



**Singapore rocked by open feud in Lee family**

## CATTLE SLAUGHTER CRACKDOWN HITS INDIA LEATHER INDUSTRY



**DOHA:** A general view taken on June 11, 2017 shows portraits of Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani on the back of vehicles and text reading in Arabic: "Tamim the glorious". —AFP

# TURKEY: GULF RIFT DAMAGES MUSLIM WORLD

HAMAD PORT BUSTLING WITH SHIPS LOADED WITH FOOD, BUILDING MATERIALS

**ANKARA/DOHA:** Turkey said yesterday Qatar's rift with fellow Gulf Arab states and Egypt was damaging the Islamic world and it would do all it could by diplomatic channels to prevent any escalation. President Tayyip Erdogan, who has cultivated close ties to Doha while preserving relations with Saudi Arabia, dispatched his foreign minister to Doha in a bid to solve a dispute raising concern across the Middle East and beyond.

Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain have broken off ties and imposed sanctions on Qatar, accusing it of supporting terrorism and courting regional rival Iran - allegations Doha denies. "Our main priority as part of our efforts with both Qatar and Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries is to solve this through negotiations, not to escalate the crisis," President Tayyip Erdogan's spokesman Ibrahim Kalin told an Ankara news conference. "Today we are having to tackle many problems such as Daesh (Islamic State), the ongoing war in Syria, the fight against terrorism and poverty. Amid all this, tensions further escalating in the region through such a crisis would mean wasting of the region's resources and opportunities."

Turkey and Qatar have both provided support for the

Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and backed rebels fighting to overthrow Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad. Conservative Gulf neighbours have long viewed Qatar's outgoing foreign policy with suspicion. The Gulf Arab states have not made public any demands of Qatar but a journalist with the state-funded Al Jazeera network has shared a list that includes Qatar severing diplomatic ties with Iran and expelling members of the Palestinian Hamas group and the Muslim Brotherhood who live in Doha.

The list of demands also includes ending support for "terrorist organizations" and ceasing "interference" in Egyptian affairs, charges Qatar denies. Kalin said a Turkish military base in Qatar, set up before the regional spat, was established to ensure the security of the whole region and did not pose any military threat to any other country.

Turkey approved plans last week to deploy more troops to the base after the crisis began. But it was not immediately clear if they arrived. The measures against Qatar, which has a population of 2.7 million people but vast gas wealth, have disrupted imports of food and other materials and caused some foreign banks to scale back business. Qatar, which imported 80 percent of its food from bigger Gulf Arab neighbours before the diplomatic

shutdown, has been talking to Iran and Turkey to secure food and water.

At Qatar's Hamad port yesterday, workers were busy unloading containers of food and building materials, while another ship carrying livestock, including chicken and sheep from Australia had docked at the port. "There is a service from India... which used to come via Jebel Ali port (in the United Arab Emirates) but is now redirected," said a port official who declined to be named. "The first vessel on that service is to arrive Friday and will run once a week," he added.

### Africa

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu flew to Doha for a meeting with Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani during a tour that may also include a visit to Saudi Arabia. There was no word either from Qatar or Saudi Arabia about the visit. The effects of the dispute could widen beyond the region. Yesterday, Qatar said it had withdrawn troops from the border between the east African states of Djibouti and Eritrea where the Gulf state has been acting as mediator in a border dispute. It gave no reasons for the move, but Djibouti had earlier down-

graded its diplomatic ties with Qatar after the Gulf move against Doha.

Last week, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt announced a list of 59 people, including Muslim Brotherhood spiritual leader Yousef Al-Qaradawi, and 12 entities, among them Qatari-funded charities Qatar Charity and Eid Charity, who had been designated as terrorists. Qatar has rejected the list and said it adheres to United Nations Security Council resolutions on countering terrorism including eradicating sources of financing for terrorism. Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has criticized the measures imposed on Qatar, saying they were hurting the emirate's people, not its rulers.

Saudi Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir, speaking after talks in Washington with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson on Tuesday, said the measures taken against Doha did not amount to a blockade since Qatar's airports and ports remained open and offered to send supplies to Qatar if needed. The Qatari foreign ministry said Saudi Arabia's offer to provide food and medical assistance confirmed that the closure of transport links "is a siege, not a boycott, and reflects the clear contradiction in statements by officials of those countries." —Reuters

## UAE: US SHOULD RETHINK QATAR BASE

**WASHINGTON:** The United States should consider moving its air base out of Qatar, the Emirati ambassador to the US said Tuesday, encouraging the Trump administration to use its leverage to further pressure Qatar over alleged support for extremism. As the Gulf crisis enters its second week, Ambassador Yousef Al-Otaiba of the United Arab Emirates said Qatar's neighbors would "fairly soon" give the US a list of specific actions Qatar must take before punitive steps are lifted. He said the list would likely include Qatari sanctions on bank accounts of individuals that Qatar's neighbors have already sanctioned - and possibly on the banks themselves. "We've gotten fed up. We've had enough," Otaiba said.

In their bid to isolate Qatar by cutting off diplomatic ties, the UAE, Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries have been emboldened by US President Donald Trump, who has forcefully echoed their accusations that Qatar funds terrorist groups and foments instability in the Mideast. Otaiba said both his country and the US had allowed "bad behavior" by Qatar to continue for "a very long time." "If I want to be honest, I think the reason action hasn't been taken against Qatar is because of the air base," Otaiba said, referring to Al-Udeid air base, not far from Doha. "The air base is a very nice insurance policy against any additional pressure."

Home to some 10,000 US troops, the base has emerged as a flashpoint in the dispute between Qatar and its neighbors, the worst in the Gulf in years. The forward headquarters of the US military's Central Command is a staging point for US air campaigns in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria. "Maybe someone in Congress should have a hearing and just say, you know,

"Should we consider moving it?" Otaiba said. "And maybe not moving the entire base. Maybe just distribute to various countries so you don't have all your eggs in one basket."

Otaiba told reporters that the UAE hasn't told the US it should consider moving the base, but is "willing to have that conversation." And he suggested American troops could be moved to his country, instead. Pointing to new



**Yousef Al-Otaiba**

defense cooperation deal the US and the UAE signed last month, Otaiba said the "infrastructure is in place" to have the conversation if the US wanted to relocate. The US already has some troops in the UAE. The Pentagon has said the new document "provides the US military with the ability to more seamlessly

respond to a range of scenarios in and around the UAE, if necessary."

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt cut diplomatic ties with Qatar last week, accusing it of backing terrorism and promoting policies that destabilize the region. Qatar denies those allegations. Trump has offered Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to help mediate a resolution, but other countries including Kuwait have also gotten involved. Otaiba said the forthcoming list of demands would center on three complaints about Qatari behavior: Support for terrorism, meddling in others' internal affairs, and use of state-backed media to attack neighbors.

He said the list would likely include expelling terrorists from Qatar and shutting down or curtailing Qatar-funded media outlets that attack UAE and others. He said Al-Jazeera, the Qatari-backed television network that has drawn particular consternation from Qatar's neighbors, would likely be on the list of issues Qatar address would have to address. The Emirati diplomat said his country was hearing only support from the White House on its move against Qatar, despite Tillerson's call for the UAE and the others to ease the steps they took to isolate Qatar. "That's not going to happen," Otaiba said.

Still, he said he did not foresee the crisis becoming a military conflict, even if Qatar refused to bow to demands. Even if Qatar does accept the list of demands, Otaiba said they'd have to fulfill specific steps over a period of time to show seriousness before the countries would restore ties to the tiny, gas-rich country. "There will be an escalation of economic pressure" unless Qatar changes course, Otaiba said. —AP

## QATAR PULLS TROOPS FROM DJIBOUTI-ERITREA BORDER

**DOHA:** Qatar said yesterday it has pulled all of its troops from the border of Djibouti and Eritrea, east African nations that have a long-running territorial dispute which Doha had helped mediate. Qatar offered no explanation for the move, though it comes amid a diplomatic dispute with other Arab nations that have cut diplomatic ties and now are trying to isolate Qatar from the rest of the world. While the dispute hasn't escalated to a military confrontation, Qatar's military is dwarfed by neighboring Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, two of its biggest opponents in the crisis.

The 450 Qatari troops controlled a mountainous border crossing between Eritrea and Djibouti, said Nasredin Ali, a spokesman for Eritrea's biggest armed group, known as the Red Sea Afar Democratic Organization. Eritrean forces moved in after the troops departed, Ali said. Eritrea's top diplomat to the African Union, Araya Desta, told AP the move came after Eritrea cut diplomatic ties to Qatar. However, Desta said his country wanted no confrontation with Djibouti. "We don't want to take any of Djibouti's land," Araya said. "The last time we had some skirmishes. It was unnecessary."

Doha mediated the conflict between the two countries in 2010. Gulf nations have stationed troops in both African countries, using that as a jumping-off point for the ongoing Saudi-led war in Yemen. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain have accused Qatar

of supporting terrorism and severed ties with Doha last week. Qatar denies the allegations, but its ties to Iran and embrace of various Islamist groups have put the country under intense scrutiny.

In Geneva, the United Nations human rights chief said yesterday he is "alarmed about the possible impact" of a diplomatic rift in the Persian Gulf on people's lives. "It is becoming clear that the measures being adopted are overly broad in scope and implementation, and have the potential to seriously disrupt the lives of thousands of women, children and men," said Zeid Raad Al-Husseini. After cutting ties with Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain also ordered Qatari residents out though on Sunday, officials said there would be exceptions for mixed-nationality families. Hussein said these measures do not sufficiently address all cases and expressed alarm that the UAE and Bahrain have threatened to jail and fine people who express sympathy for Qatar online.

Meanwhile, top donors trying to relieve the humanitarian crisis engulfing war-torn Syria met in Doha yesterday. Countries have pledged \$6 billion to help Syria, but so far only 22 percent of that has been funded, said Marcy Vigoda of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. I'm "taking this opportunity to request this top donor group to use your leverage, to use your influence ... to ensure that pledges are turned into commitments," Vigoda said. —AP