Amir chairs meeting of Supreme Council for Economic Affairs and Investment

QNA

Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Chairman of the Supreme Council for Economic Affairs and Investment, yesterday chaired the council’s second meeting in 2019 at the Al Bahr Palace.

Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Thani, Deputy Chairman of the Council, attended the meeting along with the Prime Minister and Interior Minister H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani, Executive Member of the Council and Their Excellencies the members of the Council.

The Council discussed topics on the meeting agenda and took the appropriate measures regarding them, including the approval of the establishment of the Investment Promotion Agency of the State of Qatar, which is tasked with attracting foreign investment to the State.

The Council also reviewed a presentation on regulating industrial and logistic sector, and an effort on developments in the fields of energy and investments.

FIFA: 2022 World Cup in Qatar to feature 32 teams

THE PENN GNA & AGENTS

The governing body FIFA yesterday announced that the 2022 World Cup will feature 32 teams, ending a long raging debate whether Qatar would be asked to host 48 teams.

Qatar, which opened its second multi-purpose World Cup venue Al Janoub Stadium by hosting the Amir Cup final on May 16, is rapidly completing its preparations to host 32 teams for the 2022 edition. Yesterday’s statement by FIFA means the 48-team concept will be officially launched at the 2026 World Cup to be jointly held in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

In a statement posted on www.fifa.com, FIFA’s yesterday said: “Following the conclusion of the feasibility study approved by the FIFA Council at its last meeting, FIFA and Qatar have jointly explored all possibilities to increase the number of participating teams from 32 to 48 teams by involving neighbouring countries at the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. Following a thorough and comprehensive consultation process with the involvement of all the relevant stakeholders, it was concluded that under the current circumstances such a proposal could not be made now.”

The statement added: “Additionally, FIFA and Qatar have once again explored the feasibility of Qatar hosting a 48-team tournament in particular lowering certain key FIFA requirements. A joint analysis of the impact concluded that due to the advanced stage of preparations and the need for a detailed assessment of the potential logistical impact on the host country, more time would be required and a decision could not be taken before the deadline of June. It was therefore decided not to further pursue this option.”

FIFA concluded the statement by saying: “The FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 will therefore remain as originally planned with 32 teams and no proposal will be submitted at the next FIFA Congress on 5 June.”

Last week’s opening of Al Janoub Stadium — which can house 40,000 football fans — was another feather in Qatar’s cap as it races to complete all venues before the FIFA World Cup kicks off in Nov 21-Oct 8, 2022. Two years ago, Qatar opened the iconic Khalifa International Stadium by staging the Amir Cup final between Al Sadd and Al Rayyan. In just two years, Qatar has completed two state-of-the-art football venues that will host 2022 World Cup matches.

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Qatar holds symposium on healthcare quality in Geneva

QNA

The State of Qatar organised a symposium on healthcare quality and patient safety in the face of emergencies and adversities as a prerequisite for achieving universal health coverage, with the participation of 17 countries, WHO Secretariat, WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean and a number of non-governmental organizations. The symposium was held on the sidelines of the WHO World Health Assembly held in Geneva.

Minister of Public Health H E Dr Hanan Mohamed Al Kuwari launched the symposium confirming that access to safe and high quality health care is a human right in accordance with international humanitarian law. She added that securing this right worldwide requires regional and international cooperation and removing obstacles that face the path to safer healthcare and the pledge to leave no one behind, calls for a safe comprehensive health coverage and making patient safety and care top priority.

Al Kuwari presented the efforts made in the country’s patient safety field since the Alma Ata Declaration more than 40 years ago. She added that the WHO and the Global Ministerial Summits on Patient Safety had launched an agenda for safer care in low-and middle-income countries, and recently in areas of extreme adversity. She the Minister of Public Health said the healthcare system in Qatar is of high quality and safety and that the modern and internationally advanced system is working as well as Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) health care workers work with local and international partners to ensure that patients are provided with quality care and safety.

Hotels and resorts offer up to 40% off in summer

The Peninsula

The Qatar National Tourism Council (QNTC) is bringing unmissable hospitality deals to residents and visitors this summer, in collaboration with leading hotel developers and operators Katara Hospitality, Al Rayyan Project Management, and Marriott International Hotels. This Summer in Qatar also allows residents to experience Qatar’s award-winning hospitality sector firsthand, with discounts of up to 40 percent at top hotels and resorts available to those living in Qatar.

Rashed Al Qurese, Chief Marketing Officer at QNTC, commented: “We are pleased to offer both domestic and inbound tourists the opportunity to enjoy the best of our hospitality sector through these special offers. Together with our partners we remain committed to developing sustainable tourism offerings for locals, residents, as well as visitors.”

Katara Hospitality is offering discounts of up to 40 percent, valid for bookings at any of its 42 properties in Qatar between June 4 – August 31, 2022. Properties include Sheraton Village & Spa, Sheraton Grand Doha Resort & Convention Hotel, and Seaside Beach. Katara Hospitality provides unique experiences within its hotels, and places high importance on initiatives that enhance its offerings while highlighting the country’s passion for creating ultimate guest experiences. As the country’s flagship hospitality organisation, Katara Hospitality supports Qatar’s long-term economic vision, and actively invest in waterfront hotels in Qatar as well as internationally.

Marriott International have also unveiled enticing offers across its nine properties in Qatar, including 25 percent off for Marriott Bonvoy members and 15 percent off for non-members until 30th September 2022.
The Speaker of the Shura Council, H E Ahmed bin Abdullah bin Zaid Al Mahmoud, met yesterday with the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the State of Qatar, Mohamad Ali Soltani. During the meeting, they discussed parliamentary relations between the two countries and ways of boosting them. Issues of mutual interest were also discussed. The meeting was attended by a number of officials from the Shura Council.

Shura Council Speaker meets Iranian envoy

Chairperson of Qatar Museums, Doha Film Institute and Reach Out to Asia, H E Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, stressed that culture is a main component of human development.

This came in a statement read by Her Excellency at a round table discussion on culture and sustainable development at the UN General Assembly in New York. Her Excellency reviewed the steps taken by the State of Qatar to develop its component of human development due to population growth. She stressed the importance of the initiatives made by the National Museums of Qatar in protecting the knowledge and wisdom of the people of the State of Qatar and the contribution it will make to development.

She also discussed the role the museum can play in inspiring Qatar’s foreign visitors, who can see how Qataris are connected to both the desert and the sea. Her Excellency stressed that the museum also highlights the State of Qatar’s commitment to sustainable development as a main goal, as well as improving the lives of Qataris and all people living in the country.

In concluding her statement, she pointed to the challenges facing sustainable development due to population sizes, stressing at the same time the importance of enhancing human development by investing in education. She said that the advantage of the development of the cultural field in Qatar was its ability to create a member of jobs on a regional level. She lamented the bad luck as the current political environment is acting as an obstacle in that regard, adding that it also obstructs efforts to combat poverty. Her Excellency also stressed on the important role played by culture in supporting forgiveness and dialogue.

Meanwhile, H E Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani has welcomed the increase in the number of school visits to QM’s museums, art workshops and education programs during the 2018-2019 school year. According to data released by QM’s Department of Education, 22,430 students took part in over 680 visits, with Doha’s iconic Museum of Islamic Art being the most popular destination.

In addition to visits to MA schools also participated in the education programs offered by Mathaf: Museum of Arabic Modern Art; the National Museum of Qatar. Fire Station and other institutions under QM’s umbrella. Sheikha Al Mayassa was particularly impressed by several government and international schools which stood out for their commitment to instilling the umbrella. Sheikha Al Mayassa was particularly impressed by several government and international schools which stood out for their commitment to instilling appreciation for arts, culture and heritage among its students.

QM’s Department of Education, which is committed to providing interactive opportunities for families, students and adults to create lasting memories and foster creativity in society, is currently preparing its program for the new school year with the expectation that engagement will continue to rise.

Sheikha Al Mayassa reviews steps to develop National Museum of Qatar

Chairperson of Qatar Museums, Doha Film Institute and Reach Out to Asia, H E Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, at a round table discussion on culture and sustainable development at the UN General Assembly in New York, yesterday.

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Cabinet takes measures to ratify MoUs

The Cabinet reviewed and took the appropriate decision on the memo of the National Committee for the Prohibition of Weapons on report 149 on the committee’s work between January 1 and April 30, 2019. The Cabinet reviewed and took the appropriate decision on the memo of Chairman of the Qatar Financial Centre Regulatory Authority on the report on the Authority’s activities between April 1, 2018 and March 31, 2019.

Qatar holds symposium on healthcare quality, patient safety in Geneva

She highlighted the humanitarian activities and commitments that the State of Qatar is known for. Relevant stakeholders in Qatar are working to improve the lives of those in need globally through a wide range of humanitarian assistance, relief services and development activities, where the 2018 World Summit on Innovation in Health Care (WISH) issued a report on challenges and opportunities for achieving universal health coverage in conflict areas, she added.

The Minister of Public Health said part of its commitment to global health security, Qatar was one of the first countries in the Eastern Mediterranean region and the seventh in the world to be subject to the external assessment process to ensure compliance with the International Health Regulations 2005, to ensure that Qatar is ready to respond to any problems related to global health security.

Dr Al Kuwari despite her schedule and political commitments, she repeatedly called for a global implementation of the resolutions of the Global Action on Patient Safety, which would contribute to building capabilities for that purpose and hosting consultation and technical meetings to discuss the matter. The Minister also called on international organizations and states to think about their commitments and the procedures that they can carry out.

According to a World Health Organization report on universal health coverage, at least half of the world’s population still lacks access to basic health services, resulting in between 5.7 and 8.4 million deaths per year in low- and middle-income countries. The situation is even worse in fragile countries that are struck by armed conflicts, plagues or natural disasters. Health care systems in those countries, according to the report, are terribly affected by the increased demand and reduced resources.

Numbers show that around 350 million children currently live in conflict zones of some type. Additionally, about 20 people are forcibly displaced every minute as a result of conflict or persecution, leading to a total of 63.6 million people, including some 22.5 million refugees, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The symposium was organized to reflect the commitment of the State of Qatar in its responsibility towards international community and humanity, and its commitment to enhancing regional and international partnerships in the healthcare field.

Minister of Public Health H E Dr Hanan Mohamed Al Kuwari attending the symposium on healthcare quality and patient safety held in Geneva.

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Prime Minister and Interior Minister H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani chaired the regular meeting held at his seat at the Amir Qusan Yesterday.

Following the meeting, Minister of Justice and Acting Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs H E Dr Issa bin Saad Al Jalah Al Bannai stated that the Cabinet reviewed topics on its meeting’s agenda.

The Cabinet approved its draft decision to amend some of the provisions of Decision No. 34 of 2018 regarding the reorganization of the national coordinating committee in international trade affairs. The Cabinet also took required procedures to ratify a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to cooperate in the youth and sports fields between the Ministry of Culture and Sports in the State of Qatar and the Ministry of Youth in the Italian Republic.

The Cabinet took required procedures to ratify an MoU on food security and cooperation in agriculture and agro-food industries between the Ministry of Municipality and Environment in the State of Qatar and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Tourism Policies in the Italian Republic.

The Cabinet approved a draft agreement to cooperate in the education, scientific, research and technology fields between the governments of the State of Qatar and the Republic of Bulgaria.
Katara GM meets envoy of the Republic of Cyprus

Dr Khalid bin Ibrahim Al Sulaiti, General Manager of Katara, received Michalis A Zacharioglu, Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus at the Cultural Village Foundation yesterday. They discussed enhancing cooperation between Katara and the Embassy of Cyprus to enrich the cultural scene in Qatar, and further collaboration to support arts and culture. This cooperation will begin by opening an art gallery for the Ambassador who himself is an artist and will display some of his artworks through an art exhibition in September 2019. The envoy took a tour around Katara and was introduced to the different facilities and galleries which host various cultural and art events within Katara’s commitment to boost and support arts and culture and form a bridge between cultures of the world.

Qatar Executive announces global expansion at EBACE

Qatar Executive, the private jet charter division of Qatar Airways Group, is celebrating 10 years of success at EBACE with the announcement of plans to open new offices in Shanghai, China; Moscow, Russia, and London, United Kingdom later this year, as well as receiving two new additional certifications. The European Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition (EBACE) is the annual meeting place for the European business aircraft community and is taking place in Geneva, Switzerland from May 21 - 23.

Qatar Executive’s expansion to Shanghai, Moscow and London in 2019 will further enable it to offer its bespoke and personal service to business and leisure clients on a global scale, regardless of where they are located.

Additionally, for the first time since its establishment in 2009, Qatar Executive has undergone an audit on two international standards in April 2019. IS-BAO (International Standard for Business Aircraft Operators) and Wyvern Wingman. These are two internationally recognised aviation safety standards in the business and charter jet fields. IS-BAO is based on ICAO International Civil Aviation Organization standards while Wyvern popular in the USA market, also follows IS-BAO standard but dictates additional stringent requirements. The audits concentrate on, among other critical subjects, the Safety Management System (SMS) implemented in Qatar Executive as an operation.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive Akbar Al Baker said: “Qatar Airways first announced the formation of a corporate jet subsidiary Qatar Executive at the Paris Air Show in 2009, as part of the airline’s global growth strategy and continued commitment to the Middle East, and the global business travel community. I am extremely proud of the growth we have made since then”.

Qatar marks Biological Diversity Day

The celebration of the International Day for Biological Diversity aims to increase knowledge and raise awareness of the importance of healthy diets and ecological ecosystems.

The State of Qatar, represented by the Ministry of Municipality and Environment, yesterday marked the International Day for Biological Diversity, which was celebrated on May 22.

The significance of this year’s celebration is that it coincides with the 20th anniversary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which was signed in 1992.

The celebration of the International Day for Biological Diversity aims to increase knowledge and raise awareness of the importance of healthy diets and ecological ecosystems, contributing to the preservation of the natural vital system in terms of the availability of water, food and energy.

The Ministry indicated that it is working on the implementation of the requirements of the Convention on Biological Diversity, through operational procedures to be applied on a daily basis, pointing to the development of the first biological biodiversity strategy in the country since 2004 which has been updated in the second national strategy to contribute to the balance between the country’s large sustainable development components and to reduce significant pressures on the components of biodiversity, including ecosystems, animals, plants and fungi.

Qatar National Vision 2030 has included innovative solutions to ensure sustainability, awareness and commitment to a flexible legislative regime to protect the environment and mitigate climate impacts. The National Strategy (2008-2020) included a number of initiatives to ensure the sustainability of fishery resources and energy efficiency.

In addition, the national strategy to combat desertification includes projects that contribute to the conservation of ecosystems. The National Development Strategy (2016-2020) emphasized the Green Project Initiative, which aims to increase sustainable urbanization and create a healthy living environment.

The State of Qatar has also adopted regulations and mechanisms that contribute to the protection of biodiversity, including the ban on grazing, the protection of endangered sea turtles and the amendment of the law on damage to the plant environment, in order to ensure that such legislation is in line with the management of environmental developments.

The State of Qatar has signed and ratified different international regional and bilateral agreements, conventions and protocols within the framework of biological diversity and the fight against desertification.

QRC hosts annual ‘Hope Iftar’

OFFICIALS and participants during the Iftar event hosted by Qatar Cancer Society, yesterday.

Dr. Qassim Ahmed Al Thani, Chairman of Qatar Cancer Society (QCS) hosted annual ‘Hope Iftar’ at Intercontinental Doha The City, yesterday. The event gathered many patients and survivors who shared their inspiring stories and fought the disease “Cancer comes into our life as an unexpected and powerful, said Dr Mohamed Shaaban, a colon cancer survivor.

Saeed bin Saqr Al-Mazroui, a Kensington said that in 2007 her son was diagnosed with leukemia at the QCCF and it was introduced to the QCS. The QCS said the QCS provides them with financial help for the treatment and psychological help direct the family to concerned people on psychological and counselling.

Dr. Nada Al-Sulaiti at the QCS shed light on the support programs provided to individuals living with cancer.

Qatar Executive team members posing for a group photo during the European Business Aviation Convention and Exhibition held in Geneva, Switzerland.
Sidra Medicine, ACS NSQIP join forces for surgical care

QU protects hawksbill turtles through Qatar Turtle Project
Landmark Group brands certified as ‘Best Workplaces’ in Qatar

Landmark Group homegrown brands, Centropoint, Home Centre, Babyshop, Max and Shoexpress were officially recognised as best workplaces in Qatar for 2021 by Great Place to Work, a global research and consultancy organisation. The brands were presented with the certification during an awards ceremony held at Hilton Doha.

Great Place to Work is the global authority on workplace culture. With employee surveys and the leadership behaviours proven to drive performance, engagement and innovation, the GPTW ranking covers a wide cross section of the business, from furniture and fashion retailers to counter forwarders and hotels.

Organisations are reviewed on multiple parameters - of credibility, respect, fairness, pride and camaraderie - by employees within the organisation.

Currently, Landmark Group employs over 35,000 employees across 8 countries. Over the last five years, the Group initiated the Landmark Happiness Movement to build the foundation of a great workplace. As a part of this initiative, a dedicated people engagement framework was built that focused on four key pillars - reinventing core organizational values, women in workplace, enhanced health and well-being of its employees, and ensuring a high degree of transparency amongst its employees.

Nisha Jaglani, Group Director, Landmark Group, said “This recognition from the Great Place to Work Institute, is a big achievement for us and we are pleased to have received this recognition for four of our home grown brands. As a Group, we are committed to providing our employees with a positive and happy work environment which helps us grow and build a strong business together.

We have a people-first strategy that focuses on keeping our people at the heart of our business as they positively impact us every single day, elevating our customer engagement. This recognition is a testament to our continued efforts at bringing value to the lives of our employees and the community at large.”

Santishee Pat, Chief Operating Officer, Landmark Group, added “We are honoured to be recognised with such a prestigious award. This study is a reflection of our Group’s continued efforts in providing a happy and positive work environment to all our employees. Our people are our greatest assets, and we believe that investing in their future will help us achieve greater success in the long term.”

Vodafone sees huge rise in customer donations during Ramadan

Vodafone Qatar has seen a huge rise in customers using “Red Easy Donations” to donate to charity during the holy month of Ramadan. Lauren Thomas, Sales Director for Donations, notes that “Vodafone’s Red Easy Donations gives Vodafone Red / prepaid customers an easy way to make regular, automatic monthly contributions between QR100 and QR300 to either Qatar Charity or Qatar Red Crescent. One hundred per cent of the donation goes to the selected charity without any extra charges to the customer or the charity.

Vodafone, close to QR100,000 has been raised that’s benefited Qatar Charity’s various projects including Orphans - making the wishes of илиphans come true and Qatar Red Crescent’s urgent relief projects that includes the funding of primary education of low-income students in Qatar.

Vodafone’s Red customers can activate “Red Easy Donations” via the My Vodafone app, or by calling their nearest Vodafone retail store.
The Islamic Finance Centre is equipped with the most advanced technological tools offering training programs with the aim of being a hub for the research and educational cluster in Islamic Finance. The College of Islamic Studies (CIS) will support this Centre through faculty expertise in the area of Islamic finance and economy. In addition, the two institutions will be working on student exchange programs, joint conferences, and mutual research projects to promote Islamic finance studies. CIS, as a global leader in Islamic finance, works to support other entities in establishing academic programs and research in this area.

QNRF & MME launch first cycle of food security call

Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF) — a member of Qatar Foundation (QF) — in partnership with the Ministry of Municipality and Environment (MME), has launched the first cycle of its joint Food Security call. The initiative aims to foster the development of productive and sustainable food systems that increase food security and improve nutrition in Qatar.

The main objective of this call is to enhance food security measures in Qatar through investing in applied research for the primary theme of Local Food Production, along with Community Initiative Policy and Legislation. Strengthening Incidence among People, and Agricultural Systems Supply Chain. This call also strives to utilise external expertise and knowledge in science and technology related to food security in order to encourage the development of solutions which are designed to suit Qatar’s climatic conditions.

Dr Fahad bin Nasser Al Noori, Assistant Undersecretary of Agriculture and Fisheries Affairs, said, “In line with its mandate, the Ministry of Municipality and Environment is working towards achieving a set of goals, mainly food security and environmental balance and protection, through comprehensive and sustainable development for the benefit of future generations.”

“Agro-research plays an important role in terms of applying modern and appropriate technologies to attain scientific solutions to bridge the gap in agricultural production in order to increase self-sufficiency and food security,” he said.

The submission deadline for the call is October 2, 2019.

QB implements Iftar project in collaboration with Qatar Charity

Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB) in collaboration with Qatar Charity (QC), is sponsoring the Iftar project for people who are fasting. The Iftar project is part of the campaign ‘The Gift of Giving’ in Al Rayan Tent targeting workers and community gatherings.

“The sponsorship of the project comes as part of the Bank’s community-focused CSR initiatives during the Holy Month of Ramadan. Commenting on the sponsorship, Masar Al Shukaili, Assistant General Manager, Head of Corporate Communications & Quality Assurance at QIB said, ‘Ramadan is a time of giving, generosity, togetherness and tolerance. We are humbled and proud to know that our partnership with QC in implementing community members break their fast with a good meal in comfortable surroundings.’

Supporting low-income community members during the holy month is part of QIB’s social responsibility agenda. It reflects the Bank’s adherence to Islamic values and Qatar’s traditions of social solidarity.

The people attending an Iftar at Al Rayan tent.
**EDITORIAL**

Tourism sector set for a boost

Tourism has been a significant contributor to Qatar's economic growth, with the country attracting a growing number of visitors. The rapid growth of the hotel industry is facilitating the country's tourism sector, which is projected to experience a boom over the next few years. The implementation of a free trade zone and the construction of new hotels are expected to attract significant investments in the sector.

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**

"Attempts at promoting an economic normalization of the Israeli occupation of Palestine will be rejected," said Saeb Erekat, the Palestinian Liberation Organization's chief negotiator.

"The Trump-Kushner peace plan looks doomed already"
Islamophobia has grown louder and bolder across Canada

Islamophobia is not an aberration in Canada as the prevailing caricature-promoted by starmy-voiced propagandists—routinely suggests, but a stubborn, metastasizing reality.

The proof? Johnson has it. He appears thousands of times on social media and at mosques across Canada; he is a part of a ‘counter-insurgency’ movement and a counter-propagandist to the Muslim community, carriers a two-year prison sentence upon conviction. There are those who argue that he is part of a broader Islamophobic movement, that Johnston’s brand of “patriotism and bolder,” but greater in number, smaller in influence, smaller the scope of the scourge.

Indeed, the presiding judge found that Johnson’s illiterate assault on Fakih’s “provocateur” who peddled it. Johnston was joined on the local inaction. The failure to do so would have made it possible to paint most Muslims as rabid, violent radical, responsible swaths of the mainstream media, have exploited the opportunity to present Muslims as hateful, violent perpetrators and tiptoe tryst on destroying Western “values” and “way of life.”

Admittedly, Johnston is an obscure, municipal facsimile of much more well-known, national Islamophobes who gin up fear and hatred for their parochial aim.

He is, of course, not alone on this foul score. Johnston was joined on the hustings in 2018 by perhaps Canada’s most notorious racist, Faith Goldy. The Islamophobic, white supremacist rant for mayor of Toronto, Canada’s largest and arguably most diverse city. Goldy came in a distant third, with 25,600 votes or 3.4 percent of the ballot cast. The unparalleled notwithstanding Johnston’s support is chillingly impressive given the fact that Goldy was harnessed from participating in all-candidates debates, and advertising on platforms owned by the telecomm giant, Bell Media. Together, Johnston and Goldy captured close to 46,000 votes in the episode of modern, “cosmopolitan” Canada which this election captured, and 2,500,000 votes in the mythical Canada as the prevailing caricature—of a harmonious, open-minded, multicultural nation, uncowed by the apologists, prevailing over hate and the pathetic “patriotism” which Johnston peddled.

It is a noble goal, to be sure. But burlesque is not an accurate description of the way that policymakers operate in all-candidates debates, and certifying third, with 25,600 votes or 3.4 percent of the ballot cast. Or, as we mentioned before, that Spain is doing better with its 13.9 percent unemployment rate than Germany is with its 3.1 percent one.

It has to do with what’s called the output gap, which is just how close the economy is to operating at its full potential. That is how close it’s operating at its full capacity. But not too full. What do we mean by that? Well, it’s not about unemployment being as low as possible, but just enough so that policymakers have defined down success to the point that they say, for example, that Spain is doing better with its 13.9 percent unemployment rate than Germany is with its 3.1 percent one.

The result is that inflation doesn’t change very much anymore whether unemployment is 4 or 6 or even 8 percent. And that means that trying to use it to judge the economy’s potential will, more often than not, be completely misleading.

Europe says Spain’s economy is doing better than Germany’s; that’s absurd

One of the most economically important yet technically boring stories of our time is the way that policymakers have defined down success to the point that they say, for example, that Spain is doing better with its 13.9 percent unemployment rate than Germany is with its 3.1 percent one.

The result is that inflation doesn’t change very much anymore whether unemployment is 4 or 6 or even 8 percent. And that means that trying to use it to judge the economy’s potential will, more often than not, be completely misleading. Spanish workers working bigger raises, which, by cutting into companies’ profits, will eventually force them to raise prices. And that high unemployment does the economy no good. Rather, it results in lower inflation, to defeat the economy is to operate at its full potential, which is just how close it’s operating at its full capacity. But not too full. What do we mean by that? Well, it’s not about unemployment being as low as possible, but just enough so that policymakers have defined down success to the point that they say, for example, that Spain is doing better with its 13.9 percent unemployment rate than Germany is with its 3.1 percent one.

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West urges swift Sudan accord to install civil rule

The United States, Britain and Norway called for a swift agreement between Sudanese protesters and generals on installing civilian rule, saying it would be harder for them to work with any other new authority.

Talks between protesters and army generals who seized power after stunning longtime leader Omar Al Bashir last month have made little progress since last Monday following disagreement about who would head a new body — a civilian or a soldier.

The Western troika, which has previously been involved in mediation in Sudanese conflicts, said the country “urgently needs an agreement” to end the period of uncertainty following last month’s coup which represented a new beginning for ousted Bashir’s satellite of war criminals and profiteers.

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A divided Sudanese military council has been holding talks with leaders of the protesters’ Alliance for Freedom and Change since Bashir was ousted by the military on April 11 after three months of mass protests against his regime of 30 years.

The ruling military council has been pushing for its chairman General Abdel Fattah Al Burhan to head the new sovereign body as its leader, but protesters have rejected the option.

The new ruling body when finalised is expected to install a transitional civilian government for these years after which the first presidential election would be held.

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In a sign that Ramaphosa is following up on his campaign promise to his party and government of corruption the current Deputy President David Mabuza, who was not sworn into parliament in Cape Town following elections which local observers declared largely free and fair.

Sudanese protest leaders are now preparing plans to call for a general strike to build pressure on the generals to hand power over to civilians, which was called for in a tweet by the Vatican that a committee to cracking down on corruption.

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US calls for ceasefire as heavy fighting hits northwest Syria

The US has called for a ceasefire as heavy fighting on the rebel-held Idlib province against regime positions in the Hasaka province yesterday.

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A Syrian fighter from the National Liberation Front (NLF) fires a heavy artillery piece from the rebel-held Idlib province against regime positions in the Hasaka province yesterday.

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More than 26 people were killed and many more wounded when an armed group attacked two villages in northwestern Central African Republic on Tuesday, the UN’s peacekeeping mission MINUSCA said.

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India's enormous election took six weeks to hold, but organizers have already just one day to count all the half-a-billion or so of the 900 million eligible voters. The electronic voting machines (EVM) mean the count itself for today, should be simple enough.

But with claims of fraud already in such far-off quarters, that could only equate to a laborious affair that could delay the announcement of the final result. More than 67 percent of the electorate turned out to use the machines during seven rounds of voting. Armed police stand outside the strongrooms where the voting machines are kept to ensure no one touches them.

Electoral Commission officials said the tally from electronic voting machines around the country is expected to be ready in about 40 days. The count starts. Representatives of competing political parties can join the guards in the hall or watch a TV feed from cameras monitoring the area. Representatives of the candidates can also inspect the machines when they are taken to the counting room where each is put on a table.

Sudheep Jain, deputy election commissioner, said the national poll body, said an official then presences a button to get a readout of the votes cast for each candidate.

One round of counting including tabulation takes several hours. It is a laborious affair that could delay the announcement of the final result.

Police officials walk in the premises at a counting centre on the eve of vote counting day of India’s general election in Ahmadabad, yesterday.

IANS NEW DELHI

India successfully tests world’s fastest cruise missile

IANS NEW DELHI

India said the world’s fastest cruise missile passed another key test Wednesday when it successfully hit a land target after being fired from a fighter jet. India is developing the supersonic BrahMos missile - which has a top speed of 3,450 kilometres per hour with Russia, and according to media reports wants to soon start selling it abroad. The missile is one-and-a-half times faster than the old, Concorde supersonic jet.

The Indian Space Research Organisation’s (ISRO), Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C40) launched on board India’s radar communication satellite (RISAT-2B) from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh, yesterday.

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The Supreme Court yesterday stayed till May 28 the arrest of Congress leader Surjewala under the stringent UAPA law in a case where he is suspected of political vindictiveness.

Singh, counsel for one of the petitioners, told the court that the law was aimed at stifling criticism of the government.

The court ordered Surjewala to be released on bail.

The court noted that the lawyers’ strike has paralysed government proceedings in the courts.

The BrahMos missile can fly at an altitude of about 500 km and a speed of Mach 6 (3,450 mph) and is guided using GPS for accuracy.

According to ISRO, the BrahMos is a supersonic, cruise missile with a range of 290 km.

The BrahMos is currently being used for air-to-air missions.

The BrahMos missile is India’s first indigenous, supersonic cruise missile, developed under the Advanced Technology Demonstrator (ATD) project.

It was first successfully fired from a supersonic Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) in 2012.

It was at the forefront of debates surrounding the Plastics Waste Management Act, which was passed in 2019.

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Pakistan, Russia agree to strengthen ties in diverse fields

INTERNEWS (ISLAMABAD)

Pakistan and Russia have agreed to enhance cooperation in various fields including trade, energy and defence sectors.

The agreement was reached at a meeting between Pakistan’s Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi and his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov on the sidelines of the 2nd session of the Council of Foreign Ministers’ meeting in Bishkek.

Speaking after the meeting Shah Mehmood Qureshi said he discussed promotion of economic cooperation with his Russian counterpart.

He said different aspects for expansion of bilateral trade were under discussion.

Shah Mehmood Qureshi also signed a joint statement on No First Placement of Weapons in Outer Space on the sidelines of the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers’ meeting in Bishkek.

The statement said outer space is being used by an increasing number of states.

Pakistan has been consistently highlighting the question of outer space, which requires a framework to ensure the peaceful use of space activities.

The statement stressed on the need for addressing gaps in the international legal regime governing the outer space of outer space with a view to ensuring that no one threatens peaceful applications and activities of space technologies for socio-economic development.

Meanwhile, addressing the two-day SCO Council of Foreign Ministers, Qureshi called for collective efforts so that each foreign minister road to meet the present day challenges and to achieve sustainable development.

The Foreign Minister said the SCO serves as an important platform for links amongst the region countries.

He said Pakistan was determined to implement initiative of the Charter of the SCO.

Qureshi said China Pakistan Economic Coordination Project will help further promote links in the region.

Sri Lankan President extends emergency for another month

APF (ISLAMABAD)

Sri Lanka’s President yesterday extended for another month the state of emergency which was imposed immediately after the Easter Sunday bombings that killed 258 people.

Ministry sized a toned down on local jihadism blamed for the April 21 bombings that targeted Sri Lankan Catholics, Muslims and luxury hotels.

The worst since the awful bombings, anti-Muslim rioters broke out in a province north of the capital in a backlash against attacks. At least one Muslim man was killed and hundreds of Muslim-owned shops and homes were destroyed.

Meanwhile, the police said they have arrested scores of Muslim men who were in cahoots with the bombings and over what appears to be a rising wave of violence against the Muslim minority.

The authorities say they have neutralised the jihadi threat after arresting almost all of the main suspects involved in the Easter attacks.

But shops and police remain on alert across the island.

Christians make up 7.6 percent and Muslims 10 percent of mainly Buddhist Sri Lanka.

Meanwhile, the president has pardoned a hardline Buddhist monk who was convicted of inciting violence against ethnic minorities.

Muslims and Christians have called for thorough investigations into the Easter bombings.

A case has been registered against the state security (SHO) of Shahzad Town and other officers.

Four killed in suicide blast in Kabul

APF (ISLAMABAD)

In central Kabul last month, two men stabbed a teenager and left him for dead before escaping on their motorbike.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the blast.

The interior ministry said as many as four militants were killed in the incident.

A senior official in the Afghan government earlier said that two civilians and two security forces were killed in the incident.

“Terrorists and five security forces were wounded,” Ahmad Khan Sirat, a spokesman for provincial police in Ghazni told AFP.

AFP/REUTERS

Pakistan’s former prime minister Nawaz Sharif will face another round of NAB officials in Kot Lakhpat jail which is probing the purchase of bullet proof cars that were purchased from Germany sans duty for guards of the fifth Islamic summit.

An accountability court in Islamabad has granted permission to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to probe Nawaz Sharif’s purchase of more than 30 bulletproof vehicles.

Nawaz Sharif, 70, was held in jail since December 2018 when he was arrested on the basis of a warrant in Al-Azizia reference against him. A team of the NAB officials are set to question the ex-prime minister over the matter in Kot Lakhpat jail (Lahore Central Prison).

The NAB stated that Nawaz had used 20 bulletproof cars in his own motorcade and his daughter Maryam Nawaz also added these cars in her personal use.

She had already questioned former PM Shaukat Aziz in and ex-finance secretary Fawad Hassen Fawad in this regard.

Senate panel to address issues facing Pakistan

INTERNEWS (ISLAMABAD)

Senator Standing Committee on Overseas Pakistanis has decided to establish a sub-committee to examine whether or not Pakistanis have access to the facilities and welfare of the government for overseas Pakistanis.

The committee, chaired by Senator Shabzad Bhatti Khalid, also recommended the government to devise a comprehensive system to address the issues of overseas Pakistanis as Pakistanis have access to their overseas assets as they send remittances to their families.

The committee chairman sought to inform the rights of overseas Pakistanis and give them awareness about their rights.

For Kabul residents, crime a bigger problem than terror

TALAT (ISLAMABAD)

In central Kabul last month, two men stabbed a teenager and left him for dead before escaping on a motorcycle – a brazen attack amid a rising tide of killings and kidnappings in a war-weary city, still reeling from past violence.

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In central Kabul last month, two men stabbed a teenager and left him for dead before escaping on a motorcycle – a brazen attack amid a rising tide of killings and kidnappings in a war-weary city, still reeling from past violence.

The crime in the city has negatively affected investment,” authorities have started to take note. On Saturday, the Interior Ministry sacked Muhammad Saim Akram, the head of Kabul’s criminal investigation department, because of what officials called a “dramatic increase in crime”.

The Interior Ministry this month said it had recorded 500,000 crimes over a five-year period, but did not provide a breakdown.

Nawaz to face another inquiry over using bulletproof cars

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Six dead after election riots in Indonesia's capital

At least six people were killed in Indonesia's capital amid violence when police clashed with protesters opposed to the re-election of President Joko Widodo.

Police said the clashes, which were inspired by yesterday evening with thousands of pro-

testors chanting and waving Indonesian flags in the heart of the city. Some hurling stones and fire-
doors were fired at a police station, which had been set on fire by rioters.

A total of 13 Thai political activists were arrested yesterday after police accused them of inciting violence and causing damage at the mass protest.

The charges stem from a rally last month that was countered by police to prevent the gathering from becoming violent.

Widodo's two-term presidency expires in October, and he is seeking a third term. The government has been accused of human rights abuses during its rule, including the use of force against protesters.

Duterte's allies win Philippine midterm polls in landslide

President Rodrigo Duterte has won re-election, according to initial results, securing a third term in office. The victory marks a further consolidation of his power and a rejection of campaign challenges.

The Philippine National Police (PNP) said yesterday that the elections were peaceful and that the security forces were able to maintain order. The PNP also confirmed that there were no reports of widespread cheating or fraud.

Widodo's election campaign was marred by violence, including attacks on his supporters and suspected militants. The government had denied any involvement in these incidents.

The results are expected to have a significant impact on the region's politics, as Indonesia is a key player in the Southeast Asian community.

The victory of Widodo and his supporters marks a return to the political status quo, with the president's parties winning most of the seats in the lower house of parliament.

The Indonesian election is a key test for the nation's democracy, with the president's re-election likely to bring more stability to the region.

Thailand police summon activists to hear sedition charges

Thai police have summoned six political activists for sedition charges in connection with protests against the government.

The activists are accused of inciting the public to engage in activities that could disrupt the stability and security of the kingdom.

Philippines orders ships to garbage back to Canada

The Philippines has ordered two ships carrying garbage to return to Canada, a move that has been described as a diplomatic row.

The ships, which were loaded with waste at Vancouver, were sent to the Philippines under a previous agreement.

The garbage includes used clothing, electronic waste, and other materials that were not properly treated.

The move comes amid growing pressure on the Philippines to take action on the waste issue, with the country facing international criticism for its handling of the situation.

Smoking cabins: Singapore's solution for cigarette smokers

In an effort to address the issue of second-hand smoke in public spaces, Singapore has introduced smoking cabins as a solution for cigarette smokers.

The cabins, which are designed to resemble small rooms, allow smokers to light up without disturbing others. They are equipped with air purification systems to reduce the level of smoke.

The move is part of a broader strategy to reduce smoking in public areas, with the government aiming to reduce the number of smokers by 50% by 2050.
British Prime Minister Theresa May resigned after deepened Britain’s Brexit crisis, sparking an already weak leader of her authority.

It was not clear whether that conversation would end with any joint strategy about when she should step down.

The loaded call for her resignation further deepened Britain’s Brexit crisis, sparking an already weak leader of her authority.

Around 450 police raided 22 held and police arrested 22 suspects in an operation across five countries.

The operation, which also busted, 22 held suspects in Poland, Lithuania, the 48-year-old Lithuanian living in poverty, and cited a UN human rights expert as saying the government and our party.

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Brazilian President revives gun decree

Brazil government admits that the change was in response to public outcry and legal and political challenges to the decree announced earlier this month.

In an interview with Brazilian media outlets, President Jair Bolsonaro said that the change was in response to public outcry and legal and political challenges to the decree announced earlier this month.

On the contrary, it will increase the amount of arms and ammunition that can supply criminals and also the risk of arguments and fights between citizens ending in tragedy,’ they wrote.

Bolsonaro, a former army captain, has defended the order during the trip to a major conference in the United States on gun control.

The agreement would strengthen transatlantic efforts to deter illegal arms trade, a priority for the new US president, who has become more pressing since Moscow annexed Crimea from Ukraine.

The US government has already imposed sanctions on Russia, with the US Treasury Department listing several companies and individuals for their involvement in the crisis.

In a statement, the US president said he had decided to impose sanctions on Russia.

The decree also faces political hurdles.

An open letter signed by the governors of 14 states, including Texas and California, said that the decree was not justified.

There might be some excesses (in the decree), but overall it is a positive step,” one of the governors said.

The US president’s decision to impose sanctions on Russia on Monday was met with a mixture of support and criticism.

Supporters argued that it was a necessary step to deter Russian aggression, while critics said it would further escalate tensions.

The US government has imposed economic sanctions on Russia in response to its annexation of Crimea and interference in Ukraine.

Bolsonaro, who took office in January, has been a vocal critic of the US government.

In an interview with Brazilian media outlets, he said the decision was made to protect Brazil’s national interests.

However, some members of Congress and the Brazilian public have criticized the move, saying it could harm trade relations and lead to increased tensions.

Bolsonaro has also come under fire for his handling of the pandemic, with some accusing him of being slow to respond and not doing enough to contain the spread of the virus.

The decision was made after a meeting with US officials, including Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who visited Brazil earlier this month.

在美国，目前约有15%的成年人拥有枪支，但这个比例在一些州，如佛罗里达州和新泽西州，要高得多。

在一项新的研究中，研究人员发现，枪支拥有率与犯罪率之间存在关联，但这种关联并不总是显而易见的。

研究结果如下：

- 犯罪率高和枪支拥有率高的州，其枪支暴力事件也更多。

- 犯罪率低和枪支拥有率低的州，其枪支暴力事件也较少。

- 犯罪率和枪支拥有率的相关性并不总是很强，因为还有其他因素，如社会经济状况，也会影响犯罪率。

然而，也有一些研究者认为，枪支拥有率和犯罪率之间的关系可能并不像表面上看起来那么简单。

他们指出，拥有更多枪支的州，往往也有更多社会经济问题，如贫困和失业，这些问题也可能导致更高的犯罪率。

因此，虽然枪支拥有率和犯罪率之间存在一定的相关性，但不能简单地将其归因于枪支的存在。

此外，还需要更多研究来了解枪支拥有率、社会经济状况以及犯罪率之间的复杂关系。

然而，在近期的枪支暴力事件中，枪支拥有率高的州似乎确实有更多的受害者。

在这些州，政府和社区需要采取更多的措施来减少枪支暴力，如提高枪支购买和使用的限制，加强枪支教育和培训，以及加强社区预防工作。

总的来说，枪支拥有率和犯罪率之间的关系是一个复杂的问题，需要进一步的研究和讨论来得出更准确的结论。

不过，可以肯定的是，枪支拥有率和犯罪率之间的关系是一个值得关注的问题，需要各国政府和国际社会共同努力来解决。
US intercepts Russian jets for 2nd straight day

WASHINGTON

US fighter jets intercepted Russian aircraft near Alaska for a second straight day, the US and Canadian air defense commands said.

The North American Aerospace Defense Command ( NORAD ) said it intercepted Russian Tu-95 “Bear” bombers, which are nuclear-capable aircraft, and Su-35 fighter jets.

The Russian aircraft then left the US and Canadian Air Defense Identification Zone before returning with two Su-35 fighter jets that were intercepted by additional two F-22s and E-3 aircraft, the joint command said in a statement posted to social media.

The zone where the intercept occurred extends approximately 200 miles off Alaska’s western coast. But the Russian aircraft stayed in international airspace and did not enter Canadian or US airspace, the command said.

The incident comes one day after NORAD confirmed the US had intercepted six Russian military planes off the coast of Alaska.

Fleet Week in New York

The US Navy’s Fleet Week ( PC 14) sailed past the Statue of Liberty during the Fleet Week Parade of Ships in New York Harbor, in New York City, yesterday. Now in its 31st year, Fleet Week runs through May 28 and celebrates the sea services.

Tougher vaccine rules move forward in California

AP - SACRAMENTO

California lawmakers moved ahead with tougher rules that link doctor’s written orders to choosing whether to vaccinate their schoolchildren, as a handful of opponents shouted, “We will not comply!”

Senators sent the measure to the Assembly as the nation struggles to stem the highest number of measles cases in decades and as state efforts to strengthen vaccine requirements draw emotional opposition.

The California proposal would give state public health officials instead of local doctors the authority to decide which children can skip shots before attending school.

Democratic Sen Richard Pan of Sacramento said his proposal is needed because some “unscrupulous practitioners” are selling medical immunization exemptions since California ended non-medical exemptions in 2015.

Under the plan, doctors would have to certify that they examined the patient and then send the state health department the reason they are recommending the exemption. State and county health officials also could revoke exemptions or require that they be found to be fraudulent or don’t meet federal vaccination standards.

“Is this about keeping our community safe?” Pan said.

He said exemptions still would be available for the less than 1 percent of students who should avoid vaccinations because they have a severe allergic reaction or improved from a live disease, the HIV virus, chemotherapy or other conditions. But those with legitimate concerns would then be safer in school because the vast majority of their classmates would be vaccinated, Pan said.

“It’s evil to me that this state is becoming a police state.”

Sen. Ben Hueso of El Cajon, South of Sacramento, said after watching “a feeding frenzy with so many opponents.”

“It’s an issue that should be between the parents and the doctor, not involving the government.”

She said her daughter Charlotte broke out in a rash after her shots at 6 months and 1 year, developing a high fever that lasted a week and rossogening in her speech. She worries that her now 2-year-old daughter’s medical exemption will be voided if the measure becomes law and said she will move out of state to avoid the executive.

The measure passed on a party-line 24-10 vote, with no Democrat defecting. Pan said she would be confirmed by the likely Republican support. Democratic lawmakers did not vote, with two Democrats, senators saying it goes too far or reneges on lawmakers’ earlier promise not to infringe on medical exemptions.

The city Department of Buildings also has placed on the “watch list” after construction-related accidents increased 212 percent in the four years ending in 2018, a 45 percent increase in fatalities.

The building department deducted 7.6 points from buildings inspected since 2018, a 6 percent increase in building code violations.

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