAKA

A Bangladeshi film star has apologised after he was expelled from India for campaigning in national elections, as Indian authorities said a second Bangladesh actor was being deported for the same reason.

Ferdous Ahmad has starred in more than 200 films, and was kicked out of India on Tuesday after campaigning for West Bengal state Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, a rival of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party.

Ferdous, 45, said he respects Indian law and that foreigners should not take part in an election in another country.

"I apologise for my inadvertent mistake. I hope everyone concerned will forgive me," Ferdous said in the statement sent to local media.

Indian authorities said yesterday that a second Bangladeshi actor, Ghazi Abdul Noor, was asked to leave the country after attending a political rally of a member of the opposition Congress party in West Bengal state.

Noor's visa was also out-of-date, local officials said. The actor is a household name in West Bengal for his role in a popular television series.

Bangladesh's foreign minister accused India of overreacting by deporting him. "What he (Ferdous) has done is regrettable," said Bangladesh Foreign Minister A K Abdul Momen.

"At the same time, the way the Indians are strongly reacting to it, I feel they are overreacting," the minister told the *Dhaka Tribune* newspaper.

Azad helps unite Haryana Congress leaders

IANS
CHANDIGARH

An initiative by the Congress party in-charge for Haryana, Ghulam Nabi Azad, backed by a firm message from the high command to the highly factionalised party leadership in Haryana, has brought the warring Congress leaders together — at least for the ongoing Lok Sabha elections.

With the Congress facing an uphill task of trying to recover lost ground from the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the 'unity' of the Congress leaders is being seen as the only hope for the party as all the 10 Lok Sabha seats in Haryana go to the polls on May 12.

Azad, a former Union Health Minister and former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, had his task cut out after he was named the Congress in-charge for Haryana as late as January this year. He took over from another senior Congress leader, Kamal Nath, who is currently the Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister.

With just three months to go for the Lok Sabha polls and less than 10 months for the assembly elections in Haryana, Azad hit the ground running to ensure that the party presented a picture of unity before taking on other political parties.

Last month, Azad made all the top leaders from the party come together on a common platform — a bus — for a six-day (March 26-31) whirlwind tour of Haryana called the "Parivartan Yatra".

Former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda, who led the state from 2005 till 2014, and is considered the strongest leader in the party with a pan-Haryana appeal, could be seen sharing his seat on the bus journey with Haryana Congress President and former MP Ashok Tanwar.

Leaders of others factions in the party — Kiran Chaudhary, Kumari Selja, Randeep Singh Surjewala and Ajay Singh Yadav — were also part of the bus tour.

"We have followed the Andhra-Karnataka model in taking all leaders around the state in one bus. The Congress is united in Haryana. We had people waiting eagerly even past midnight. The Yatra got an overwhelming response," Azad said.

As a fallout of the Azad initiative, the leaders of the various factions have stopped working as cross-purposes in the run-up to the elections.

"We will repeat our earlier performance of winning the Lok Sabha elections. The party leadership is united," Hooda told IANS.

One leader missing on the bus tour was former MP Kuldip Bishnoi, the younger son of former Chief Minister Bhajan Lal. Bishnoi, however, had turned up at Congress President Rahul Gandhi's rally in Jagadhri town in Yamunanagar district on March 29, to end speculation about his leaving the Congress fold.

Tanwar said that the unity effort by Azad had "energised" the party leadership and the cadre.



Myanmar ceasefire anniversary celebrations

People watching fireworks during a ceremony in Panghsang to commemorate 30 years of a ceasefire signed with the Myanmar military in the Wa State.

India suspends LoC trade, says being used to fuel terror

IANS
NEW DELHI

India yesterday suspended, with immediate effect, trade across the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir, saying it was being used by unscrupulous and anti-national elements for sneaking in hawala money and weapons from the territory under Pakistani occupation to fuel terrorism and separatism in the country.

The Ministry of Home Affairs said a probe conducted by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) had revealed that some individuals, who have crossed over to Pakistan and joined militant organisations, have opened trading firms there and these were under the control of militant organisations and were engaged in the LoC trade.

Noting that India had already withdrawn the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status to Pakistan after the Pulwama terror attack, it said the latest action has been taken after receipt of inputs that "in order to evade the consequent higher duty, LoC trade is likely to be misused to a much larger extent".

"It has, therefore, been decided by the government to suspend the LoC trade at Salamabad and Chakkan-da-Bagh in Jammu and Kashmir with immediate effect." Meanwhile, "a stricter regulatory and enforcement mechanism is being worked out and will be put in place in consultation with various agencies", it said, adding the issue of reopening of LoC trade will be revisited thereafter.

The government, it said, "has been receiving reports that the cross-LoC trade routes are being misused by the Pakistan-based elements for funnelling illegal weapons, narcotics and fake currency etc".

The LoC trade, meant to facilitate exchange of goods of common use between local populations across the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir, is allowed through two trade facilitation centres located at Salamabad in Baramulla district and Chakkan-da-Bagh in Poonch district.

The trade takes place four days a week and is based on barter system and zero duty basis.

"However, reports have been received that the LoC trade is being misused on very large scale. It has been revealed that the trade has changed its character to mostly third party trade and products from other regions, including foreign countries, are finding their way through this route," the statement said.

"Unscrupulous and anti-national elements are using the route as a conduit for hawala money, drugs and weapons, under the garb of this trade," it added.

The MHA said that during the ongoing investigations of certain cases by NIA, "it has been brought out that a significant number of trading concerns engaged in LoC trade are being operated by persons closely associated with banned terrorist organisations involved in fuelling terrorism/separatism".

Myanmar urged to drop charges against artists

REUTERS
YANGON

Human Rights Watch urged Myanmar yesterday to drop charges against four satirical performers and a filmmaker arrested after criticising the military, as an army spokesman defended "rules and limits" on freedom of expression.

Police arrested four members of the Peacock Generation "thangyat" troupe on Monday after they broadcasted a live show on Facebook during traditional New Year celebrations. Thangyat is a centuries-old tradition of performance that often lampoons ruling powers and social foibles.

"Myanmar's authorities are demonstrating once again their intolerance of criticism, even in satirical form," Linda Lakhdhir, Asia legal adviser at Human Rights Watch, said in a statement.

During their performance, the troupe criticised the military's role in politics, chanting "it's time to say goodbye".

The military ruled Myanmar for nearly 50 years - tolerating little dissent - until democratic reforms began in 2011. The constitution still reserves 25 percent of seats in parliament, and control of several important ministries, for the military.

The troupe members were charged under Section 66D of the Telecommunications Act, which outlaws "defaming, disturbing, causing undue influence or threatening any person using a telecommunications network", and later released on bail.

A military spokesman said authorities planned to bring further charges under Section 505 of the Penal Code, covering public statements, which carries a maximum sentence of two years in prison and does not permit bail.

The arrests follow criticism of authorities over restrictions imposed on thangyat during this year's New Year festivities.

Performers in Yangon, the commercial capital, were required to submit their lyrics to a censorship board, with a spokesman for the ruling National League for Democracy saying the restrictions were "temporary" as the country moved towards democracy.

Members of the Peacock Generation did not submit their lyrics to the board before performing under streetlights on a dusty Yangon road on Monday night.

"In my opinion, the military has taken action against us... because the government didn't take action," said Paing Ye Thu, one of the members of the troupe and a youth leader for the NLD.

Asad Umar quits amid major cabinet reshuffle

REUTERS
ISLAMABAD

After yesterday's shake-up, Abdul Hafeez Shaikh will be the de-facto Finance Minister while Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry has been moved to the Science and Technology Ministry. Brigadier retired Ijaz Ahmed Shah has been appointed Interior Minister, and energy expert Nadeem Babar will lead the Petroleum Ministry.

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan made a sweeping cabinet reshuffle yesterday after only seven months in power and appointed Abdul Hafeez Shaikh as de facto Finance Minister to steer the country through worsening economic turmoil.

Pakistan is on the brink of signing up for it 13th International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout since the late 1980s in a bid to stave off a balance of payments crisis and ease ballooning current account and fiscal deficits.

Imran's government inherited a wobbly economy but the former cricketer has come under intense criticism for failing to fulfil his promises that he would steady the ship and bring prosperity to Pakistan.

Imran late yesterday announced 10 ministerial appointments in a shakeup that included the departure of Finance Minister Asad Umar, who has been a close ally to Imran for many years.

Shaikh, who already served as Finance Minister from 2010-2013 under the opposition Pakistan People's Party when it was in power, has been appointed as "Adviser on Finance" but will be heading the Finance Ministry once again.

In Pakistan it is common for financial experts to be given the title of "adviser", rather than Federal Minister, to head the Finance Ministry when they are not a sitting member of parliament.

Earlier in the day Umar, announcing that he would step down, said Pakistan would still go into an IMF programme but warned his successor that he faces a tough job ahead.

"No one should expect from the new Finance Minister that things could be better in three months' time," Umar told reporters in Islamabad yesterday afternoon.

"The next budget will be a difficult one," he added, referring to annual spending plans for the financial year ending June 2020 due to be announced in May.



Asad Umar speaks to the media during a press conference after stepping down as Finance Minister, in Islamabad, yesterday.

Umar, who had been asked to quit on Wednesday night, said he still strongly believed Imran was the best hope for the country.

Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry has been moved to the Science and Technology Ministry, while retired Brigadier Ijaz Ahmed Shah has been appointed as Interior Minister. Energy expert Nadeem Babar has been appointed to lead the Petroleum Ministry.

Imran was widely expected to turn to a steady hand to replace businessman Umar, who was the former chief executive of Engro, Pakistan's biggest private conglomerate.

Shaikh, a US-educated economist who worked at Harvard University, also spent many years working for the World Bank and had also been the Privatisation Minister during the government of former military dictator General retired Pervez Musharraf.

Umar had been leading negotiations with the IMF but has faced criticism over a worsening economic outlook on his watch, with inflation at a five-year high and the rupee down about 35 percent since December 2017.

The central bank last month cut growth estimates, forecasting the economy to expand 3.5 to 4 percent in the 12 months to the end of June, well short of a government target of 6.2 percent.

14 shot dead in Balochistan

AGENCIES
KARACHI

Gunmen shot dead at least 14 people, including personnel of Pakistan Navy, in the country's southwestern Balochistan Province yesterday morning, officials said.

The gruesome incident - latest in a fresh flare-up of violence - took place on a main highway that connects Pakistan's commercial capital Karachi to southwestern strategic Gwadar port, where unidentified assailants in camouflage uniform intercepted five to six passenger buses, Gwadar's Deputy Commissioner retired Captain Muhammad Waseem told reporters.

The heavily-armed assailants, according to local broadcaster Dawn News that quoted unnamed security sources, first offloaded the passengers and then took 16 with them after checking their identification in remote Buzi Top area.

At least 14 were killed by the gunmen while two managed to escape and reached a nearby security check post. Security forces rushed to the spot and shifted the bodies to the area hospital.

"The martyrs included Pakistan navy personnel," the country's Navy said in a statement, without specifying the number of personnel and their ranks.

Baloch Raji Aajoi Sangar (BRAS), an umbrella group of several outlawed Baloch separatist groups, has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Imran Khan has condemned the "dastardly act of terror" and directed the authorities to bring the perpetrators of the "barbaric act" to justice.

Imran also expressed his sympathies with the families of the victims.

The large Balochistan province, which borders Iran and Afghanistan, has seen a fresh wave of violence in recent weeks. At least 21 people were killed and dozens injured in a suicide attack in the provincial capital Quetta last week.

Information Minister Fawad Chauhdry said there appeared to be an "organised pattern" in recent terrorist attacks in the country. "We have sacrificed a lot for peace. God willing, we will make those responsible for these incidents an example," he added. Chaudhry said, "We have achieved major successes in the war against terror but the war is not yet over."



Japan's Emperor to step down on April 30

Japan's Emperor Akihito (left) and Empress Michiko wave to well-wishers before leaving Ujiyamada Station after visiting Ise Jingu shrine in Ise in the central Japanese prefecture of Mie yesterday. Akihito will step aside and make way for his son Crown Prince Naruhito on April 30.

Imran among Time's 100 most influential people

INTERNEWS
ISLAMABAD

Time magazine has published its list of the '100 most influential people' for the year 2019, naming Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, Malaysian PM Mahathir Mohamad, and New Zealand's PM Jacinda Arden on the list.

In the description mentioning details of PM Imran Khan, journalist Rashid Khan said that Imran Khan generates the broadest hope among the people of Pakistan.

He said that young and old hope that Imran Khan can turn the country around and help make 'South Asia an ocean of peace rather than a state of permanent conflict'.

Peace talks postponed as Taliban object to Afghan guest list

REUTERS
KABUL

A meeting between the Taliban and Afghan politicians and civil society aimed at ending more than 17 years of war in Afghanistan has been postponed, officials and diplomats said yesterday, citing Taliban objections to the size of the Afghan delegation.

The talks were set to begin today, but a senior government official in Kabul said "the gathering has been called off for now and details were being reworked." Afghan delegates nominated for the talks were told the trip was postponed and new dates were being discussed, a western diplomat in Kabul said.

"The government will have to change the composition of the delegation to make this meeting happen," the diplomat said on condition of anonymity.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said Taliban leaders were uncomfortable with the size of the Afghan delegation and its composition.

"Presence of some participants was completely against the list of what was agreed upon," Mujahid said, adding that the delegation included Afghans working for the government. The Taliban have repeatedly refused to meet President Ashraf Ghani's government, which they call a puppet regime, but have held several rounds of peace talks with US officials.

Ghani said on Wednesday the 250-member Afghan delegation included some government officials attending in a personal capacity. But the group did not include some of the most powerful figures in Afghan politics.

Rivals make competing claims in Indonesia polls

AFP
JAKARTA

Indonesia's Joko Widodo said yesterday his reelection as head of the world's third-biggest democracy was all but assured, calling for calm as his firebrand former general rival insisted he had in fact won the nation's top job.

Widodo, 57, said he had received phone calls from world leaders to congratulate him on his country's biggest-ever election, but added he would await the final results before formally declaring victory.

He cited a series of so-called "quick counts" by pollsters, which are based on samples, that showed him as much as 11 percentage points ahead of Subianto.

Quick counts have been reliable indicators in past elections.

But "we still have to wait for the numbers from the KPU (General Elections Commission)", Widodo told a crush of reporters.

"Let's continue to work and maintain our unity and harmony as a nation," he added.

However, Subianto insisted that he and running mate Sandiaga Uno, a wealthy financier, had prevailed, citing voter fraud but without supplying concrete evidence.



Incumbent Indonesian President Joko Widodo talks to media about the results of the presidential election, in Jakarta, yesterday.

"Sandiaga Uno and I are declaring victory as the President and Vice-President," he told cheering supporters in Jakarta.

The retired general - who had close ties to the Suharto dictatorship, which collapsed in 1998 - earlier warned he would challenge the results in court if he lost, and stage street protests.

Some supporters of Subianto called for a march near Jakarta's biggest mosque after Friday prayers today.

The 67-year-old, who has long had his eye on the country's top job, lost to Widodo in 2014 and then mounted an unsuccessful legal challenge to that election.

The competing claims came as authorities warned against unrest over Wednesday's "smooth and safe" polls, and warned of arrests.

"If there are any illegal or unconstitutional actions that threaten public stability and security, (authorities) will take firm action," National Police Chief Tito Karnavian said yesterday.

"I urge everyone against mass demonstrations, whether it's to celebrate or to express dissatisfaction" at the results, Karnavian added.

This year's campaign was punctuated by bitter mud-slinging and a slew of fake news online - much of it directed at the presidential contenders.

Authorities said yesterday they had seen a spike in false reports and hoaxes, with some calling for chaos in the streets and for Indonesians to commit violence in response to the results.

However, the capital Jakarta was quiet yesterday after as many as 190 million voters in the country cast ballots in the one-day poll - which featured a record 245,000 candidates - to elect a new President, parliamentarians and local legislators.

National newspapers called for reconciliation, with top-selling Kompas saying "Let's Unite", while Tempo declared it "One More Time" for Widodo.

Financial markets cheered, with the Jakarta composite stock index and the Indonesian rupiah both higher.

N Korea calls for Pompeo to be dropped from talks

REUTERS
SEOUL

North Korea said yesterday it no longer wanted to deal with US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo and said he should be replaced in talks by someone more mature, hours after it announced its first weapons test since nuclear talks broke down.

The North's official KCNA news agency quoted senior Foreign Ministry official Kwon Jong Gun as warning that no one could predict the situation on the Korean peninsula if the United States did not abandon the "root cause" that compelled North Korea to develop nuclear weapons.

The statement came shortly after North Korea announced that leader Kim Jong Un had overseen the testing of a new tactical guided weapon, which KCNA said has a "peculiar mode of guiding flight" and "a powerful warhead." It was the North's first weapon test since talks in Vietnam between Kim and US President Donald Trump in late February broke down over conflicting demands by North Korea for sanctions relief and by the United States for North Korea to abandon its nuclear program.

KCNA gave no details on the weapon that was tested on Wednesday but "tactical" implied a short-range weapon rather than the long-range ballistic missiles that have been seen as a threat to the United States.

KCNA quoted Kwon, who is in charge of US affairs, as saying the Vietnam summit, the second between the two leaders, showed that talks could go wrong "whenever Pompeo pokes his nose in." "I am afraid that, if Pompeo engages in the talks again, the table will be lousy once again and the talks will become entangled," Kwon said.

"Therefore, even in the case of possible resumption of the dialogue with the United States, I wish our dialogue counterpart would be not Pompeo but other person who is more careful and mature in communicating with us." A spokeswoman for the State Department said it was aware of the report about Pompeo and added: "The United States remains ready to engage North Korea in a constructive negotiation."

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EDITORIAL

Towards food self-sufficiency

Adverse situations bring out the best in everyone. It pressures people to innovate, explore and push the limit. This is exactly what happened after the four siege countries announced their blockade over Qatar in June 2017.

This adverse happening stirred up the normal and pushed everyone to bring their best to the table. New thoughts, new beginnings, new ideas, new plans and it was time to plunge into action without wasting time.

Almost two years down the line, it is very heartening to see that Qatar has not only beaten the illegal and inhuman blockade, but also managed to rise above expectations and progress at a rapid pace. This is especially visible in journey towards food security.

The news which came out last week that Baladna has come out with juices in 6 flavours is one such high points. The local dairies not only managed to fulfil the 100 percent milk requirement of the country, they are forging ahead with more and more local products be it laban, curd or fruit juices.

Almost two years down the line, it is very heartening to see that Qatar has not only beaten the illegal and inhuman blockade, but also managed to rise above expectations and progress at a rapid pace. This is especially visible in journey towards food security.

This is no mean feat considering that 22 odd months back Doha was a net importer of dairy products. The market share of local companies was miniscule compared to the imported products. It is a remarkable turnaround to become self-sufficient in such a short time. It is a matter of great pride that while doing so they didn't compromise on quality or taste and the products are so good that firms are planning to export their products soon.

Companies have stepped up their pace in starting new projects or expanding existing ones and the results can be seen on the shelves of supermarkets. There are more and more local products now available to choose from – be it poultry, vegetables or meat. Even non-perishable goods like paper tissues, detergents, packaging materials and many more are produced inside the country.

Another big success story is vegetable farming. Using locally developed technology and materials, many farms are able to produce vegetables through out the year in their automated green houses where every variable can be remotely controlled. This has boosted the efficiency of local farms and has resulted in much higher output.

Some farms are already exporting their produce to friendly countries in the region and they are aiming to export to Europe.

All this shows what determination in the face of adversity can achieve. This is just the beginning, there are many more glories to come and it can only get better.

QUOTE OF THE DAY



I know we're spending an enormous amount of time, and rightly so, on Hodeidah, but it's the gateway to the comprehensive settlement and of course failure in Hodeida is not an option.

Martin Griffiths
UN Special Envoy to Yemen

Why aren't Europeans calling Israel an apartheid state?





JOHN DUGARD
AL JAZEERA

Apartheid is alive and well and thriving in occupied Palestine. Palestinians know this. South Africans know this. Many Israelis have accepted this as part of their political debate. Americans are coming to terms with this, with new voices in Congress and NGOs like Jewish Voice for Peace unafraid of speaking this truth.

Only in Europe is there a steadfast denial of Israeli apartheid over Palestinians despite overwhelming evidence underlining it.

Israel's restrictions on freedom of movement in the occupied Palestinian territory are a resurrection of South Africa's hated pass laws, which criminalised black South Africans without a permit or pass to be in a "white" city. Israel's policy of forcible population removals and destruction of homes resembles the relocation of black people from areas zoned for exclusive white occupation in apartheid South Africa.

The Israeli security forces engage in torture and brutality exceeding the worst practices of the South African security apparatus. And the humiliation of black people that was a feature of apartheid in South Africa is replicated in occupied Palestine. Racist rhetoric in the Israeli public debate offends even those familiar with the language of apartheid South Africa. The crude racist advertising that characterised campaigning in Israel's recent elections was unknown in South Africa.

Why were sanctions against apartheid South Africa welcomed while European governments take steps to criminalise the nonviolent Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement that seeks to secure freedom, justice and equal rights for Palestinians?

Of course, there are differences that arise from the different histories, religions, geography and demography, but both cases fit the universal definition of apartheid. In international law, apartheid is a state-sanctioned regime of institutionalised and legalised racial discrimination and oppression by one hegemonic racial group against another.

In some respects, apartheid in South Africa was worse. In some respects, Israeli apartheid in occupied Palestine is worse. Certainly, Israel's enforcement of apartheid in occupied Palestine is more militaristic and more brutal. Apartheid South Africa never blockaded a black community and methodically killed protesters as Israel is currently doing along its fence with Gaza.

These facts are well known. No one who follows the news can claim to be ignorant of the repression inflicted on the Palestinian people by the Israeli occupation army and Jewish settlers. It is common knowledge that the different legal systems for settlers and Palestinians have created a regime of separate and grossly unequal legal statuses.

Why then do Europeans consistently deny the existence of apartheid in occupied Palestine? Why is it business as usual with Israel? Why is Eurovision to be held in Tel Aviv? Why does Europe sell arms to Israel; trade with it, even with its illegal settlements; maintain cultural and educational ties? Why is Israel not subjected to the kind of ostracism that was applied to South Africa and complicit white South African institutions?

Why were sanctions against apartheid South Africa welcomed while European governments take steps to criminalise the nonviolent Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement that seeks to secure freedom, justice and equal rights for Palestinians?

There are three explanations for this conundrum. First, pro-Israeli lobbies in many European countries are as effective as their US counterparts without the same degree of visibility.

Second, there is Holocaust guilt. The policies of some countries towards Israel, such as the Netherlands, are still determined by guilt stemming from the failure to have done more to save Jews during World War II.

Third, and most important of all, there is the fear of being labelled anti-Semitic. Encouraged and manipulated by Israel and Israeli lobbies, the concept of anti-Semitism has been expanded to cover not only hatred of Jews but criticism of Israeli apartheid.

In the case of South Africa, President PW Botha was hated because he applied apartheid and not because he was an Afrikaner. It would seem obvious that in the same way many hate Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu because he enforces apartheid and not because he is a Jew. But this distinction is increasingly blurred in Europe. To criticise the government of Israel for applying apartheid is seen as anti-Semitism. And so it becomes dangerous and unwise to criticise Israel.

In Europe, criticism of apartheid in South Africa was a popular cause. The Anti-Apartheid Movement, which lobbied for the boycott of South African exports, trade, sport, artists and academics was encouraged and subjected to no restrictions. Governments imposed different kinds of sanctions, including an arms embargo. Public protests against apartheid were a regular feature of university life.

Criticism of Israel's discriminatory and repressive policies, on the other hand, can result in one being labelled anti-Semitic with serious consequences for one's career and social life. Consequently, there are fewer protests against Israeli apartheid on European campuses and less popular support for BDS. Public figures who criticise Israel are attacked as anti-Semites, as evidenced by the witch-hunt against members of the British Labour Party.

Until Europeans have the courage to distinguish criticism of Israel for applying apartheid from real anti-Semitism — that is, hatred of Jews – apartheid will continue to flourish in occupied Palestine, with the direct complicity of Europe.

The author is Professor Emeritus at Universities of Leiden and the Witwatersrand.

Kim, returning to military optics, turns up heat

ERIC TALMADGE
AP

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is cautiously turning up the heat after his unsuccessful summit with President Trump in Hanoi two months ago.

Returning to military optics for the first time in five months, Kim on Tuesday paid a surprise visit to an Air Force base to inspect fighter combat readiness and followed that up the next day by supervising the test of what the North's official media described ominously but ambiguously – and without any photos or video – as a new type of "tactical guided weapon."

The military-related posturing comes after Kim expressed deep disappointment earlier this month with what the North claims was an inflexible, "gangster-like" demands by the US in Hanoi. It also comes as the Kremlin announced Thursday that Kim will visit Russia later this month at the invitation of President Vladimir Putin. It gave no further details.

Putin has been something of an outsider over the past year as Kim has held multiple summits with the leaders of China, the United States and South Korea. But he could provide important political cover or economic aid for North Korea – and a potential headache for Trump – if he chooses to play a bigger role.

Though Kim claims he still has a good personal relationship with the US president, he and senior North Korean officials have shown increasing frustration with Trump's top advisers, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and national security adviser John Bolton.

"The Hanoi summit gives us a lesson that whenever Pompeo pokes his nose in, the talks go wrong without any results even from the point close to success," Kwon Jong Gun, director general of the American desk at the North's Foreign Ministry, was quoted as saying on Thursday. "I wish our dialogue counterpart would be not Pompeo but (some) other person who is more careful and mature in communicating with us."

In an address to the Supreme People's Assembly, the North's version of parliament, Kim gave the US until the end of the year to come up with a more mutually acceptable negotiation strategy.

For North Korea, that would mean lifting the sanctions it has imposed against the North over its development of nuclear weapons and missiles capable of reaching the US mainland.

Kim indicated, however, that he would in the meantime maintain his self-imposed moratorium on nuclear tests and long-range missile launches and he appears to be standing by that vow.

US military officials said they did not detect any significant missile launches on Wednesday and the North's description of the "newly developed ultramodern tactical weapon" suggested it might have instead been an anti-tank guided missile or other short-range system.

If so, it was likely intended to be a response to recent military drills by US and South Korea.

Just before the reports of the weapon test, a North-run propaganda website said the drills fuel "the mood for a fight and risks of war."

Washington and Seoul have renamed and scaled back their joint maneuvers since early last year, when the South hosted the Winter Olympics. They have continued that policy since Kim's first summit with Trump, in June last year, but the North claims even the smaller versions run counter to the spirit of dialogue.

Since Hanoi, Kim and senior North Korean officials have also been openly critical of South Korea and efforts by President Moon Jae-in to play the role of middleman, saying he has adhered too closely to his American allies and dragged his feet on inter-Korean projects that would provide the North with crucial investment to build its sagging infrastructure.

Moon has expressed an eagerness to engage with the North on such projects, but Washington wants it to stick to sanctions.

North and South Korean leaders have met three times and Moon has said he is ready to meet again at any time. Trump has also suggested he wants a third summit. But there are growing worries that the progress could be killed by mismatched demands between the US and North Korea over sanctions relief and disarmament.

Washington says it won't allow the North's desired sanctions relief until the nation commits to verifiably relinquishing his nuclear facilities, weapons and missiles. Kim has shown no signs that he's willing to give away an arsenal he may see as his strongest guarantee of survival.

Donald Trump now owns the Yemen war



ISHAAN THAROOR
THE WASHINGTON POST

Though the resolution's impact was always largely symbolic, critics of the Trump administration argue his veto only encourages a Saudi regime that has shown a propensity for recklessness abroad. "We did not intend US support to the coalition to become a blank check," 30 former Obama officials wrote in a letter last year.

For a time, President Donald Trump could plausibly say this wasn't just his fight. The previous administration of Barack Obama tacitly greenlit the 2015 Saudi intervention into what was then a civil war in Yemen. Four years later, the conflict has metastasised into a grim regional conflagration, pitting a US-backed Saudi and Emirati-led coalition against the country's Houthi rebels, whose ties to Iran have only grown tighter amid the fighting.

Accurate figures are hard to come by, but it is estimated that 50,000 Yemenis have been killed in the war so far, including dozens of civilians slain in Saudi airstrikes using US-made munitions. The bombardments and an ongoing blockade have contributed to the wholesale collapse of the country's economy. Nearly 10 million Yemenis live on the brink of famine, while thousands have endured (and succumbed to) outbreaks of cholera, diphtheria and other diseases that have spread amid the catastrophe.

Efforts by the United Nations to reach a diplomatic solution to the war trudge on, but a limited cease-fire doesn't appear to have set the stage for a lasting peace.

Instead, battles continue to rage between an array of warring parties, including militias affiliated with extremist groups such as Al Qaeda and the Islamic State.

The United States provides the Saudi-led coalition with intelligence, aerial targeting assistance and, of course, billions of dollars in weapons. All the while, my Washington Post colleagues reported, "the Saudi-led effort, which has targeted civilian facilities and prevented aid shipments from getting to Yemenis, has been faulted by human rights organizations for exacerbating what the United Nations has deemed the world's worst humanitarian catastrophe."

This month, Trump was handed a seemingly perfect out from this mess. A resolution that landed on his desk last week, which had bipartisan support in both chambers of Congress, invoked Vietnam-era limits on presidential war powers to force an end to American participation in the Yemeni war.

Lawmakers contended that the continued American role in the conflict — which seemed strikingly outside the bounds of the post-9/11 authorisation used to justify US hostilities in multiple Middle East conflicts - required congressional consent.

"Without US support, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman would likely be forced to end the war," noted a Washington Post editorial in March. "Unfortunately, the Trump administration is doubling down."

On Tuesday evening, Trump did just that, choosing to veto the measure. "This resolution is an unnecessary, dangerous attempt to weaken my constitutional authorities, endangering the lives of American citizens and brave service members, both today and in the future," he said in a statement, suggesting that US servicemen posted in other gulf countries were at risk from Houthi attacks outside of Yemeni territory.

According to my colleagues, Trump also bristled at the implicit anti-Saudi line of the legislation, which picked up steam in the aftermath of the grisly murder of dissident Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

Trump's critics on the Hill didn't hide their disappointment. Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., said the veto "shows the world he is determined to keep aiding a Saudi-backed war that has killed thousands of civilians and pushed millions more to the brink of starvation."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., decried Trump's decision to "contravene a bipartisan, bicameral vote of the Congress and perpetuate America's shameful involvement in this heartbreaking crisis."

Though the resolution's impact was always largely symbolic, critics of the Trump administration argue his veto only encourages a Saudi regime that has shown a propensity for recklessness abroad.

"We did not intend US support to the coalition to become a blank check," 30 former Obama officials wrote in a letter last year. "But today, as civilian casualties have continued to rise and there is no end to the conflict in sight, it is clear that is precisely what happened."

Humanitarian organisations warned of bleak times ahead for Yemenis. The veto "sends a sobering message to Yemeni families caught in the daily hell of war: our administration simply does not care," Scott Paul of Oxfam America said in an emailed statement. "With a veto, they lose faith in the United States and see the end to their suffering a little further out of reach."

The irony in Trump's resolute support of the Saudis is the extent to which it clashes with his broader political message.

In his State of the Union address earlier this year, he said "great nations do not fight endless wars" and reiterated his desire to draw down US involvement in Middle East battlegrounds. But, as John Glaser, a foreign policy expert at the libertarian Cato Institute, wrote in an email, Trump has given yet another "bold signal that his administration remains committed to aiding the Saudi regime in its brutal war in Yemen, to the detriment of basic humanitarian values and US strategic interests."

What explains this commitment to Riyadh? Of course, there is the administration's deep hostility toward Iran and Iranian influence in the Middle East, as well as the White House's desire to keep the Saudis onside as it carries out its quixotic quest toward a peace plan between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Critics also point to the Trump administration's tendency toward brazen, unilateral action, from its retreat from the nuclear deal with Iran to its controversial recognition of Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. Guardian columnist Simon Tisdall noted that Trump has displayed a "now systemic, vandalistic contempt for international law."

"Donald Trump's presidency makes plain that global supremacy has become an end in itself, unmoored from the interests of the American people and most of humanity," political historian Stephen Wertheim wrote last month.

"'Our military dominance must be unquestioned,' Trump has declared, 'and I mean unquestioned.' Trump has stripped supremacy of ethical pretense and strategic justification. He values it for its own sake, as a gesture of brute domination."

And in his unflinching support for a disastrous war, it is ordinary Yemenis who feel the force of that brutishness.



The site of an April 10 airstrike in Sana'a, Yemen.

JAPAN NEWS-YOMIURI

Use school instructors with specialist skills to make classes more productive

Productive, fulfilling school lessons are essential for expanding children's abilities.

Japan's Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Minister Masahiko Shibayama has asked the Central Council for Education to deliberate how elementary and secondary education should be structured for a new era. This move comes against the backdrop of new school curriculum guidelines that place greater emphasis on developing students' ability to think and express themselves.

These guidelines will come into effect from the 2020 school year and beyond.

A main pillar of the council's deliberations will be the full-scale introduction of a system in which fifth- and sixth-grade elementary school students are taught different subjects by different teachers.

This method would allow teachers specialising in certain subjects to teach students, just as is done at junior high and high schools.

At elementary schools, the basic structure centers on the class-based teacher system, in which a homeroom teacher teaches every subject to their class.

While this makes it easier for a teacher to closely watch the children in their class, there also is the downside of the teacher being unable to competently handle subjects that require specialist knowledge.

Elementary school lessons up to the fourth grade focus on helping children acquire a solid understanding of the basic academic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic. From the fifth grade, students need to develop abstract thinking skills.

It is reasonable that educators possessing specialist knowledge should teach advanced subject content.

For instance, it can be expected this approach would bring positive results in computer programming education and English, which will become compulsory subjects for students in the later grades of elementary school.

It also would be beneficial to flexibly station junior high English teachers and outside instructors well versed in information appliances.

An overhaul of the teacher certification system also will be needed to make more flexible class instruction possible.

Promotion of a system under which different teachers teach different subjects is also aimed at reducing the workload teachers shoulder.

Elementary school teachers that teach every subject have, on average, about 24 class hours a week.

This is six classes more than junior high school instructors teach. If the new system becomes established, teachers would be responsible for fewer lessons, and they could use this freed-up time to prepare for classes and handle other school duties.

In recent years, the elementary school teacher employment exams have seen 3.5 times more applicants than those who ultimately pass, a low figure about half or less than that for junior high and high schools.

It seems many university students are steering clear of a career teaching at elementary school due to the long working hours combined with the need to instruct a wide range of subjects that could even include the piano and swimming.

If work-style reforms progress and the subjects taught are narrowed down, it likely will become easier to attract more human resources to elementary schools.

High school reforms also were a major theme the council will need to deliberate.

Observers have pointed out that the general academic high schools, which account for 70 percent of the total, lack any major distinctive characteristics. High school students are soon divided into two groups — one pursuing a course in natural sciences, the other a course in the humanities and social sciences.

In the latter group, many students even graduate without applying themselves, not really studying in their science and mathematics classes.

The creation of high schools that tout the nurturing of human resources who will engage in local issues, and teach a good balance of natural science subjects and humanities and social science subjects is anticipated.

According to a survey jointly conducted by the education ministry and the Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry, 25 percent of first-year high school students do absolutely no study outside of school. Making high schools more interesting and bringing out students' desire to learn will be vital.

Promotion of a system under which different teachers teach different subjects is also aimed at reducing the workload teachers shoulder.

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29 German tourists die in Portugal bus crash

AFP
CANIÇO, PORTUGAL

Prosecutors have launched an inquiry into the crash, but the Vice-President of the regional government Pedro Calado said it was "premature" to attribute the cause of the accident.

The Portuguese island of Madeira began three days of mourning yesterday after 29 German tourists died when their bus spun off the road and tumbled down a slope before crashing into a house.

Drone footage showed the mangled wreckage resting precariously on its side against a building on a hillside near the town of Canico, the vehicle's roof partially crushed and front window smashed.

Rescue workers attended to injured passengers on the grass where the bus came to a halt, some of them bearing bloodied head bandages and blood-stained clothes.

Local authorities said most of the dead were aged in their 40s and 50s. Twelve men and 17 women were among the victims, an official at the Nelio Mendonca hospital, Tomasia Alves, told reporters.

They were among the more than one million tourists who visit the Atlantic islands off the coast of Morocco each year, attracted by their subtropical climate and rugged volcanic terrain.

"It is with sadness and dismay that I think of our compatriots and all the other people affected by the terrible bus accident in Madeira," German Chancellor Angela Merkel said in a statement.

"My sincere condolences go above all to those families that have lost loved ones in this tragedy," she added, thanking the Portuguese emergency services for their efforts.

The 50-odd tourists had left their hotel and were on their way to the regional capital Funchal for dinner when the bus crashed on Wednesday.

Local media said two Portuguese nationals survived the crash: the driver and a tour guide. Prosecutors have opened a probe.

The Vice-President of the regional government Pedro Calado said it was "premature" to attribute the cause of the accident.

He said the bus was five years old and had been recently inspected.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said he will travel to Madeira with a team of doctors and psychologists to "speak personally with those affected".

"It is shocking that an Easter holiday has become a tragedy for so many people," Maas said in a statement.

A makeshift morgue has been set up at the airport in Funchal, local media reports said. Medical teams will be flown in from Lisbon to carry out autopsies.

Known as the Pearl of the Atlantic and the Floating Garden, Madeira is home to just 270,000 inhabitants.

"I express the sorrow and solidarity of all the Portuguese people in this tragic moment, and especially for the families of the victims who I have been told were all German," President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa told Portuguese television.

Alves said the hospital hoped to begin returning victims' bodies to their families by Saturday.

Prime Minister Antonio Costa said he had contacted Merkel to convey his condolences. He expressed "profound sadness", in a message on the government's Twitter page.



The wreckage of the tourist bus that crashed in Canico, on the Portuguese island of Madeira.

N Korea's Kim to visit Russia this month

REUTERS
MOSCOW

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un will travel to Russia in the second half of this month and meet President Vladimir Putin, the Kremlin said yesterday.

The pro-Kremlin Izvestia newspaper cited a diplomatic source on Wednesday as saying the Putin-Kim meeting would likely take place next week in Russia's Far Eastern city of Vladivostok before Putin flies on to an April 26-27 summit in China.

It added though that a sudden change of plan by the leader of the North Korean state could not be ruled out.

The Kremlin gave no further details in a statement on its website, but Moscow has been saying for months that it was working on such a meeting.

It was not clear how Kim might travel to the summit.

A North Korean official, Kim Chang Son, travelled to Vladivostok this week and was seen on Wednesday inspecting the Pacific city's train station and making security checks, Russia's RIA news agency reported yesterday.

US Special Representative for North Korea Stephen Biegun was due in Moscow on Wednesday and Thursday to meet Russian officials to discuss ways to advance a "final, fully verified denuclearisation of North Korea", Washington said on Tuesday.

Estonia, Russia Presidents discuss ties

AFP
MOSCOW

Estonia's President met Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin here yesterday for talks on trade and global relations, during the first such Russian visit in eight years.

Kersti Kaljulaid is also the first leader of three former Soviet states on the Baltic Sea to hold a high profile meeting with Putin since Moscow's 2014 annexation of Crimea.

"Neighbours should talk, even if we have certain disagreements," she told the Russian leader, according to translated comments.

"We have not seen each other in a long time," Putin said. "We are happy to see you in Moscow. Welcome!"

"The lack of contact between official people, official state institutions and between neighbours is not a normal situation," he added.

Ukraine reverses nationalisation of major bank

AP/AFP
KIEV, UKRAINE

A Ukrainian court yesterday ruled that the 2016 nationalisation of a major bank owned by a tycoon was illegal, sending shockwaves through the country's financial community.

Privatbank, Ukraine's biggest lender, was nationalised in 2016 after authorities discovered a capital shortfall of more than $5bn. The bank was owned by tycoon Ihor Kolomoyskyi, who was appointed Governor of a Ukrainian region by President Petro Poroshenko but later fell out with him.

The court in Kiev yesterday upheld Kolomoyskyi's lawsuit against the National Bank and financial authorities and ruled that the nationalisation was illegal. It wasn't immediately clear, however, how and when the bank would be returned to Kolomoyskyi.

Kolomoyskyi's figure has loomed large in Ukraine in recent few weeks as the country goes to the polls on Sunday to elect a new President. Kolomoyskyi is an archrival of incumbent President Poroshenko and is believed to have ties to Volomyr Zelenskiy, a comedian who has emerged as the favourite in the race.



The logo of PrivatBank on the bank's branch in Kiev, yesterday.

The Finance Ministry said in a statement that it disagrees with the ruling and insisted that the decision to nationalise Privatbank was taken "in order to ensure financial stability and security of the citizens' savings."

Meanwhile, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko has warned that the country risks defaulting on its debt if PrivatBank is handed back to a controversial tycoon.

"Such a reckless move... threatens a default and a new economic crisis," Poroshenko said in a video address three days before a presidential election that polls show him losing.

"Tens of millions of clients" will also lose their money, added Poroshenko, who will face Volodymyr Zelensky in the runoff vote on Sunday.

Comedian Zelensky, whose shows are broadcast by Kolomoysky's television channel, has emerged as a favourite in the presidential race after his surprise decision to run.

Zelensky has denied that he is in the employ of Kolomoysky or that his policies would favour the billionaire, and the two insist their ties are purely professional.

PrivatBank was nationalised after authorities blamed Kolomoysky and other bank owners for issuing bad loans to cronies and having insufficient capital to stay afloat. The Ukrainian central bank said it would appeal against the court ruling.

"The court decision has not yet entered into force and will be appealed by the National Bank," it said in a statement.

PrivatBank – the nationalisation of which was welcomed by the West – holds more than a third of Ukraine's deposits.

Ukraine's government has spent nearly 140 billion hryvnyas (around $5bn) on recapitalising the lender to cover the losses caused by the withdrawal of money from the bank and poorly-secured loans handed out before the nationalisation.

Facebook bans far-right UK groups

AFP
LONDON

Social media giant Facebook yesterday banned various far-right British groups including the English Defence League from its network for promoting hate and violence.

Other groups kicked off by both Facebook or Instagram include Knights Templar International, Britain First, the British National Party (BNP) and the National Front.

The tech titan banned the groups for contravening its policy forbidding "terrorist activity, organised hate, mass or serial murder, human trafficking or organised violence or criminal activity".

"Individuals and organisations who spread hate, or attack or call for the exclusion of others on the basis of who they are, have no place on Facebook," a spokeswoman for Facebook said.



Parisian Firefighters' brigade arrives at Elysee Palace to attend a speech of the French President Emmanuel Macron, in Paris, yesterday.

France honours Notre-Dame firefighters

AP
PARIS

France paid yesterday a daylong tribute to the Paris firefighters who saved Notre-Dame Cathedral from collapse, while construction workers rushed to secure an area above one of the church's famed rose-shaped windows and other vulnerable sections of the fire-damaged landmark.

President Emmanuel Macron held a ceremony at the Elysee Palace to thank the hundreds of firefighters who battled a fast-moving fire at Notre-Dame for nine hours starting Monday evening, preventing the structure's destruction and rescuing many of the important relics held inside.

"We've seen before our eyes the right things perfectly organised in a few moments, with responsibility, courage, solidarity and a meticulous organisation", Macron said. "The worst has been avoided." Macron said the firefighters will receive an Honour Medal for their courage and devotion.

As the ceremony took place, investigators continued seeking clues to what sparked the fire. The huge cathedral, including the spire that was consumed by flames and collapsed, was in the initial stages of a lengthy restoration.

The roof was destroyed, but Notre-Dame's iconic bell towers, rose windows, organ, and precious artworks were saved. Fire officials warned that the building remains very fragile and extremely dangerous for construction workers, restoration experts and neighbours.

Former SS guard, 92, charged with complicity in Nazi killings

AFP
HAMBURG

German prosecutors yesterday charged a 92-year-old man with aiding and abetting the murder of 5,230 people as a guard at a Nazi concentration camp during World War II.

The allegations against the accused, identified by daily newspaper Die Welt as Bruno Dey from Hamburg, concern atrocities committed at the Stutthof concentration camp, near what was then Danzig, now Gdansk in Poland.

He worked between August 1944 and April 1945 at the camp, which ended up holding 110,000 prisoners, 65,000 of whom perished.

Despite his senior age, the accused will be tried by a juvenile court in Hamburg, because he was 17 when he first worked at Stutthof.

Prosecutors accuse him of having contributed to the implementation of the Nazis' order to kill as a "cog of the murder machinery".

According to Die Welt, Dey was questioned by Hamburg prosecutors last year and he does not deny his presence in the camp, which was part of the Nazis' vast network of concentration camps.

The trained baker reportedly insisted he was never a Nazi and only ended up in the SS-Totenkopfsturmbahn (Death's Head Battalion), which ran the camp, because of a heart disease.

According to the report, Dey confirmed he had guard duties at the watchtowers and knew of the camp's gas chambers, where he saw SS prisoners being pushed inside.

He admitted seeing "emaciated figures, people who had suffered", but insists he is not guilty, replying "what use would it have done? They would have just found someone else" when asked why he did not put in a transfer to fight at the front, Die Welt reported.

The case is likely to be one of the last trials involving Nazi war crimes.

Earlier this month, a German judge suspended the trial of a former concentration camp guard, who also worked at Stutthof, after the 95-year-old defendant was hospitalised with heart and kidney problems.

Germany has been racing to put on trial surviving SS personnel, after the legal basis for prosecuting former Nazis changed in 2011 with the landmark conviction of former guard John Demjanjuk.

He was sentenced on the grounds that he served as a cog in the Nazi killing machine at the Sobibor camp in occupied Poland, rather than for murders or atrocities linked to him personally.

The Nazis had initially used Stutthof as a detention camp for Polish prisoners.

Mueller report is out; Trump tried to control probe

AP
WASHINGTON

Mueller said in his report that he could not conclusively determine that Trump had committed criminal obstruction of justice.

Public at last, special counsel Robert Mueller's report revealed to a waiting nation yesterday that US President Donald Trump had tried to seize control of the Russia probe and force Mueller's removal to stop him from investigating potential obstruction of justice by the president.

The report said that in June 2017, Trump directed White House Counsel Don McGahn to call the acting attorney general and say that Mueller must be ousted because he had conflicts of interest.

McGahn refused — deciding he would rather resign than trigger what he regarded as a potential Saturday Night Massacre of Watergate firings fame.

For all of that, Mueller said in his report that he could not conclusively determine that Trump had committed criminal obstruction of justice.

The Justice Department posted a redacted version of the report online yesterday, 90 minutes after Attorney-General William Barr offered his own final assessment of the findings.

The two-volume, 448-page report recounts how Trump repeatedly sought to take control of the Russia probe.

Mueller evaluated 10 episodes for possible obstruction of justice, including Trump's firing of FBI Director James Comey, the president's directive to subordinates to have Mueller fired and efforts to encourage witnesses not to cooperate.

The president's lawyers have said Trump's conduct fell within his constitutional powers, but Mueller's team deemed the episodes deserving of criminal scrutiny.

Mueller reported that Trump had been agitated at the special counsel probe from its earliest days, reacting to Mueller's appointment by saying it was the "end of his presidency." As for the question of whether the Trump campaign had colluded with Russia during the 2016 presidential campaign, Mueller wrote, "While the investigation identified numerous links between individuals with ties to the Russian government and individuals associated with the Trump Campaign, the evidence was not sufficient to support criminal charges." Mueller also said there wasn't sufficient evidence to charge any campaign officials with working as an unregistered foreign agent of Russia.

The report included an appendix that contained 12 pages of Trump's written responses to the special counsel. They included no questions about obstruction of justice, as was part of an agreement with Trump's legal team.

Trump told Mueller he had "no recollection" of learning in advance about the much-scrutinised Trump Tower meeting between campaign officials and a Russian lawyer. He also said he had no recollection of knowledge about emails setting up the meeting that promised dirt on Hillary Clinton's campaign.

He broadly denied knowing of any foreign government trying to help his campaign, including the Russian government. He said he was aware of some reports that Russian President Vladimir Putin had made "complimentary statements" about him.

Trump said that his comment during a 2016 political rally asking Russian hackers to help find emails scrubbed from Clinton's private server was made "in jest and sarcastically" and that he did not recall being told during the campaign of any Russian effort to infiltrate or hack computer systems.

Trump's legal team called the results "a total victory for the president."



US President Donald Trump departs with a statuette after speaking at an event honouring the Wounded Warrior Project Soldier Ride in the East Room of the White House in Washington, DC, yesterday.

Poland: Talks between striking teachers, govt fail

AP
WARSAW

Unions representing Poland's public school teachers vowed to continue a nationwide strike after their latest round of pay negotiations with the government failed yesterday.

Government ministers and union leaders blamed each other for the lack of progress during more than two hours of talks. Teachers have been on strike since last week, closing most schools.

No further bargaining sessions were immediately set.

Striking teachers saw little chance for an agreement after the government insisted it doesn't have money to meet their demand for a 30% pay increase. The government is offering 15% raises starting in September and a smaller pay hike next year for an increase in the number of teaching hours. "I don't believe that new proposals will be made on the government side," Magdalena Klein, a high school teacher from Chorzow, said on private TVN24.

The head of the prime minister's office, Michal Dworczyk, said it was crucial to have the strike suspended for matriculation exams starting May 6. The exams are the basis for university entry.

The strike has drawn support from many students, parents and artists. A rock concert was held on Wednesday night in Warsaw in support of the strike.

Acropolis closed after lightning strike

AP
ATHENS

Authorities in Greece have closed the Acropolis in Athens to visitors for the day due to a severe weather warning, a day after a lightning strike at the ancient site left four people injured.

The Culture Ministry said it ordered the closure yesterday after the country's civil protection agency said a thunderstorm with heavy rainfall was expected in the capital.

On Wednesday, two visitors and two guards were slightly injured in the lightning strike at the country's most famous ancient site. A culture ministry statement said the citadel's lightning conductor, which is set apart from the 2,500-year-old marble buildings, was hit. The impact shattered glass windows nearby, and the guards inside as well as two female visitors were taken to hospital with light cuts. The monuments suffered no damage.

Amnesty to monitor Italy's EU candidates for hate speech

AFP
ROME

Tens of thousands of Facebook and Twitter messages sent by Italian candidates in the run up to next month's European elections will be monitored by a computer programme for hate speech, a rights group said yesterday.

The Italian arm of Amnesty International said it would be tracking comments posted amid concerns verbal and physical violence is on the rise under Italy's populist government.

The global advocacy organisation is asking candidates across Europe to become more involved in issues such as climate change, women and LGBT rights, and migrants and refugees. But its Italian arm is bringing in people trained in spotting "hate speech" to see whether those running — from far-right leader Matteo Salvini to the granddaughter of dictator Benito Mussolini — promote racial or other discrimination.

"We have launched a control on how and to what extent human rights are entering the debate online," said Martina Chichi.

The country's intelligence agency warned in February that attacks on migrants and minorities could rise in the run-up to the EU elections.

Italy has lurched to the right under its populist coalition government, which since June has united Salvini's anti-immigrant League with the anti-establishment Five Star Movement (M5S).

The League has soared in popularity on the back of Salvini's "Italians First" message, but he has dismissed critics who accuse him of whipping up a climate of hate.

His approach to the migration crisis — which has included closing Italian ports to charity vessels that have rescued people in the Mediterranean — has been blamed by some for a rise in xenophobia.

Amnesty said a computer program will collect 100,000 messages from the candidates' Facebook and Twitter accounts — their statements as well as a random sample of comments from users — and carry out a content evaluation.

New York City's population is shrinking: Census Bureau

BLOOMBERG
NEW YORK

New York City is shrinking.

Newly available Census Bureau population estimates indicate the Big Apple's population is getting smaller for the second year in a row.

Beyond the city, more people have fled New York state than any other over this decade and that could cause a loss in congressional representation.

New York City's five boroughs — also classified as counties — have contracted by a net of almost 40,000 over the last year. Only Staten Island is estimated to have grown. About three quarters of New York state's counties have seen a population decline over the past year. Only two counties grew by more than 1,000 people — Orange County with 2,148 residents, faster than any other, and Saratoga by 1,061. From April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2018, domestic migration left the Empire State with 1.2 million fewer inhabitants, though foreign immigration cushioned the loss. Also offsetting the loss, births outnumbered deaths. The overall change from April 1, 2010 is a modest gain of 164,085.

From July 1, 2017 to July 1, 2018, New York state's population fell by 48,510 and New York City lost 39,523.

As a result, New York could lose congressional representation after the 2020 Census. By law, the number of seats in the House of Representatives is capped at 435 and population totals determine how the seats are divided nationwide. Current population estimates show that New York will be the only state to lose two seats, putting it behind California, Texas and now Florida in the number of House members.

Legionnaires' disease found in California prisons

AP
SACRAMENTO

Legionnaires' disease bacteria that killed one inmate and sickened another is more widespread than expected in a California state prison, officials said, citing new test results. Preliminary results found the bacteria in the water supply at a prison medical facility in Stockton and at two neighbouring youth correctional facilities, Corrections Department spokeswoman Vicky Waters said.

Officials had thought it was isolated to one housing unit where the two inmates lived. They restricted water use throughout the medical facility and neighbouring juvenile facility, bringing in bottled water. But they put special filters only on showers in the housing unit where the inmates had been housed in the California Health Care Facility, which treats about 2,670 inmates needing medical or mental health care.

The neighbouring OH Close Youth Correctional Facility houses about 150 youths and NA Chaderjian Youth Correctional Facility about 260 youths.

No subsequent illnesses were reported and the source hasn't been found. But officials now are adding the shower filters in other areas and warning against using unfiltered water throughout the three facilities.



NY man caught with full petrol cans, lighters

The members of the New York Police Department (NYPD) gather outside St Patrick's Cathedral on 5th Avenue yesterday, the morning after a man was arrested after trying to enter the Cathedral with gas cans, lighter fluid and butane lighters, police said, just days after a fire badly damaged the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. NYPD Deputy Commissioner John Miller said the arrested man claimed he was taking a shortcut through the cathedral after his car ran out of fuel, but his answers were "inconsistent and evasive."

California dispute threatens plan to protect Colorado River

AP
FLAGSTAFF

A dispute between two major California water agencies is threatening to derail a hard-won agreement designed to protect a river that serves 40 million people in the US West.

The Imperial Irrigation District, the largest single recipient of Colorado River water, on Tuesday sued a Los Angeles water utility that agreed to contribute most of California's share of water to a key reservoir under a multistate drought contingency plan.

The action came the same day President Donald Trump approved federal legislation to implement the plan, which Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming spent years negotiating. The agreement is meant to keep the country's two largest reservoirs on the Colorado River from dropping so low they cannot deliver water or produce hydropower amid prolonged drought and climate change.

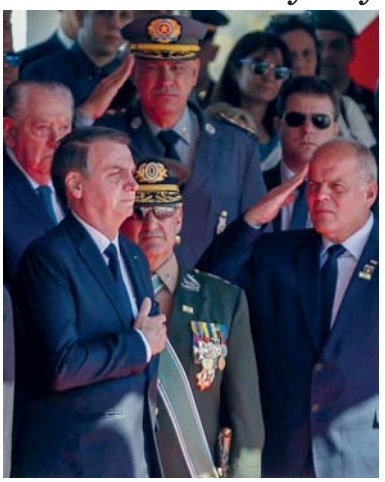
The Imperial Irrigation District said it wouldn't join the drought plan unless it secured $200m in federal funding to address health and environmental hazards at the Salton Sea, a massive, briny lake southeast of Los Angeles.

The Metropolitan Water District, which serves Los Angeles, essentially wrote Imperial out of the drought plan to prevent delays in implementing it by taking on Imperial's pledged water contributions to Lake Mead. With that, Metropolitan's contribution could top 2 million acre-feet through 2026 when the drought plan expires. An acre-foot is enough water to serve one to two average households a year.

Imperial's lawsuit claims the Metropolitan Water District sidestepped an environmental law.

"Where the water supply would come from and what environmental impacts could result from Metropolitan's need to acquire such water to fill this sizable hole in its water supply are entirely unknown," Imperial wrote in court documents filed in Los Angeles County Superior Court. The seven states and US Bureau of Reclamation have said the drought plan won't affect the Salton Sea, but the Imperial Irrigation District isn't convinced.

Brazil marks Army Day



Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro (left) attends a ceremony to mark the Army Day, in Sao Paulo, Brazil, yesterday.

Second man dies after Brazilian army's mistaken shooting

AP
RIO DE JANEIRO

A second man has died following a mistaken military shooting of a family car that has roused protests in Brazil.

Relatives tell Brazilian news website G1 that Luciano Macedo died yesterday in hospital.

Macedo was collecting recycling materials when soldiers opened fire on a family's sedan in Rio de Janeiro. Authorities say they confused the car with a similar one reportedly used in a robbery.

Driver Evaldo dos Santos Rosa died at the scene. Macedo was shot while trying to help those injured in the sedan. Ten of the 12 soldiers involved in the shooting are in military custody while the case is investigated.

Guatemalan presidential candidate held in drug case

REUTERS
GUATEMALA CITY

A Guatemalan presidential candidate was arrested in Miami and charged with an elaborate plot to use drug cartel money to win the election and assassinate rivals, according to US officials, two months before voters head to the polls.

Mario Estrada, candidate of the centre-right National Change Union, who is polling far behind other rivals, is accused along with another man, Juan Pablo Gonzalez, of seeking between $10m and $12m from Mexico's powerful Sinaloa Cartel to fund his campaign and transport cocaine into the United States.

"Estrada and Gonzalez conspired to solicit Sinaloa Cartel money to finance a corrupt scheme to elect Estrada president of Guatemala," Geoffrey Berman, US attorney for the Southern District of New York, said in a statement.

According to the statement, the two men pledged that if Estrada won the June 16 election, he would help the cartel transport drugs from Guatemalan airports and ports with the aid of complicit security officials. The two also conspired to kill unnamed rival candidates, the US attorney's statement said.

The statement added that since January, several meetings with both men in Miami and Guatemala designed to advance the plot were held and recorded, in most cases with both video and audio.

Trump ramps up pressure on Cuba in new offensive

AFP
MIAMI

US President Donald Trump ramped up pressure on Cuba with new restrictions on US travel and remittances and a green light to lawsuits over seized property as he vowed to rid Latin America of leftists.

Defying European warnings on the long-festering property issue, Trump rolled back much of previous president Barack Obama's bid to reconcile with Cuba and also imposed fresh sanctions on Venezuela and Nicaragua, the two other hard-left nations in Latin America.

John Bolton, Trump's hawkish national security adviser, said the measures were meant to "reverse the consequences of disastrous Obama-era policies and finally end the glamorisation of socialism and communism." "We're standing with the freedom-loving patriots of this region," Bolton said in Miami as he addressed veterans of the invasion, the failed CIA-backed 1961 bid by exiles to topple the Cuban regime.

Bolton said the United States would bar Americans from travelling to Cuba except to visit family, reversing the loosening under Obama that had started to open the cash-strapped island to US tourism.

Bolton also announced restrictions under which no individual can remit more than $1,000 per quarter to Cuba, pledging: "These new measures will help steer American dollars away from the Cuban regime."

The hard-hitting speech came hours after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the United States would forge ahead with a long-delayed law that allows Cuban Americans to take businesses and the Havana government itself to court over properties seized after Fidel Castro's 1959 revolution.

Passed by Congress in 1996 with support from Cuban-American hardliners, the provision of the Helms-Burton Act will finally go into effect on May 2 after being systematically suspended every six months by successive presidents.



Cuban migrants stand along a road after their buses were seized by Mexican authorities as they participate in the Migrant Via Crucis to continue their journey towards the US, in Huixtla, Mexico.

Mexico to restrict migrants to southern states

AFP
MEXICO CITY

Mexico said central American migrants will be given "regional visitor cards" near the Guatemalan border that restrict their movement to the south of the country, impeding their ability to reach the US.

The restriction will be a blow to tens of thousands of migrants, fleeing the poverty and violence at home, who enter southern Mexico and travel across the country in so-called "caravans" in an attempt to seek asylum in the US.

The cards will be given out in Tapachula, where Mexican media report there are around 5,000 would-be migrants planning to head to the US. "In appropriate cases, for nationals of neighboring countries, a Regional Visitor Card will be issued which allows multiple entries and exits from the country (but) with the possibility of mobility only in the southern states," Mexico's National Migration Institute said.

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EUR/QAR	: 4.21	GBP/QAR	: 4.87	CAD/QAR	: 2.82	AUD/QAR	: 2.72
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Oil prices rise on lower US stocks, Opec+ supply cuts

REUTERS
LONDON

Oil prices rose slightly yesterday, boosted by a decline in US inventories, ongoing supply cuts from Opec and its allies, and US sanctions on Venezuela and Iran.

Brent crude futures were at $71.80 a barrel at 1313 GMT, up 18 cents from their last close and near Wednesday's five-month high of $72.27 a barrel.

US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were at $63.83 per barrel, up 7 cents. Both contracts traded slightly lower earlier in the day. US crude inventories fell by 1.4 million barrels in the week to April 12, US Energy Information Administration (EIA) data showed on Wednesday.

"The latest weekly statistics on US oil inventories were seemingly positive. All the major categories registered draws," Tamas Varga of London-based oil brokerage PVM said.

Prices have been supported this year by an agreement reached by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies, including Russia, to limit their oil output by 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd). Global supply has been tightened further by US sanctions on Opec members Venezuela and Iran. Iran's crude exports have dropped in April to their lowest daily level this year, tanker data showed and industry sources said, suggesting a reduction in buyer interest ahead of expected further pressure from Washington.

Brent crude futures were at $71.80 a barrel at 1313 GMT, up 18 cents from their last close and near Wednesday's five-month high of $72.27 a barrel.

Indian refiners are turning to other Opec members, Mexico and the United States to make up for any loss of Iranian oil.

Spain's Repsol has suspended its swaps of refined products for crude with Venezuela's state-run oil company PDVSA.

Growing US oil production and concerns over the US- China trade dispute are keeping prices in check. US crude oil output from seven major shale formations was expected to rise by about 80,000 bpd in May to a record 8.46 million bpd, the EIA said in its monthly report.

QICCA set to update arbitration rules

LANI ROSE R DIZON
THE PENINSULA

The Qatar International Centre for Conciliation and Arbitration (QICCA) is set to update its arbitration rules and is considering the inclusion of emergency arbitration provisions modeled after the ones started by the Paris-based International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), a QICCA official said here on Wednesday.

Talking to ***The Peninsula*** on the sidelines of the seminar 'ICC Emergency Arbitration Provisions as an Alternative to Qatar Court' which was co-organised by the ICC Qatar and Squire Patton Boggs and supported by the Qatar Chamber, QICCA Principal Legal Counsel Dr Minas Khatchadourian said: "Emergency arbitration is now becoming an international trend. When all the leading arbitration institutions in the world amended their rules, they made specific chapters for emergency arbitration rules. QICCA under the Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry is actually preparing a project to update its rules, because its rules are from 2012. So especially with the end of many mega projects and the upcoming FIFA World Cup 2022, we may take into consideration to include a chapter for emergency arbitration provisions in the new rules".

Emergency arbitration, which was introduced by the ICC in 2012, seeks to provide urgent temporary relief to parties in the middle of a dispute.

The procedure offers short-term solution for parties that are unable to wait for the constitution of an Arbitral Tribunal. Any emergency measure granted takes the form of an order, which aims to prevent irreparable harm to parties involved.

Tarek Saad, counsel at Squire Patton Boggs and main speaker at the seminar, said that a total of 95 emergency arbitration cases have now been received worldwide; with half of them related to the construction, engineering, energy sectors, real estate, telecom, transport and natural resources.

Saad added that one case has also been filed in Qatar, and was handled by the Squire Patton Boggs.

He said: "The case involved a subcontractor who had given a very large performance bond. The contractor was going to pull the bond from the bank, take the money and flee the country. We went in to get a freezing order to stop the other party from pulling the bond and the ruling went in favor of the subcontractor. In the past, if you're going to go through the normal process of arbitration, you file your application and the other side gets 30 days to respond. The arbitrator gets appointed, and the process takes several months. With the emergency arbitration, the process will be settled within 17 days from when the case is filed."

According to Saad, the emergency arbitration requests included anti-suit or anti-arbitrator injunctions, maintaining status quo, preserving assets or property, demanding performance of contractual obligations and restraining sale of stock or products due to alleged breach of contract.



Tarek Saad, Counsel at Squire Patton Boggs, during the 'ICC Emergency Arbitration Provisions as an Alternative to Qatar Court' seminar held at Qatar Chamber head quarters, on Wednesday
PIC: BAHER AMIN/THE PENINSULA

Other measures also related to corporate governance, ordering security, and preventing a party from drawing down funds from a performance bond, he added.

He also said the emergency arbitration provisions can help protect both the existing companies in Qatar as well as the growing number of foreign companies investing in World-Cup related projects in the country. "With the World Cup approaching, deals are being done between Qatari companies and companies from all over the world. Deals are being done between companies outside of Qatar that are doing business in Qatar. And everybody is going to want a fair, efficient, and quick dispute resolution process. ICC arbitration is one that has been trusted for decades. It's extremely well-established organization, and these emergency arbitration rules will give people incentive and even more people to agree to ICC arbitrations so that they can get their disputes resolved," Saad added.



Russia-France boosting economic ties

Russian President Vladimir Putin (right) listens to Total CEO Patrick Pouyanne during a meeting with French business leaders at the Kremlin in Moscow, yesterday.

QSE index gained 89.12 points last week

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

Qatar Stock Exchange's (QSE) benchmark index gained 89.12 points, or 0.87 percent, last week when the bourse closed yesterday at 10,348.19 points.

Trading value during last week increased by 1.18 percent to reach QR1.30bn compared to QR1.28bn. Trading volume increased by 10.71 percent to reach 80.19 million shares, as against 72.43 million shares, while the number of transactions rose by 2.57 percent, to reach 30,077 transactions as compared to 29,322 transactions.

Market cap rose by 0.78 percent to reach QR579.34bn as compared to QR574.84bn at the end of previous week, reports QNA.

Banking and Financial Services sector led traded value last week with 41.46 percent of the total traded value. Industries sector accounted for 27.77 percent. Real Estate sector accounted for 11.00 percent and Consumer Goods and Services sector accounted 8.19 percent.

Banking and Financial Services sector led traded volume last week with 34.19 percent of the total traded volume. Industries sector accounted for 31.45 percent Real Estate sector accounted for 14.40 percent and Telecoms sector accounted 9.23 percent. Industries sector led traded number of transactions last week with 36.81 percent of the total number of transactions. Banking and Financial Services sector accounted for 25.10 percent. Real Estate sector accounted for 17.67 percent and Consumer Goods and Services sector accounted for 7.50 percent.

From the 46 listed companies 26 ended last week higher, while 18 fell and two remained unchanged.

QNB led trading value during last week accounted for 17.74 percent of the total traded value.

When compared on daily basis the QSE index gained 40.02 points, or 0.39 percent, yesterday compared to Wednesday's closing.

Turkish citizenship offer, weak lira draw foreign property buyers

REUTERS
ISTANBUL

Turkey's slumping housing market is getting some support from foreign property investors, especially from the Gulf region, who are drawn by the weak lira and a government effort to ease the path to Turkish citizenship.

Foreign housing investment jumped 82 percent in the first quarter of the year, according to government data, even as Turkey's overall housing sales tumbled 24 percent in January and 18 percent in February as the economy settled into a recession. Iranians, Iraqis and Saudis led those taking advantage of Turkey's decision last year to slash an investment threshold for gaining citizenship to $250,000 from $1 million previously. The measure was aimed at keeping money flowing into an economy that was driven for years by a construction boom.

A 30 percent drop in the Turkish lira last year, and another 10 percent decline against the dollar so far in 2019, has also made it cheaper for foreign buyers.

"The Turkish government has made it very easy to come and invest in Turkey. But getting a Turkish passport is more important for me, especially when travelling abroad and doing business," said an Iranian named Hossein who was considering buying an apartment in Esenyurt district on Istanbul's outskirts.

Hossein did not disclose his surname due to Iran's capital-transfer restrictions, but added that he was also drawn by Turkey's "close distance, food and similar culture as a Muslim country."

Government statistics show construction declined 8.7 percent in the last quarter of 2018, when the overall economy contracted at its fastest rate in nearly a decade. Faced last year with unsold housing stock of more than 1 million units, the government cut the citizenship threshold in September. By the end of 2018, housing investment by foreigners was up 80 percent, and sales climbed 82 percent in the first quarter of 2019. The Turkish Statistics Office said the foreign investors are primarily from Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Afghanistan and Kuwait. Palestinians bought 297 housing units in the first quarter, a surge of nearly 300 percent from a year earlier.

"Many Palestinians have no passport. They travel with a travel document and face difficulties," said Ismail Altin, chairman of the Arabic Turkish Businessmen and Investors Association.

"Now they can get a Turkish passport in a cheaper and easier way. That's why we see a boost in demand from Palestinians," he said.

Jet Airways' lenders hope bidding can save airline



AP
NEW DELHI

Creditors of India's beleaguered Jet Airways said they were "reasonably hopeful" that a bidding process with potential investors for a controlling stake in the airline would save the company, while airline employees rallied in New Delhi and Mumbai for a government rescue.

A consortium of 26 lenders led by the State Bank of India released a statement Thursday following the cash-starved carrier's decision late Wednesday to suspend flight operations.

Jet Airways, once India's largest airline, was down to seven aircraft flying only domestic routes earlier this week.

"Since no emergency funding from the lenders or any other source of funding was forthcoming, it would therefore not have been possible for us to pay for fuel or other critical services to keep the operations going," the airline's chief executive Vinay Dube **(pictured)** said in a statement published on the company's website.

Zoya Shaikh, a 23-year-old Jet Airways airport agent, said at a gathering of employees outside the airline's Mumbai headquarters yesterday that she was still waiting for this month's salary.

"There is no clear idea of what is happening. We have been told by the airline management to wait for what the bidders plan to do," she said.

Jet Airways pilots have complained that they haven't been paid in four months, and that more than 20,000 jobs are at stake.

In New Delhi, hundreds of employees in uniforms – including flight attendants in the airline's signature yellow – appealed for Prime Minister Narendra Modi to step in, some holding signs that read, "Save Jet Airways, save our family."

"My kids are asking for medicine. Who do we go to and beg? If we don't ask the government, who do we ask?" Rajender Kumar, a Jet Airways baggage handler, cried.

Shares in the Mumbai-based airline were down 32.7 percent on the Bombay Stock Exchange at yesterday's close.

Travel agents in New Delhi said Jet Airways' grounding was affecting prices and availability of flights in and outside of India.

Jyoti Chopra of Sadhana Tours India said there were no seats available on any of the five daily direct flights from New Delhi to London Heathrow anytime in the next six days. One-way flights with one or more stops were selling for around 70,000 rupees ($1,006), about 43 percent higher than a week ago.

"If a passenger has something urgent, I don't know how they will do it," she said.

A round-trip flight from New Delhi to Thiruvananthapuram, a city in Kerala state in southern India, a week ago would have cost about 14,000 rupees ($201) but showed at 35,000 rupees ($503) on Thursday, Chopra said.

On Tuesday, former Jet Airways Chairman Naresh Goyal, who founded the airline in 1992, withdrew plans to bid for a controlling stake in the company, according to aviation consultant Mark Martin.

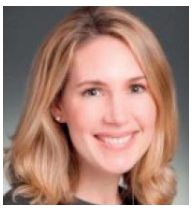
It was not immediately clear who else might bid for the company. Etihad Aviation Group purchased a 24% stake in 2013.

"Finding new investors was always going to be a tall order for Jet Airways," said Loizos Heracleous, an aviation expert at Warwick Business School in Britain. "Increases in industry profitability after 2011 were aided by lower fuel prices. With fuel prices on an upward trend since 2016, the performance of some airlines has taken a hit."

The airline had 119 planes on December 31, when it first defaulted on some of its more than $1bn in debt. This week, its fleet was down to 14 planes after some lessors grounded aircraft for lack of payment.

The airline reported a net loss in the quarter that ended in December of 5.8 billion rupees, about $83m.

Amazon & Google agree on each other's apps streaming



AFP
WASHINGTON

Amazon and Google announced yesterday they had agreed to allow each other's streaming media applications to work on their platforms, ending a spat over video between the tech giants.

The companies said in a statement that the official YouTube apps will be available on Amazon's Fire TV in the coming months, allowing users of the Amazon platform to access the music videos, movies, shows and other content from the Google-owned service.

The agreement also enables Amazon Prime members streaming to Chromecast or using Android TV devices to access Amazon's video content. The deal appears to end a spat between the two tech giants that made it difficult or impossible for users of one of the video services to use the platform to access the other's.

"We are excited to work with Amazon to launch the official YouTube apps on Fire TV devices worldwide," said Heather Rivera **(pictured)**, head of product partnerships at YouTube.

"Bringing our flagship YouTube experience to Amazon Fire TV gives our users even more ways to watch the videos and creators they love."

Andrew Bennett, head of business development for Prime Video, said the agreement would "give our customers convenient access to the shows and movies they love... customers will have even more ways to stream what they want, whenever they want, no matter where they are."

Amazon and Google are in fierce competition over streaming, but their spat had sparked concerns of anti-competitive conduct by locking out an important rival.

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1 Central point
4 Sit-up targets
7 "— new?"
12 Eggs
13 Perched
14 Sun (Pref.)
15 Convent dweller
16 Tropical cooler
18 Sprite
19 "Believe it —!"
20 Wilson's predecessor
22 Mag. staff
23 The Mets' old home
27 Writer Rand
29 Brennan of "Clue"
31 Marsh bird
34 Tall and thin
35 Secret matters
37 Buddhist sect
38 Low isles
39 Hit CBS series
41 Nonsense
45 Sediment
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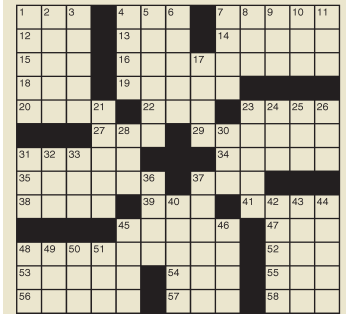
DOWN

1 Music for nine
2 Palate dangler
3 Alberta resort town
4 Regarding
5 Lacking vegetation
6 Rise
7 Sharpen
8 Chop
9 "The Greatest"
10 Can material
11 Lay down the lawn
17 Rx amount
21 Spanish snacks
23 Word on the street?
24 Chick's mom
25 "A mouse!"
26 Whatever number
28 Longing
30 — -de-France
31 Pouch
32 Gun lobby org.
33 Glacial
36 Farm fraction
37 Move evasively
40 Leaks slowly
42 Of an arm bone
43 "Shrek" princess
44 Gooey treat
45 Wagon
46 Faxed
48 Tax form ID
49 — de cologne
50 Invoice fig.
51 Little pellets

Solution time: 26 mins.

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F	A	K	E	S	■	M	G	P	■	S	A	D
R	A	I	D	■	M	A	R	■	H	A	L	E
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M	A	C	K	■	T	A	D	S	■	A	S	K

Yesterday's answer 8-26



MALL

Vellai Pookal (2D/Tamil) 2:15pm;
Mera Naam Shaji (2D/Malayalam) 2:00pm;
Jersey (2D/Telugu) 2:30pm;
Missing Link (2D/Animation) 4:30 & 6:15pm;
Teen Spirit (2D/Romance) 4:30pm;
Kanchana 3 (2D/Tamil) 5:30 & 11:15pm;
Last Fool Show (2D/Tagalog) 6:15pm **Kalank (2D/Hindi)** 8:00 & 11:00pm; **Stockholm** 8:00pm
Madhura Raja (2D/Malayalam) 8:30pm
The Curse Of La Llorona (2D/Horror) 9:45pm
Triple Threat (2D/Action) 11:30pm

LANDMARK

Vellai Pookal (2D/Tamil) 3:45pm;
Madhura Raja (2D/Malayalam) 2:00 & 8:15pm;
Missing Link (2D/Animation) 2:00, 4:45 & 6:30pm; **Kanchana 3 (Telugu)** 2:15, **(Tamil)** 5:15 & 11:00pm; **Last Fool Show (2D/Tagalog)** 6:00pm; **Triple Threat (2D/Action)** 8:00pm; **Kalank (2D/Hindi)** 8:15 & 11:15pm;
The Curse Of La Llorona (2D/Horror) 9:45pm;
Mera Naam Shaji (2D/Malayalam) 11:30pm

FLIK Mirqab Mall

Dumbo (2D/Fantasy) 5:00 & 6:00pm
Hellboy (2D/Action) 6:10pm
Kalank (2D/Hindi) 3:20, 5:00, 6:45, 8:25, 9:50, 10:50 & 11:20pm; **Missing Link (2D/Animation)** 10:25, 12:25, 2:25, 3:00 & 7:20pm
Shazam! (2D/Action) 12:00, 2:20, 4:25, 5:20, 7:10, 8:10 & 10:10pm; **Stockholm (2D/Action)** 11:45am, 12:50 & 1:45pm
Teen Spirit (2D/Romance) 10:50am, 12:10, 1:20, & 2:10pm
The Curse Of La Llorona (2D/Horror) 8:25, 9:20, 10:25, 11:50pm & 0:25am
The Hummingbird Project 11:00am, 12:15, 2:20, 3:45 & 8:40pm

Note: Programme is subject to change without prior notice.

ROYAL PLAZA

Missing Link (2D/Animation) 2:15 & 4:00pm;
Madhura Raja (2D/Malayalam) 2:30pm; **Jersey** 2:30pm
Mission In Seven Days – Kuwaiti (2D/Arabic) 5:45pm;
Kanchana 3 (2D/Tamil) 5:30 & 11:15pm;
Mera Naam Shaji (2D/Malayalam) 5:45pm;
The Hummingbird Project (2D/Thriller) 7:30pm;
Kalank (2D/Hindi) 8:15 & 11:15pm;
Mission Of Honor (2D/Action) 9:30pm;
Kursk (2D/Action) 11:30pm

ASIAN TOWN

Kanchana 3 (2D/Telugu) 12:15pm; **Mera Naam Shaji (2D/Malayalam)** 3:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:30pm & 1:00am
Jersey (2D/Telugu) 12:00 & 2:30pm; **Kalank (2D/Hindi)** 5:00, 10:45pm & 1:45pm; **Madhura Raja (2D/Malayalam)** 3:15, 8:15, 11:00pm & 1:45am; **Lucifer (2D/Malayalam)** 3:00 & 9:15pm
Vellai Pookal (2D/Tamil) 7:30pm;
Kanchana 3 (2D/Tamil) 12:00, 6:00pm & 12:15am.

ROXY

Kalank (2D/Hindi) 10:30am, 1:40, 5:00, 8:20, 8:45, 11:40pm & 12:00midnight; **Mera Naam Shaji (2D/Malayalam)** 11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:30 & 10:30pm; **The Curse of Llorona** 1:10, 2:15, 5:00, 6:00, 8:00, 9:00, 10:00, 11:15pm; **Missing Link (2D)** 11:00, 12:50, 2:40, 4:40 & 6:40pm; **Shazam! (Action)** 10:30am, 11:30am, 3:10, 4:20pm & 12:00midnight

AL KHOR

Kalank (2D/Hindi) 11:00am, 8:15 & 11:30pm
Mera Naam Shaji (2D/Malayalam) 12:15, 6:00 & 11:45pm
Missing Link (2D) 12:45, 2:15, 4:15 & 6:15pm
Madhura Raja (2D/Malayalam) 11:30am, 3:00 & 8:45pm
Kanchana 3 (2D/Telugu) 2:45 & 8:15pm
The Curse Of La Llorona (2D/Horror) 6:00pm



The lives of three men sharing the same name intertwine, leading to a series of hilarious incidents.

8-26 CRYPTOQUIP

WCWFKHL GSHLHGPZL VA H OHDSVABPCA VLYVAB PHKZ OSC OHD MCLA HAT MLZT VA XVZY: VGSHMCT FXLHVAZ.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: A equals N



The Peninsula
Local focus, Global vision
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Pakistan leave Amir out of preliminary World Cup squad



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Djokovic, Nadal cruise into Monte Carlo quarters

AFP
MONTE CARLO

Top seed Novak Djokovic and 11-time champion Rafael Nadal showed no mercy in dominating wins to power into the Monte Carlo Masters quarter-finals yesterday.

Djokovic extended his winning streak against US players with a 6-3, 6-0 defeat of Taylor Fritz.

The two-time tournament champion has now won nine in a row over Americans since losing at Wimbledon in 2016 to Sam Querrey.

"It was very challenging to play in these (windy) conditions," Djokovic said. "Taylor just flattens the ball.

"We had five, six close games in the first set, I just managed to break his resistance midway through. After that, things went on my side and I felt more comfortable. This was one of these days where you just have to hang in there and try to put an extra ball back in the court - that was enough."

Nadal repeated last year's semi-final win over Grigor Dimitrov, beating the Bulgarian for the 12th time, 6-4, 6-1.

"I'm very, very happy, this is an important victory for me," the second seed said after winning his 23rd consecutive set at the tournament.

"Grigor is a super talent and is very dangerous. It was a positive match for me.

Spain's 17-time Grand Slam champion started his clay season this week after missing a month with another knee problem and has title-holder points to defend here plus Barcelona, Rome and Roland Garros.

The king of clay is bidding for a 12th trophy in the principality. His record at the event is a staggering 70-4.

Nadal spent almost an hour in securing the first set but picked up the pace in the second as he ran out the winner.

He next faces Guido Pella, who defeated Italy's Marco Cecchinato 6-4, 4-6, 6-4.

Third seed Alexander Zverev suffered another early exit as he lost 7-6 (8/6), 6-1 to 2013 semi-finalist Fabio Fognini, while French Open runner-up Dominic Thiem was blown away by Dusan Lajovic.

The Serb reeled off five straight games to complete a 6-3, 6-3 win over Indian Wells champion Thiem, who had beaten Lajovic on six previous occasions.

World number one Djokovic will be playing his ninth quarter-final here from 13 appearances at his home event.

Djokovic turned in a steady performance while his opponent committed nearly 30 unforced errors in 68 minutes.

Sixth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas earlier lost 6-2, 1-6, 6-4 as Daniil Medvedev continued his run of form. The Russian will next line up against Djokovic after losing to him in January in the Australian Open fourth round.

Tsitsipas was caught on the back foot facing three match points as he trailed 0-40 on his serve late in the third set.

After saving the first two, the Greek botched the third to seal his exit after an hour and three-quarters.

Medvedev increased his leading total of ATP season match wins to 20 as a result after he beat Tsitsipas for the fourth time in as many attempts.

"This was a great achievement for me," Medvedev said. "Everything was perfect today."

Ranked a career-high 14th, Medvedev credits his rising form to a renewed dedication to the sport.

"I've been working hard for the past 18 months - since before the start of 2018. I've dedicated my life to tennis, which I did not do before," he said.

"I had my best season last year - hopefully this year will be better."

The Russian reached his first quarter-final at the Masters 1000 level after winning his second match against a Top 10 opponent.

Tsitsipas, runner-up last season to Nadal in Toronto, suffered his eighth defeat of the season against 18 wins and will try and lift his game next week on the clay of Barcelona.

Italian qualifier Lorenzo Sonego defeated Britain's Cameron Norrie 6-2, 7-5.

ATP MONTE CARLO MASTERS RESULTS

Third Round

Novak Djokovic (SRB x1) bt Taylor Fritz (USA) 6-3, 6-0
Daniil Medvedev (RUS x10) bt Stefanos Tsitsipas (GRE x6) 6-2, 1-6, 6-4
Dusan Lajovic (SRB) bt Dominic Thiem (AUT x4) 6-3, 6-3
Lorenzo Sonego (ITA) bt Cameron Norrie (GBR) 6-2, 7-5
Borna Coric (CRO x9) bt Pierre-Hugues Herbert (FRA) 6-4, 6-2
Fabio Fognini (ITA x13) bt Alexander Zverev (GER x3) 7-6 (8/6), 6-1
Guido Pella (ARG) bt Marco Cecchinato (ITA x11) 6-4, 4-6, 6-4
Rafael Nadal (ESP x2) bt Grigor Dimitrov (BUL) 6-4, 6-1



Serbia's Novak Djokovic plays a backhand return during the Monte-Carlo ATP Masters Series tournament in Monaco, yesterday.

FIBA 3x3 World Tour: Novi Sad extend unbeaten run with big wins in Doha

CHINTHANA WASALA
THE PENINSULA

Serbian powerhouse Novi Sad extended their unbeaten run from last year with two more wins on the opening day of the FIBA 3x3 World Tour – Doha 2019 being held at Katara Amphitheatre, yesterday.

Novi Sad outplayed Doha 22-6 to record their first win yesterday.

Doha, who were given a wildcard due to Qatar's host-status in the opening round of the Tour, had the services of Elhadj Seydou, Moustafa Essam Fouda, Nedim Muslic and Ousseynou Ndiaye.

Novi Sad later followed up with another impressive show which saw them defeating Tokyo 22-7 in Pool B.

Top seeds Liman, who won three Masters last year, defeated Qatar's Katara 21-11 in the opening game of the two-day event.

Katara team consists of Bobo Magassa, Aaron Randolph Mitchell, Abdulrahman Mohamed Saad and Fadi Abilmona.

Despite the convincing win against the hosts, the defending champions, Liman went down to Pasig Chooks from The Philippines, 16-19 in Pool A.

Balanga, also from the Philliphines, booked their place in today's quarter-finals by winning both of their Group C games yesterday.

They beat Riga 19-17 in a thrilling match before overpowering Moscow with a same margin.

Moscow lost their next game to Riga 12-17 as they lost the opportunity to advance.

Today, Pasig meet Riga in the first quarter-final at 4.45pm at the same venue. Balanga, Liman, Tokyo and yesterday's heroes Novi Sad have also made it to the last-eight stage.

The semi-finals will begin at 6.55pm, followed by the final which tips off at 8.20pm.

The FIBA 3x3 World Tour is the pinnacle event of an 'open' network of FIBA-endorsed 3x3 tournaments.

The 2019 season consists of 11 Masters tournaments which will culminate with the FIBA 3x3 World Tour Final on November 2-3 in Utsunomiya, Japan.

The tour now moves to Chengdu, in China's Sichuan province for the second leg.



Doha's Moustafa Essam Fouda (right) dribbles during the Pool B game against Tokyo, on the opening day of the FIBA 3x3 World Tour – Doha 2019 at Katara Amphitheatre, yesterday.

OPENING DAY'S RESULTS

Liman beat Katara 22 - 11
Novi Sad beat Doha 22 - 6
Balanga beat Riga 19-17
Piran beat Mount-Royal 22 - 13
Pasig beat Katara 21-14
Tokyo beat Doha 19-13
Balanga beat Moscow 20-19
Ljubljana beat Mount-Royal 17-12
Pasig beat Liman 19-16
Novi Sad beat Tokyo 22-7
Riga beat Moscow 17-12

Mumbai Indians thrash Delhi Capitals by 40 runs

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Rishabh Pant had started Delhi Capitals' journey in the 12th edition of the Indian Premier League by smashing Mumbai Indians pacer Jasprit Bumrah all over the park in their opening encounter in Mumbai. But Bumrah got his revenge at the Feroz Shah Kotla yesterday as he sent Pant's off-stump for a walk in the park.

With that ended DC's hope as they finished on 128/9, losing the game by 40 runs.

Chasing 169, DC made a mess of the target after Shikhar Dhawan was dismissed for 35 in the 7th over of the innings by Rahul Chahar.

After a quality start of 48/0 in the first six overs, Dhawan's wicket opened the floodgates as Chahar kept picking wickets and finished with figures of 3/19 from his four overs.

While Chahar sent back Dhawan, Prithvi Shaw (20) and skipper Shreyas Iyer (3), Krunal Pandya sent back the dangerous Colin Munro (3) as Delhi were never really in the chase on a low and slow Kotla wicket.

Earlier, Hardik Pandya (32 off 15 balls) and Krunal (37*) provided the late order flourish as Mumbai Indians scored 168/5 in their 20 overs.

Having bowled a disciplined line and length through the innings, the DC bowlers lost the plot in the last five overs as the MI batsmen picked 64 runs.

While Krunal was the anchor during the 54-run partnership, Hardik once again showed why he is such a dangerous batsman in the death overs as he used the long handle to excellent effect to dig out the low full tosses and attempted yorkers and sent them over the ropes till Kagiso Rabada dismissed him off the third ball of the 20th over.

Brief Scores:

Mumbai Indians: 168/5 in 20 overs (Krunal Pandya 37n.o.; Rabada 2/38)

Delhi Capitals: 128/9 (Axar 26; Chahar 3/19)

Sheikh Joaan participates in Olympic Refuge Foundation Executive Office meeting





The Qatar Olympic Committee (QOC) President, H E Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al Thani speaks with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) President, Dr Thomas Bach on the sidelines of the third meeting of the Olympic Refuge Foundation Executive Office, which was held in Lausanne, Switzerland . The meeting was chaired by Dr Thomas Bach, who is also the Chairperson of the Olympic Refuge Foundation. The meeting was attended by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, who is also Vice-Chairperson of the Foundation. The meeting was also attended by Honorary Member of the Foundation, Dr Jacques Rogge, member of the Foundation and President of World Taekwondo Dr Chungwon Choue, member of the first Refugee Olympic Team at the Olympic Games Rio 2016, Yiech Pur Biel and other members of the Executive Office. RIGHT: H E Sheikh Joaan poses for a group photo with other officials.

12th edition of SOP concludes with pulsating finals at Aspire Academy

THE PENINSULA
DOHA



The players and officials of Ibn Taymiyyah Independent Secondary School celebrate with the trophy as officials applaud them after the final at Aspire Dome, yesterday.

Ibn Taymiyyah Independent Secondary School grabbed top honours as the 12th edition of the School Olympic Program (SOP) concluded with thrilling finals at Aspire Dome yesterday.

Top officials including Jassem Al Buainain, Secretary-General of the Qatar Olympic Committee (QOC), Dr Ibrahim Bin Saleh Al Nuaimi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education, and Qatar national football team's stars Akram Afif, Salem Al Hajri and Tariq Sulaiman were among the high number of spectators, who watched five thrilling finals among the schoolboys.

The title-deciding matches played yesterday included finals of football, basketball, volleyball, gymnastics and tennis tournaments.

Ibn Taymiyyah secured the coveted football title after edging out Palestine School 1-0 following an interesting battle.

Expressing his delight on the success of latest edition, Al Buainain praised the level of competition and motivation among young competitors during the finals.

"It was great to see these youngsters competing with such a passion. All the hard work by School Olympic Program has started paying dividend," Al Buainain said on the sidelines of the finals.

"The School Olympic Program is part of Qatar National Vision 2030 and I am very happy that it is progressing well. This edition turned out to be a huge success," he added.

The QOC Secretary-General also thanked Ministry of Education and Higher Education, and Aspire for their cooperation.

"We are delighted to partner with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. We also thank Aspire for hosting the finals of the School Olympic Program. We are always keen to distinguish the School Olympic Program, which started in 2007 as one of the projects that is the legacy of the Asian Games 2006. The program is supported by the leadership of the Qatar Olympic Committee," said the top QOC official.

"School sports are among the priorities of the Qatar Olympic Committee. We strive to achieve the program's strategic objectives, achieve future sports excellence and spread sports in various fields in Qatar," he added.

Meanwhile, Abdulrahman Al Muftah, Executive Director of Qatar Sports Federation (QSF), said the organisers achieved their target with another successful edition of SOP.

"We are pleased with what has been achieved not only on the final day, but in the program in general. It is a great success which will continue to give positive results in the future," said Al Muftah.

"This success brings us more responsibility to deliver the best in the next stage and the next edition will be the best," he concluded.

Secretary-General of QSF, Ali Al Hitmi praised young athletes and thanked all the top officials who made the finals a resounding success.

"We are pleased with this special day and with the great attendance of all officials and the various schools in the five finals," said Al Hitmi.

"It was also a special day in the presence of the stars of our team and the participation of students in this celebration especially as they represent role models for these young players and such attendance has a good and distinctive reaction of students," he added.

The School Olympic Program is part of Qatar National Vision 2030 and I am very happy that it is progressing well. This edition turned out to be a huge success: Jassem Al Buainain



QOC Secretary-General Jassem Al Buainain (front, left) arrives for finals along with other officials.

Qatar Manateq Baja round four begins today

QNA
DOHA

The fourth round of the local championship Qatar Manateq Baja Rally will kick off today, with the championship set to witness the participation of local drivers as well as drivers from Kuwait, Oman and Russia.

The event will start with the technical inspection of the participating cars and the announcement of the final list of the participating teams, which are yet up to 15 contestants. The rally's organisers will meet with drivers and their assistants to give them guidance on the rally and the paths.

Qatar Manateq Baja Rally will be held in the southern desert of Sealine with 124 km long and includes two repeated phases, the first at 9:30am and 62 km, and the second at 12.00. The fourth round is expected to witness strong competition from 15 teams to win the T1, T2 and T3 categories.

A number of leading drivers, led by Sheikh Hamad bin Eid Al Thani, Mohammed Al Meer, Mohammed Al Attiyah, Rashid Al Mohannadi, Jamal Fakhro, Abdullah Al Rabban, Ahmed Alloh, Mohammed Al Hargan and Omani Abdulaziz Al Bashir are participating.

The fourth round is expected to witness strong competition from 15 teams to win the T1, T2 and T3 categories.

Joshua-Miller fight off after New York denies licence



Anthony Joshua

AFP
LOS ANGELES

Jarrell Miller was denied a licence to box by the New York State Athletic Commission (NYSAC) over a failed drug test, scuppering his planned June 1 bout with world heavyweight champion Anthony Joshua.

In a statement quoted by US media outlets, the NYSAC said Miller was barred from fighting in the state following the news of his positive doping case.

"The New York State Athletic Commission has denied Jarrell Miller's professional boxing license application for a violation relating to the use of a prohibited substance. We have no further comment at this time," the commission said.

Miller, who is undefeated in his 24 professional fights, was due to take on the Briton at Madison Square Garden for the WBA, IBF and WBO titles on June 1.

However on Tuesday it emerged Miller had tested positive for a banned substance following a test conducted by the Voluntary Anti-Doping Association (VADA) on March 20.

"We have been informed by VADA that there has been an adverse finding in Jarrell Miller's sample collected on March 20th, 2019," Eddie Hearn, Joshua's promoter, tweeted.

Miller previously served a nine-month ban from the California State Athletic Commission after testing positive for methylhexaneamine when kickboxing in 2014.

During their promotional tour for the fight, Miller revealed that both fighters had agreed to between 10 and 12 weeks of drug testing in the build-up to the bout.

ESPN reported that Joshua still planned to make his US debut as planned in June for what will be his seventh title defence. Promoter Hearn said he was scrambling to find an alternative opponent.

"I am on the search for a new opponent," Hearn said.

"Literally anyone can get it. There are some names that would appeal to our partners -- DAZN, *Sky Sports* and Madison Square Garden -- more than others and it's our job to get the ones that appeal most. I've spoken to 16 heavyweights in the last 24 hours, 10 of which are not suitable."

Not much excitement as Juve set to clinch another title

REUTERS
MILAN

Juventus should finally wrap up an eighth successive Serie A title tomorrow but it will be little more than a consolation prize to the Turin side following their Champions League exit.

At the same time, opponents Fiorentina, without a win for two months, will have their minds elsewhere as they concentrate on their Coppa Italia campaign which offers the chance to win their first silverware since 2001.

Juve need a point tomorrow to clinch the title with five matches to spare. Even if they lose, they will have another chance on Monday, when second-placed Napoli, who are 17 points behind, would still need to beat Atalanta to prolong the contest.

The lack of anticipation around tomorrow's match sums up a strange Serie A season in which Juventus, spearheaded by Cristiano Ronaldo, have been utterly dominant without playing particularly well.

Their signing of the five-times World Player of the Year in July was initially seen as a boost for Serie A which has been struggling to attract the world's biggest players.

But Ronaldo's ability to conjure goals out of nothing has often allowed to Juventus to win matches without really exerting themselves and, in others, snatch wins they have not really deserved.

Fiorentina, meanwhile, are one of several exasperating Serie A outfits who threaten to offer a challenge to the bigger teams before slumping into mediocrity.

They boast plenty of talented young players such as forward Giovanni Simeone -- the son of Atletico Madrid coach Diego -- and Federico Chiesa.

Yet they have struggled to turn dominance of matches into wins, and their record of 16 draws in 32 league matches, plus their position in the table -- 10th out of 20 -- sums up a mediocre season.

Their frustration came to a head two weeks ago when, after a home defeat to lowly Frosinone, the club issued a statement criticising the team and coach Stefano Pioli resigned in protest, saying his "human and professional" qualities had been questioned.

In his place, Vincenzo Montella has returned for a second stint, having led Fiorentina to three successive fourth-placed finishes during his previous spell.

The bright spot has been Fiorentina's Coppa Italia campaign which has taken them to the semi-finals. They visit Atalanta for the second leg next Thursday following a 3-3 draw in the first.

Montella said on his arrival that he sensed the air of discontent among the club's fans.

"In Florence, we need synergy between the fans, media and the team," he said.

"I ask them to trust in my enthusiasm and to only protest if we deserve it."

"There is always a sense of disappointment after a change of coach especially for players who got on so well with Pioli. However, in football you need to turn over a new leaf quickly and the lads want to turn around this negative trend."

Juve need a point tomorrow to clinch the title with five matches to spare.



Tottenham Hotspur's Spanish striker Fernando Llorente (foreground) celebrates after scoring his team's third goal during the UEFA Champions League quarter-final second leg match against Manchester City on Wednesday.

Spurs 'still in a dream' after win: Pochettino

REUTERS
LONDON

Tottenham Hotspur manager Mauricio Pochettino says his players are 'still in a dream' after reaching the Champions League semi-finals in dramatic fashion but expects his side to be ready for tomorrow's crucial Premier League clash against Manchester City.

Spurs lost 4-3 in a classic encounter against City in Wednesday's quarter-final second leg, but went through on away goals after the tie finished 4-4 on aggregate.

It was a gripping spectacle right until the final few minutes when City had a stoppage-time goal from Raheem Sterling, which would have sent them through, ruled out for offside after a VAR review.

"We are all tired after an amazing, crazy and unbelievable night," Pochettino told a news conference yesterday.

"It means a lot to reach the semi-finals. We still haven't realised because we are still in a dream. We're still in a bubble. We can feel the happiness of our fans, also through the messages of family and friends.

It means a lot to reach the semi-finals. We still haven't realised because we are still in a dream. We're still in a bubble. We can feel the happiness of our fans, also through the messages of family and friends: Mauricio Pochettino

"But because we are so focused and busy preparing for Saturday, you do not allow yourself to live your reality. Our job is to be focused and concentrated and use all the tools to be ready for Saturday (tomorrow)."

Spurs, currently third in the league, return to the Etihad Stadium tomorrow as they hope to boost their chances of finishing in the top-four for a fourth consecutive season.

"In 10 days to play three games... everybody thinks we know each other better now but there is not much time to train or prepare," Pochettino added.

"We need to assess some players, we need to assess some players that cannot be possible to play.

"That is the most important... to try to take the best decision and to provide the team with energy to be possible to fight and challenge for the three points."

In their first European Cup semi-final appearance since 1961-62, Tottenham will face Ajax Amsterdam, with the first leg scheduled in London at their new 62,000-capacity stadium on April 30.

"We need to be humble. No one expected us to beat City. It can give massive belief but if you are not clever enough to manage it, that victory can make you weaker," said Pochettino.

"It's so important to respect Ajax. Beating Real Madrid and Juventus means they are more favourites than us -- that is a reality."

The Champions League final takes place on June 1 in Madrid and Pochettino has not ruled out the chance of striker Harry Kane recovering from an ankle injury to play in it, should they beat Ajax.

"We are going to assess him day by day. We are not optimistic but you know Harry Kane - with Harry Kane, all is possible," he added.

Klopp focuses on Cardiff as Messi looms for Liverpool

AFP
PORTO

Jurgen Klopp **(pictured)** might be steeling himself for some sleepless nights as he tries to work out how to stop Lionel Messi, but for now the German can be delighted at seeing his Liverpool side extend their outstanding record in European ties under his management.

Having won 2-0 at home in the first leg, Liverpool always knew that an early away goal in the second leg of their quarter-final against FC Porto at the Estadio do Dragao would effectively kill the tie.

So it proved, as after surviving a barrage of early pressure in northern Portugal on Wednesday, Sadio Mane's 26th-minute strike broke Porto hearts and set Liverpool on their way to a 4-1 win on the night.

Having won 3-1 at Bayern Munich in the last round, here was another statement away victory for the Anfield club after they lost all three matches on the road in the group stage.

Klopp remains unbeaten after 10 two-legged European ties as Liverpool manager, with two coming against Porto.

He has only been stopped in finals, against Sevilla in the Europa League in 2016 and Real Madrid in last season's Champions League.

We play again in three days, so we fly tomorrow and make ourselves ready for another intense football game: Jurgen Klopp

"I know people like to be disrespectful to a team like Porto, but we knew how difficult it is and we won 2-0 at home, it was deserved, and here anything could have happened," Klopp said.

"We dealt really well with it. In the quarter-finals there are only unbelievably strong teams."

It is six years since Barca lost at home in the Champions League, but Liverpool need to ensure they remain in the tie before the return at Anfield on May 7.

"It is our dream. Every single player wants to play this kind of game in their lives," admitted Mane, yet Klopp will have to come up with a plan to deal with the brilliant Messi.

"Thank God I don't have to think about that tonight," Klopp joked on Wednesday.

"I have a few more nights to think about that. Everybody tried it so far and nobody can do it.

"We still will try it. We are looking forward to it but we have so many jobs to do before we meet Barcelona. Let's first play these games and then let's prepare Barcelona."

The focus now reverts back to the Premier League, with Liverpool two points clear of Manchester City at the summit having played a game more. Klopp's squad stayed in Portugal on Wednesday night before returning home to start preparations for Sunday's visit to relegation battlers Cardiff City.

By then they could be behind Pep Guardiola's City side, who will look to avenge their incredible Champions League defeat against Tottenham Hotspur when they play the London club again tomorrow.

Despite the games coming thick and fast, Liverpool emerged from their trip to the Estadio do Dragao in great shape.

Klopp rotated his squad, with Divock Origi making a rare start while Roberto Firmino and Jordan Henderson were only used as substitutes.

In addition, Joe Gomez came off the bench for his first top-team appearance since suffering a leg fracture in December.

"In the last third of the season you see the finish line already but you need a little bit of luck with injuries," admitted Klopp.

"We play again in three days, so we fly tomorrow and make ourselves ready for another intense football game."

Cardiff boosted their survival hopes with a 2-0 win at Brighton and Hove Albion on Tuesday.

"Cardiff is completely back in the race with that result so they will fight for it." However, after this latest victory -- their eighth in a row -- Liverpool have the momentum as they dream of winning the league and the European Cup in the same season, something they last achieved back in 1984.



CL failures haunt Guardiola as City fall short again

AFP
MANCHESTER

Another season will pass without Champions League glory for Pep Guardiola's Manchester City, but few will forget the manner in which the quest for a historic quadruple was ended by a combination of Tottenham Hotspur and VAR.

Spurs survived a seven-goal thriller on Wednesday night at the Etihad, losing the battle 4-3 but winning the war on away goals thanks to their 1-0 victory in the first leg a titanic quarter-final tie.

A match that saw City lead 1-0, trail 2-1, then forge ahead 4-2 to lead the tie for the first time before Fernando Llorente's controversial decisive goal was allowed to stand after a VAR check for handball, brought one final twist in stoppage time.

Guardiola scampered down the touchline in celebration when Raheem Sterling thought he had completed his hat-trick with the goal to take City into the semi-finals for just the second time.

Seconds later, delirium turned to disbelief, as Guardiola sank to his knees in the realisation that VAR had revealed an offside earlier in the move.

Guardiola described the exit as "cruel."

Winning the Champions League remains the grail for the club's Abu Dhabi owners after a decade of pouring money into the club, but no one can say they were not entertained.

For the much-lauded Catalan coach, though, the elimination continues a pattern of Champions League anguish since he won the title for a second time with his great Barcelona team in 2011.

Guardiola's Barca reign ended in semi-final defeat to Chelsea in 2012 and there were last four exits in each of his three seasons at Bayern Munich.

The upturn in City's standards since he arrived in 2016 is unquestionable, and they could still complete an unprecedented treble of Premier League, FA Cup and League Cup in England.

However, it is for Champions League success that Guardiola was pursued so long by City, and in three attempts he has failed to even reach the semi-finals.

Guardiola has consistently played down City's potential as a European powerhouse in his three years in charge, contrasting their lack of historic success to Barca, Bayern and Real Madrid.

But it is Monaco, Liverpool and now a Spurs side 16 points adrift of City in the Premier League, that have sent his expensively assembled squad packing in the Champions League.

A common theme has been City's poor defensive record. Monaco scored three times in both legs in the last 16 in 2017, Liverpool thrice in 31 minutes to take a decisive lead in last season's quarter-final and, even shorn of Harry Kane, Tottenham became just the second visiting side this season to score three at the Etihad.

Guardiola will contend that is why his approach for the first leg was more conservative, but the lack of an away goal ultimately cost him.



Pep Guardiola

World Cup: Pakistan leave Amir out of preliminary squad

AFP
LAHORE

Pakistan selectors yesterday left out pace spearhead Mohammad Amir **(pictured)** from the preliminary 15-man squad for next month's World Cup to be held in England.

The 27-year-old has been in wretched form since guiding Pakistan to win over India in the Champions trophy final in June 2017, with just four wickets in 14 matches.

But the left-arm fast bowler, who missed the 2011 and 2015 World Cup due to a five-year ban on match fixing imposed in 2010, has a lifeline as teams can be changed until May 23 -- seven days before the ten-team event starts.

Chief selector Inzamam-ul-Haq said Amir's form was concerning.

"Amir had not performed as well as was expected of him," said Inzamam, who was part of Pakistan's World Cup winning team in 1992.

Amir is included in the 17-man squad for the five-match one-day series against England from May 5-19, and can regain his World Cup place if he performs well.

"We have included Amir for the England series with a hope that he regains his rhythm and wicket-taking ability in the series," said Inzamam.

Allrounder Mohammad Hafeez was included in the World Cup squad subject to fully recovering from a fractured thumb injury he sustained during the Pakistan Super League (PSL) in February this year.

There was a surprise World Cup call-up for 19-year-old rookie fast bowler Mohammad Hasnain, who bowled at 150kph in the PSL earlier this year.

"Hasnain is exciting and can be a surprise package of the World Cup," said Inzamam of the paceman, who played three one-day internationals against Australia last month, taking two wickets.

Sarfraz Ahmed will lead both the squads.

Another left-arm pacer, 29-year-old Junaid Khan, was preferred over Amir.



Opener Abid Ali, 31, also earned a call-up after scoring a debut hundred against Australia.

The squad is largely comprised of young players, with only a handful of veterans -- Sarfraz and Haris Sohail, who played in 2015, as well as Shoaib Malik, who played in 2007, and Mohammad Hafeez, who took part in the 2007 and 2011 tournaments.

Pakistan will leave for the UK on Tuesday and play three one-day matches against county teams before taking on England in the five-match ODI series from May 5.

They will play two warm-up World Cup games against Afghanistan on May 24 and Bangladesh on May 26, before taking on the West Indies in their first World Cup match in Nottingham on May 31. All 10 teams will play each other in the first stage, with the top four playing the semi-finals.

Proteas recall off-form Amla

REUTERS
CAPE TOWN

South Africa have included off-form opening batsman Hashim Amla in their squad for the Cricket World Cup in England and Wales starting next month, but there is no place for all-rounder Chris Morris.

Amla's selection has been the topic of hot debate. He has been a stalwart at the top of the order for the last decade, but his form in all formats has been called into question in the past year.

In One-Day International cricket he has managed a single century in his previous 16 innings, dating back to the start of 2018, at an average of 35.26.

He was given the opportunity to find form in domestic cricket over the last few weeks, but has a top-score of 32 in six innings, failing to reach double-figures in three of those.

Morris's exclusion as an all-rounder is a surprise given his form in the Indian Premier League and his death-bowling ability, but the selectors have instead opted for Dwaine Pretorius and Andile Phehlukwayo, with only one of those ever likely to play at any given time.

Fast bowlers Lungi Ngidi and Anrich Nortje were both injury doubts, but have been selected, with the former especially crucial to the side given his wicket-taking ability and economy in the opening overs.

Rassie van der Dussen, who only made his debut for the side in January but averages 88.25 from his eight ODI innings, was chosen ahead of Reeza Hendricks, while test opener Aiden Markram also gets the nod on the back of some excellent domestic form.

Faf du Plessis will captain the side, with experienced batsman JP Duminy and fast bowler Dale Steyn also included.

Imran Tahir will be the starting leg-spinner, with the guile of Tabraiz Shamsi another option in that department.

South Africa have opted not to select a specialist wicketkeeper as back-up to Quinton de Kock, but instead will rely on part-timer David Miller, who wore the gloves for some of the recent 5-0 series sweep of Sri Lanka.

South Africa, seeking a first World Cup trophy win, open their campaign against England at The Oval on May 30.



Sri Lankan selectors ignore Chandimal and Tharanga

AFP
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka yesterday dumped established stars including former captain Dinesh Chandimal from their one-day team in a mass clear-out for the World Cup.

One day after announcing that Test skipper Dimuth Karunaratne would be World Cup captain in place of Lasith Malinga, selectors also axed wicketkeeper-batsman Niroshan Dickwella, off-spinner Akila Dananjaya, and openers Danushka Gunathilaka and Upul Tharanga from the 15-man squad.

Sri Lanka have been riven with personality clashes and disciplinary problems in recent years that have seen their world standing slump.

Batsman Lahiru Thirimanne, leg-spinner Jeffrey Vandersay and all-rounders Milinda Siriwardana and Jeevan Mendis got places despite not playing an ODI for more than a year.

Opening batsman Avishka Fernando and paceman Nuwan Pradeep were also included in the squad for the tournament which starts in England and Wales on May 30.

The 1996 champions kick off their campaign against New Zealand in Cardiff on June 1.

Karunaratne and the 35-year-old Mendis last played a 50-over international at the previous World Cup in 2015.

Chief selector Ashantha de Mel said players like Siriwardena, who last played an ODI in 2016, were chosen to provide stability.

"To balance the side, the batsman coming in at number six has to be able to bowl," de Mel said of Siriwardana, a left-handed batsman and bowler. "We went with someone who has a bit of experience in that role."

Dananjaya, a mystery spinner who has played 34 ODIs, and Dickwella were axed after their poor showing in the recent tour of South Africa.



Kusal Janith Perera will be wicketkeeper and could also be used an opener.

De Mel said Dhananjaya de Silva is a better spin option than Dananjaya who picked up just two wickets from four games in Sri Lanka's 5-0 drubbing in the one-day series in South Africa.

On the pace front, Sri Lanka again opted for experience, omitting Dushmantha Chameera and Kasun Rajitha in favour of Pradeep and Suranga Lakmal.

Although not in the 15-man squad, Rajitha has been named as one of four standby players, alongside allrounder Wanindu Hasaranga and batsmen Oshada Fernando and Angelo Perera.

De Mel again justified the decision to make Karunaratne as captain in place of pace spearhead Lasith Malinga.

Karunaratne led Sri Lanka to their first Test series triumph in South Africa after sweeping the two matches in February.

"We saw in South Africa how Dimuth was able to unite the team, and have everyone playing together. That was what was important to us at this time," he said.

Sri Lanka will play two warmup games against Scotland in May before the World Cup.

QDC win thrilling final to lift KEF Engineers Corporate Cup

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

Qatar Design Consortium (QDC) beat Galfar Al Misnad by three runs in a thrilling final to win the KEF Engineers Corporate Cup 2019 at the Ideal Oval in Al Hilal, Doha.

Manu Vijayan scored an unbeaten 62 off 42 balls in the QDC innings to become the star of the show.

After winning the Toss, Galfar decided to bowl first.

QDC recovered from a bad start which saw them losing five wickets for 40 at one stage. Then, their star batsman Manu took the game away from Galfar and single handedly pulled up the score to 131 in 20 overs.

The Galfar chase started slowly and steadily but they also kept losing wickets at regular intervals. At the end of 10 overs, they were 50/5. All the hopes were on Gulfar captain Raneesh as he showed to be in good nick. Scoring 80 runs in last 10 overs were never going to be easy while chasing in a final but Raneesh steadied the ship and played some great shots. Few valuable contributions from the tail-enders meant that they needed 6 runs from the last over. Finally QDC won by three runs with a nail biting finish.

Manu was declared Man-of-the-Match and also the Player-of-the-Tournament for his all-round performance. Vishnu Chandran from Galfar was declared Best Batsman and his team mate Ghanshyam Verma from Galfar as the best bowler of the tournament which was organised by Keralite Engineers Forum (KEF).

Gulf Warehousing Company (GWC) were placed third in the tournament which also saw teams from L&T, Powerman International, Mannai Corporation, Castle Constructions, Omega Engineering, Global Auto Parts, Coastal Qatar, Almoyyed Air-conditioning and Technosteel taking part.



Players and officials of Qatar Design Consortium celebrate with the KEF Engineers Corporate Cup 2019 after defeating Galfar Al Misnad in the final played at the Ideal Oval in Al Hilal, Doha.

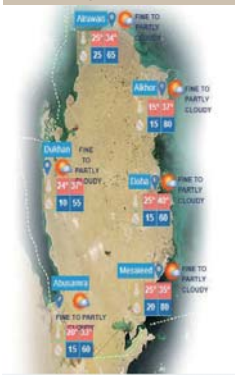
The Prize distribution ceremony was attended by dignitaries from various associations affiliated to Indian Embassy, namely Azim Abbas, President of the IBPC Managing Committee; Nilangshu Dey, President of the ISC, Dileep Balakrishnan, Gen. Secretary of EF, highly ranked executives from the participating corporate teams, representatives from the sponsors Dr. Hassan Kunhi (Chairman Ideal Indian School) and a sturdy team of KEF Managing Committee members including Chairman Sajeet George, Gen. Secretary Kishore Nair, Treasurer Prakash Nair, Cultural Secretary Sudheesh Gopalakrishnan, Event coordinator Sreenivas T S and Rahul Rajan, Vice Chairman Antony Thomas, Shabeer Ahamed, Dayan Antony, Abhijith Elakkat, Sinto George, Alex Johnson Varghese, Bipin Kandoth, Mithun M C, Iiji Arvind, Kunhikoya Thannieth, Jashmeer Kasargod; Azharudheen PN, KEF advisory committee members Mibu Jose, NV Raghavan Menon and Jacob Thomas.

KEF Chairman Sajeet George thanked all team captains for their interest and commitment to take part in this Cricket Championship, which has already attracted substantial interest from several Cricket teams in Qatar.

PRAYER TIMINGS

FAJR	03. 49 AM		
SHOROOK	05. 08 AM		
ZUHR	11. 33 AM	MAGHRIB	06. 00 PM
ASR	03. 03 PM	ISHA	07. 30 PM

WEATHER TODAY



25°C Minimum | **38°C** Maximum

Relatively hot daytime with slight dust and scattered clouds and weak chance of light rain, mild by night.

HIGH TIDE 03:58 -16:47 LOW TIDE 11:37 - 23:54

Courtesy: Qatar Meteorology Department



April 19, 1999

▲ Germany's parliament met in the newly-restored Reichstag in Berlin for the first time since before World War II. From 1949, the Bundestag met in Bonn

1839: The Kingdom of Belgium was formally recognised

1994: Rodney King, the black motorist whose beating by white police officers sparked the 1992 Los Angeles riots, won $3.8m in damages

2006: A one million-year-old ice core drilled from 3,000 metres beneath Antarctica was revealed

2012: India successfully launched a new nuclear missile capable of hitting Beijing and Shanghai

Picture: Getty Images © GRAPHIC NEWS

Over 250 brands to participate in 15th Heya Arabian Fashion Exhibition

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

More than 250 brands will be taking part in the 15th edition of Heya Arabian Fashion Exhibition, Qatar's most popular showcase of abayas and traditional Arabian attire, to be held from April 26 to 30 at Doha Exhibition and Convention Center.

Held under the patronage of H E Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the show organised by Design Creationz with the support of the Qatar National Tourism Council (QNTC), features more than 20 fashion shows, seminars, designer workshops.

The exhibition continues to be a strong platform for Qatari designers to showcase their designs, with Qatari brands representing 70 percent of participants. This year's edition also features international brands from Kuwait, Oman, India, Lebanon, Morocco, China, India, Sri Lanka, England and Belgium.

Offering a unique flavour of Arabian heritage, the Spring/Summer 2019 show will see returning brands including Debaj, Harlienz, the Hammadies (previously Lamar), as well as new exhibitors including, Avenant, Ebru Aykas by Duygu Gume, Saouli by Karima Saouli to mention a few.



A stall at the previous edition of Heya.

Mashal Shahbik from QNTC said: "As a growing platform for businesswomen and fashionistas from Qatar and the world, Heya is a great example of how business events can offer curated experiences that celebrate entrepreneurship and Arabian culture. The show has provided an enriching event for lovers of Arabian fashion, whether designers, shoppers or businesswomen for 14 editions and we look forward to witnessing its continued growth in this next edition."

This year's exhibition has partnered with the Indian Embassy which will see designer Suneet Varma showcase his work in Qatar for the first time. One of India's foremost couturiers, Varma earned his degree from Europe in 1986 and went on to work with Yves Saint Laurent in Paris. He will participate in talks and workshops throughout Heya focusing on fashion design, textiles, and sustainable fashion.

Design Creationz spokesperson, Esraa Abel, said: "The show this year offers the most diverse range of brands. We have also dedicated a larger portion of the exhibition to regional talent, while celebrating the Qatar-India Year of Culture in collaboration with the Indian Embassy."

Three prestigious designers, namely Pero, 3 clothing and SR will also take part in the exhibition in the Indian Pavilion, while a special fashion show and cocktail reception featuring all three Indian designers will also be held.

Virginia Commonwealth University School of Arts in Qatar (VCUarts Qatar), Tajmeel Academy Qatar, Qatar Business Incubation Center (QBIC), and Bedaya center will offer young talent valuable advice related to the industry.

Reem Al Suwaidi, General Manager of Bedaya, said: "Our mission is to provide support and guidance to Qatari entrepreneurs as they embark on their business journey. That's why we are happy with this partnership with Heya, and we look forward to working with budding designers at the event and to helping them get their business off the ground."

Hamad Al Qahtani, General Manager of QBIC said: "QBIC is focused on enriching the fashion industry through partnerships such as Heya to empower and support local entrepreneurs with a variety of programmes. This year, some of our incubated start-ups are participating in the event and we look forward to empowering more designers through Heya." Heya is open for women only except on the opening day, during which men can accompany family members. Children below 13 years old cannot enter the exhibition.

Visual Arts Center organises sand art contest at Sealine Beach

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

The first-of-its-kind sand art competition organised by Visual Arts Center has concluded on a high note crowning the winners of the five-day contest held at Sealine Beach.

Hamad Al Zekaiba, Director of the Culture and Arts Department at the Ministry of Culture and Sports, honoured the winners of the exciting competition which attracted the participation of artists from Qatar, Kuwait and Oman.



The winning sand sculpture.

Filipino artist Michael Conjusta won first place bagging QR25,000 followed by the group comprising Seyyedeh Somayeh Hosseini from Iran and Israa Abouchanab and Alissar Abouchanab from Lebanon placing second and receiving QR15,000. Indian artist Kotteswari Mahesh placed third winning QR10,000 while Qatari artists Mubarak Al Malik and Jaber Hamad Al Hanzab placed fourth and fifth respectively winning QR5,000 each.

Art workshops were held on the sidelines of the competition which was attended by talented children and families.

Salman Al Malik, Director of Visual Arts Center, described the turnout as "remarkable, as it achieved great interaction from the artists in the competition, and the talents who participated in the accompanying workshops."



Filipino artist Michael Conjusta, winner of the competition, receiving the award.

While thanking all the artists who took part in the competition and participants in the workshops, Al Malik said, "This response reflects the firm desire to practice sand art including sand drawing and sand sculpture in the art community, so we made "Art for all" as the motto to spread excitement in the wider community, and make the shores of Qatar an open museum."

He said that the event was aimed towards achieving the vision of the Ministry of Culture and Sports towards genuine awareness and healthy body as well as the strategic objectives of the Center to support artists and nurture talent.

A jury composed of expert artists ensured the objectivity of the judging of the competition.

The winners expressed their satisfaction on their participation thanking the Visual Arts Center for organizing the new event which is a significant addition to Qatar's already vibrant art scene.

World's fattest parrot has record breeding season

AFP
WELLINGTON

The world's fattest parrot, the critically endangered kakapo, has enjoyed a record breaking breeding season, New Zealand scientists said yesterday, with climate change possibly aiding the species' unique mating spree.

Less than 50 years after the flightless nocturnal bird was thought to have been extinct, at least 75 chicks are expected to survive this year, Andrew Digby, a science advisor to New Zealand's kakapo recovery, operation said. Digby oversees a breeding programme so precisely monitored that scientists can state the last of 249 eggs laid will hatch today.

It will significantly boost the population which has grown to 147 adults since a small number of the plump green, yellow and black birds was discovered in 1970. Digby described the kakapo as an "unusual" parrot as the females control the breeding process and only mate every two to four years when New Zealand's native rimu trees are full of fruit.

"We don't quite know what the trigger is but one of the things we are looking at is that the rimu berry is really high in vitamin D, a super food basically, which is associated with fertility and health," he said.



Kakapo parrot chick "Hinemoa-2-A" is fitted with a transmitter in this social media photo obtained yesterday in an undisclosed location in New Zealand.

The rimu trees have produced a bumper crop this year with Digby saying one theory was that climate change and temperature fluctuations could be behind the berry bonanza.

The surviving kakapo—whose name means "night parrot" in Maori — are kept on four predator-free islands off the New Zealand coast.

At the start of the breeding season, the males which weigh about 4.0kg (nine pounds), put themselves on display while the females choose a partner.

They mate and then end the relationship, shutting the male out of the incubation and rearing processes. The kakapo recovery programme is so tightly monitored that although they remain in the wild, each one has a radio transmitter attached to its body and there are monitoring systems embedded in their nests.

Digby knew that of the 50 adult females, 49 produced 249 eggs, of which 89 have so far hatched and 75 were expected to make it to adulthood.

That is more than double the success rate from the last breeding season three years ago.

"It's probably one of the most intensively managed species in the world," said Digby, who wants at least 500 birds before any thought is given to easing up the intensity of the recovery operation.

Heavyweights in world cinema nominated for Cannes' top prize

AP
PARIS

Cannes Film Festival organisers announced its 2019 line-up yesterday, pitting leading names in world cinema including Ken Loach and Pedro Almodóvar against each other in competition for the top prize, the Palme d'Or.

Festival veterans Loach and Almodóvar, as well as the Dardenne Brothers, Jim Jarmusch, Terrence Malick and Xavier Dolan — all of whom have previously won accolades at the French Riviera festival - will return for the May 14-25 event.

Four female directors were among the 19 nominated in the main category. They are Jessica Hausner for "Little Joe," Mati Diop for "Atlantiques," Celine Schiamma for "Portrait of a Young Lady on Fire" and Justine Triet for "Sibyl."

The last time four women were also nominated at Cannes was in 2011, when that number set a record for the festival. Last year, organizers pledged to raise the prominence of female filmmakers at festivals. A total of 13 women were included in the official selection this year - although male artists still dominate.

Jarmusch's "The Dead Don't Die," a zombie comedy starring Adam Driver, Bill Murray and Chloe Sevigny as police officers protecting a small town, will open the festival on a starry and surreal note.

This is not the first time Jarmusch has competed for the Palme at Cannes using the undead - his 2013 "Only Lovers Left Alive" featured erudite vampires.

Jarmusch is in the running along with other Americans including Malick, who returns after "Tree of Life" won the Palme d'Or in 2011 with the long-awaited "A Hidden Life," about an Austrian anti-Nazi conscientious objector who was executed in 1943. Memphis-born Ira Sachs will present "Frankie" starring Isabelle Huppert.

There was dismay that Quentin Tarantino missed out from being included with the highly anticipated "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood," starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Brad Pitt and Margot Robbie. Cannes Artistic Director Thierry Fremaux lamented to critics during the press conference that the movie was still in editing - explaining that Tarantino's insistence on using laborious 35mm will delay its completion.