

WISH TO PARTICIPATE AT THE 'EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLBEING CONFERENCE'

DOHA: The World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH), a global initiative of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF), will participate as a panelist at the "Employee Health and Wellbeing Conference," which will be held in Doha from October 11 to 13, 2015. The conference will be held under the patronage of HE Abdullah Bin Khalid Al Qahtani, Minister of Public Health, and is officially supported by the Supreme Council of Health.

The conference will explore the assertion that fluctuating business climates, globalization and difficult work environments are

posing wider occupational health challenges to employers. With the aim of reducing the economic burdens of workplace injury and illness, the conference is designed to find the best ways of generating high quality health care for the workforce. As part of its commitment to healthcare by capturing and disseminating the best evidence-based ideas and practices this area is of particular importance to WISH as it continues to work towards QF's vision of cementing Qatar's pioneering role as an emerging centre for healthcare and innovation.

WISH CEO, Egbert Schillings, will speak at a session entitled Wellness Works and

Prevention Pays: Business Perspective, on the first day of the conference at 9 am. Mr Schillings will discuss the return on investment that wellness and prevention programs provide once a business invests in a health strategy.

Mr Schillings said: "A business's most important asset is its employees. And in a world with rising incidence of lifestyle related diseases, the health of a business depends increasingly on the health of its employees. At the same time 75 percent of all health care costs arise from these largely preventable conditions which the providers in the health care system alone cannot fix.

Employers therefore have an important role to play in helping their staff reduce health risk factors including weight, blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol. This conference is extremely timely and throws into stark relief both the challenges and the opportunities in employee health."

Other topics that will be addressed at the event include Corporate Health as a Key Determinant for Sustainable Development, Countering Air Industry Medical Challenges, Developing Healthy & Resilient Workforces and Pioneering Remote Healthcare. Featuring 30 plus speakers and a choice of over 20 topics, the conference promises to

offer a rich selection of industry-leading education and debate.

Embedding the theme of "Global Action Plan - Promote Worker Health & Let the Business Thrive", the conference will offer invaluable advice and best practice guidance through peer-led interactive sessions, thought provoking debates, real-life case studies, and practical activity-based workshops giving each participant a learning experience unique to their professional needs. WISH's participation in the conference hopes to translate what is discussed and learned into being implemented as part of local healthcare policy initiatives.



LONG BEACH: Animal rights activist Kirby Kotler, with his daughter Kirra, 12, from Malibu, Calif, holds up signs as opponents and supporters fill the room during a California Coastal Commission meeting. — AP

FACING BAN ON ORCA BREEDING, SEAWORLD PONDERERS NEXT MOVE

'IT'S TIME FOR THEM TO STOP FIGHTING AND EVOLVE'

SAN DIEGO: SeaWorld says denying orcas' their ability to breed is cruel, but it was unclear Friday whether the corporation will fight such a ban at its California park and risk further hurting attendance. Company officials said they were reviewing their options a day after the California Coastal Commission approved a \$100 million expansion of the tanks SeaWorld uses to hold killer whales in San Diego - but banned breeding of the captive orcas that would live in them.

The panel's decision raised an array of questions, including whether the company would proceed with the project or raise a legal challenge, possibly on whether the commission overstepped its authority. Deciding the next step could be tricky for SeaWorld. The company has been struggling with falling stock prices and park attendance numbers since the release of the 2013 documentary "Blackfish," which suggests SeaWorld's treatment of captive orcas provokes violent behavior.

Number of risks

If SeaWorld abandons its expansion for its orca facility to get around having a ban on its breeding program, then it risks giving the public the perception that it never intended to build bigger tanks to benefit the park's 11 killer whales but rather to simply breed

more in captivity, said Jennifer Fearing, a lobbyist for The Humane Society of the United States.

The ban on breeding, including through artificial insemination, would apply only to the California park and not SeaWorld facilities in other states. The commission also prohibited the sale, trade or transfer of captive orcas. The amendment does provide a potential exemption for certain whales caught in the wild.

Suing the state over the ruling could be costly and time-consuming. A ruling in its favor would mean the company must return to the commission again to get another permit for its "Blue World" project, set to open in 2018, which would triple the size of existing killer whale enclosures. SeaWorld should learn from Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey, Fearing said. That company announced in March that its three touring circuses would phase out elephant acts by 2018 because of a shift in public attitudes.

If SeaWorld moved forward with its plans under the commission's various conditions, it would win back many of its critics, Fearing said. "It's clear where public opinion is and the unanimous vote from the California Coastal Commission only added to the barage over the last couple years," she said. "The writing is on the wall and it's time for them to stop fighting and evolve."

'Slow extinction'

Animal rights activists praised the decision as marking the end of the ocean park's use of orcas. SeaWorld officials expressed concern: "A ban on breeding would sentence these animals to a slow extinction in our care," said John Reilly, president of SeaWorld San Diego, who rushed out of the building after the vote. The company declined to answer questions Friday on the ruling but sent a statement from Joel Manby, SeaWorld's president and chief executive, saying: "Depriving these social animals of the natural and fundamental right to reproduce is inhumane and we do not support this condition." During Thursday's heated meeting attended by hundreds, SeaWorld attorney David Watson told the panel "the state of California does not have jurisdiction to regulate the management and care of marine mammal collections."

"We believe that federal law expressly pre-empts all state regulation" of the orcas, he said. "All marine mammal exhibits are regulated exclusively by the federal government." The condition was among several set by the commission that regulates land and water use along the California coast, including that no new whales from the wild will be kept in the new tanks. SeaWorld says it hasn't captured wild orcas in more than 30 years. — AP

GOVERNOR OKS MEDICAL MARIJUANA REGULATIONS

SAN FRANCISCO: A trio of bills aimed at bringing order and oversight to California's medical marijuana industry nearly 20 years after the state led the nation in legalizing pot for medical use won Gov. Jerry Brown's signature, his office said Friday.

The first statewide licensing and operating rules for pot growers, manufacturers of cannabis-infused products and retail weed stores comes as multiple groups try to qualify voter initiatives in 2016 that would allow adults to use marijuana recreationally.

Even before Brown approved the package of new rules, initiative sponsors had started rewriting their proposed measures to incorporate many of its elements in hopes of not alienating the governor ahead of next year's election.

"My hope is this will be viewed as a starting point, a solid foundation on which to build from," Assemblyman Ron Bonta, D-Oakland, the lead author of one of the bills, said Friday. "Whatever happens with recreational use, there needs to be proper regulation. This is a very strong contribution from the Legislature about what those regulations should look like."

The Democratic governor's endorsement of the 70-page Medical Marijuana Regulation and Safety Act hammered out by lawmakers in the closing hours of the legislative session was expected because his office crafted many of the exhaustive details. "This new structure will make sure patients have access to medical marijuana, while ensuring a robust tracking system," Brown said in a signing statement. "This sends a clear signal to our federal counterparts that California is implementing

robust controls not only on paper, but in practice." The package seeks to manage medical marijuana by requiring individuals or companies engaged in any aspect of the industry to obtain at least one of 17 different licenses. It restricts the number of licenses one company could have. The legislation includes separate licenses for indoor and outdoor cultivation, transportation, product testing, distribution and dispensaries of different sizes. It also charges various state agencies to develop guidelines for packaging, potency, pesticide use and advertising.

"Today, the Wild West era of medical cannabis came to an end, and a new era of responsible regulation has begun," said United Food and Commercial Workers Western States Council Executive Director Jim Araby, whose union lobbied for employment standards in the bills.

In addition, the bills preserve the right of individuals to grow small amounts of medical marijuana for personal use and allows local governments to ban or tax marijuana-related businesses. Another provision commissions the University of California to study how marijuana affects driving and to recommend appropriate impaired-driver standards. "This package proves that, for the first time, Californians can work collaboratively to develop and produce comprehensive medical marijuana regulation," said California Police Chiefs Association President David Bejarano, whose organization opposed previous efforts to regulate medical marijuana at the state level on the theory that to do so would amount to an endorsement that pot has proven benefits.

GLUTTONOUS JAGUAR 'TOO OBESE TO MATE'

NEW DELHI: A 12-year-old jaguar brought to New Delhi zoo on a "breeding loan" is being sent back after he was found too fat to mate, officials said yesterday. The big cat, nicknamed Salman, was borrowed from a zoo in southern Kerala state last October but has since shown little interest in coying up to his partner, Delhi zoo curator Riaz Khan told AFP.

"The female jaguar has been trying to entice him but he is simply lazy and does not respond to her overtures," Khan said. "The fact is he is too fat to breed and we have decided to send him back to Kerala," he said, adding the jaguar polishes off some six kilos of buffalo meat daily.

Jaguars look like the leopard, the only difference being they have spots inside their rosettes. The jaguar is also a much stockier animal than its cousin, with short-

er legs and tail. Jaguars have no defined breeding season and will mate any time of the year. The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources

(IUCN) lists the species as near threatened with hunting prohibited in India as well as various other countries. The International Species Information Service says there are only 292 jaguars worldwide. Delhi zoo officials have not weighed the big cat as yet although they say he is "much heavier" than the normal 100 kilos. The Indian Express daily said frustrated caretakers had given up hope of seeing Salman start a family. "He has a bigger appetite than the tigers," the English language newspaper quoted a caretaker as saying. "He is lazy, a glutton, just loves to eat and relax." — AFP

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