In the fast lane

US salmon hatchery to raise country’s first genetically modified animal cleared for human consumption. P4-5

Cover Story

Showbiz
How *When They See Us* holds Trump accountable. Page 11

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The beauty of observing Ramadan in Qatar. Page 16
Devi 2
DIRECTOR: A.L. Vijay
CAST: Prabhu Deva, Tamannaah Bhatia, Nandita Shwetha
SYNOPSIS: In the sequel to the hit 2016 horror comedy, the husband-wife duo of Krishna and Devi are troubled yet again by ‘possessive’ spirits who simply refuse to quit! Things spiral out of control when Krishna is possessed by not one but two ghosts! But what are they after? Will Devi manage to stop them and save her husband?
THEATRES: The Mall, Landmark, Royal Plaza

Aladdin
DIRECTOR: Guy Ritchie
CAST: Naomi Scott, Mena Massoud, Will Smith
SYNOPSIS: When a street urchin finds a lamp with a genie inside, he uses the lamp to turn himself into a prince in order to win the heart of a beautiful princess. But an evil vizier is after the lamp too.
THEATRES: The Mall, Landmark, Royal Plaza

Prayer Time
Fajr 3.13am
Shorooq (sunrise) 4.45am
Zuhr (noon) 11.33am
Ajr (afternoon) 2.57pm
Maghreb (sunset) 6.22pm
Isha (night) 7.52pm

Useful Numbers
Emergency 999
Worldwide Emergency Number 112
Kahramaa – Electricity and Water 991
Local Directory 180
International Calls Enquiry 150
Hamad International Airport 40106666
Labor Department 44508111, 44406537
Mowasalat Taxi 44498888
Qatar Airways 44496000
Hamad Medical Corporation 44392222, 44393333
Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation 44845555, 44845464
Primary Health Care Corporation 44593333, 44593363
Qatar Assistive Technology Centre 44594050
Qatar News Agency 44490205, 44490333
Q-Post – General Postal Corporation 44464444

Humanitarian Services Office
(Single window facility for the repatriation of bodies)
Ministry of Interior 40253371, 40253372, 40253369
Ministry of Health 40253370, 40253364
Hamad Medical Corporation 40253364, 40253365
Qatar Airways 40253374

Quote Unquote
“I can’t change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination.” — Jimmy Dean

Community Editor
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**EVENTS**

**MF Hussain: The Horses Of The Sun Exhibition**
WHERE: Mataf: Arab Museum of Modern Art
WHEN: Ongoing till July 31
TIME: 9am – 7pm
The exhibition presents Hussain’s pluralist approach to the divine and cosmic aspects of being, articulated through the myths, symbols and narratives of the world’s religions and philosophies. M. F. Husain: Horses of the Sun bears witness to a recurrent motif in his art, a personal symbol of self-renewal and vitality.

**Katara Drive Thru Festival**
WHERE: Katara Cultural Village
WHEN: Ongoing till June 10
TIME: 6pm – 4am
Join us at Katara Village and enjoy the diverse cuisines at your car step! From first day of Ramadan until Eid holidays starting from 5pm till 2am.

**India to Qatar – Symbiosis of Cultures**
WHERE: FBQ Museum
WHEN: Ongoing till July 31
Under the context of cultural exchange, FBQ Museum brings together the treasures of the museum owned collection in order to promote mutual understanding, recognition and appreciation between Qatar and India. Composed of five main topics, including community, trade, arts, food and incense, the exhibition takes one on a journey to explore the rich and diverse Indian cultures, the long historic links between Qatar and India, and cultural similarities between Qatar and India.

**Summer Camp for Special Needs**
WHERE: Step by Step Centre for Special Needs
WHEN: June 30 – August 1
TIME: 8:00am – 12:30pm
During this time, all therapists and teachers will be working together, running individual, peer and group sessions within classes. The children will continue learning age-appropriate concepts, work on social skills, life skills training, arts and crafts, music, and fun activities such as water play.

**Artistic Gymnastic Classes**
WHERE: Qatar Academy Msheireb
WHEN: Ongoing
TIME: 3:15pm – 4:15pm
The Olympic sport using horizontal bar, rings and floor exercises on mats for the children from age 4 till 16.

**Ballet Lessons**
WHERE: Music and Arts Atelier
WHEN: Ongoing
TIME: 4pm – 8pm
For more info e-mail at registration@atelierqatar.com or call on 33003839.

**Career Guidance**
WHERE: Right Track Consultants, Al Sadd
WHEN: Sunday – Thursday
TIME: 6pm – 8pm
Career guidance for course, country, college and entrance for students of Grade IX-XII, of all curriculum. Career assessments administered for stream preference, career test, branch preference, personality, multiple intelligence and learning styles and productivity. For more information, 55448835.

**Arabic Calligraphy Workshop**
WHERE: Mamangam Performing Art Centre
WHEN: Wednesday – Monday
Mamangam Performing Art Centre, is a holistic performing arts institution and a one stop solution for adults as well as children looking to explore their talents in various art forms. We offer classes in contemporary, Bollywood, hip hop, Indian classical dance, music (Hindustani and Carnatic), arts and craft, karate, yoga, percussion (Chenda, Thimila, Elathalam and Madhalam), violin, harmonium, public speaking. Additional services include dance education, choreograph music videos and dance cover albums, choreograph dance musical projects, corporate workshops and events, choreograph events for schools, colleges, alumni meets and corporate and choreography events. For details, call 33907609.

**Hobby Classes**
WHERE: Mamangam Performing Art Centre
WHEN: Saturday – Wednesday
Mamangam Performing Art Centre, is a holistic performing arts institution and a one stop solution for adults as well as children looking to explore their talents in various art forms. We offer classes in contemporary, Bollywood, hip hop, Indian classical dance, music (Hindustani and Carnatic), arts and craft, karate, yoga, percussion (Chenda, Thimila, Elathalam and Madhalam), violin, harmonium, public speaking. Additional services include dance education, choreograph music videos and dance cover albums, choreograph dance musical projects, corporate workshops and events, choreograph events for schools, colleges, alumni meets and corporate and choreography events. For details, call 33907609.

**Sunset Desert Safari with Iftar**
WHERE: Sealine Beach
WHEN: Ongoing
TIME: 2pm – 10pm
Enjoy a day out in the relaxing singing sand dunes of Mesaleed along with a thrilling dune bashing experience. This 8-hour getaway takes you all the way to the breath-taking inland sea beach aka Khor Al Adaid to watch the Sunset. Break your fast with lavish Iftar at the resort. Only for QR280 per person.

**Dance and Instrument Classes**
WHERE: TCA Campus, Behind Gulf Times Building
WHEN: Wednesday – Monday
Learn the movements of dance styles in Bollywood, Hip Hop and also the musical instruments such as Piano, Guitar, Keyboard for adults as well kids and move in the world of music. For details, contact 66523871/31326749.

**After School Activities**
WHERE: Atelier
WHEN: Ongoing
Music and arts activities for students taking place after they finish their day in school includes Group Music lessons, Hip-hop, Ballet, Drawing and Painting, Drama and productivity. For more information, contact registration@atelierqatar.com

**Compiled by Nausheen Shaikh. E-mail: gtlisting@gmail.com, Events and timings subject to change.**
Salmon, in a hurry

The genetic makeup of Atlantic salmon has been altered to include a gene from chinook salmon and DNA sequence from an eel-like species known as an ocean pout. The result is a salmon that grows to market size about twice as fast as its natural counterpart, writes Tony Briscoe.

Because this fish grows faster, you can use the same facility and produce twice as much product, and the overhead cost is halved
— William Muir, professor emeritus and researcher

On a winding road on the outskirts of a small Rust Belt town in eastern Indiana, a fish hatchery is poised to raise the country’s first genetically engineered animal approved for human consumption by the US Food and Drug Administration.

AquaBounty Technologies, a Massachusetts-based biotechnology company, altered the genetic makeup of the Atlantic salmon to include a gene from chinook salmon and DNA sequence from an eel-like species known as an ocean pout. The result is a salmon that grows to market size about twice as fast as its natural counterpart.

The company, which already breeds the salmon in Canada, got its first batch of bioengineered eggs at its indoor facility in Albany, Indiana, Wednesday, and the first salmon fillets raised there could appear in US supermarkets in late 2020. AquaBounty’s decision to raise the salmon in Indiana is a landmark moment for the Midwest, a region known globally
GULF TIMES

COVER STORY

for its agricultural prowess but one where land-based fish farming operations have struggled mightily to become profitable. AquaBounty purchased the shuttered complex about 10 miles northeast of Muncie where yellow perch had previously been raised and renovated it for Atlantic salmon. Currently, the 16-person staff, which includes factory workers who were laid off in recent years, oversees around 100,000 conventional Atlantic salmon from eggs until they reach market size. That production is expected to grow once the bioengineered eggs arrive.

Commercially raising seafood, a process known as aquaculture, will be necessary to feed the planet’s growing population at a time when rising seafood demand is pitted against plateauing wild fisheries threatened by over-fishing, pollution and climate change, according to industry experts.

The US, which imports more than 90% of its seafood, has lagged behind much of the world in aquaculture production, and proponents hope the introduction of genetically engineered fish might help promote the industry, relieve pressure on ocean fisheries and scale back the United States’ $16 billion seafood trade deficit.

“Because this fish grows faster, you can use the same facility and produce twice as much product, and the overhead cost is halved,” said William Muir, a professor emeritus at Washington University who has researched genetically modified animals.

“That’s really where we’re going with it: Can we produce fish more cheaply? The fact is, aquaculture is expensive and it’s not competitive with ocean-caught fish, because the ocean is free. But if you can produce salmon cheaply inland, large urban centres like Chicago would love to have fresh salmon next door.”

However, some consumer groups remain fiercely opposed to the production and sale of genetically modified food. These organisations have been vocal crusaders against AquaBounty, pressuring wholesalers and retailers into pledging they won’t carry the product they have maligned as “Frankenfish.”

“This is purely a commercial decision to make the fish grow faster,” said Megan Westgate, executive director of The Non-GMO Project, a Washington state-based nonprofit. “They’ve succeeded in proving that desired trait. But there’s no benefit to the consumer or the environment. I think that’s why a lot of average people would rather eat salmon as nature intended.”

To date, there’s no scientific evidence concluding that genetically modified foods are harmful to human health. The FDA says AquaBounty salmon are as safe to eat as conventional salmon.

Muir, who studied the risks of the salmon being exposed to the wild population based on government data, said many of the fears surrounding GMO foods are unwarranted.

“These people who are anti-GMO are not data-driven, they are agenda-driven. And their agenda was to make sure a GMO product was never on a dinner plate,” he said.

However, one of the foremost complaints against AquaBounty has been transparency. In Canada, where the company sells conventional and genetically modified salmon, it has sold hundreds of tons of the fish, although it wouldn’t disclose to which retailers, and there are no requirements for labelling in that country.

After the genetically modified salmon was approved to be raised and sold in the US in 2015, egg shipments were blocked until labelling guidelines were established, which allowed for the import ban to be lifted two months ago. Still, the US labelling mandate won’t take effect until 2022, creating uncertainty about whether AquaBounty will voluntarily label its salmon in the interim.

AquaBounty CEO Sylvia Wulf argues there’s no need for labelling in Canada because both wild and genetically modified salmon are the same nutritionally. But Westgate, of The Non-GMO Project, said a lack of disclosure robs consumers of choice.

“People should know what’s in their food,” Westgate said. “It’s a transgenic species, a combination of three fish. A lot of people just feel it’s unnatural, and it’s not fish they’d want to feed to their children.”

But gene-editing is nothing new in the US. Since the 1960s, American farmers have cultivated genetically engineered crops to be resistant to pesticides and insects. While the pesticide-immune strains have come under fire for allowing farmers to use more insect- or weed-killer sprays that can cause soil contamination and kill off vital organisms like bumblebees, today, about 90% of corn and soybeans grown in the US are genetically altered strains.

Experts say the progression to genetically engineering animals has been slower due to public perception and nascent federal regulation. While scientists have had the ability to retool genomes for decades, the FDA didn’t issue guidance on genetically engineered animals until 2008.

Since then, the agency has approved only a few animal-related bioengineering applications, including a genetically altered goat that produces a drug in its milk used to prevent a rare blood-clotting condition in humans. The agency also signed off on the entry of the “GloFish,” a pet zebrafish with a gene from a jellyfish that makes it glow under natural and ultraviolet light.

The AquaBounty salmon was initially developed in 1989 after Canadian scientists attempted to develop an Atlantic salmon that could withstand the country’s rigid temperatures. Incorporating a DNA sequence from an ocean pout, a species with antifreeze proteins in its blood, allowed it to survive in near-freezing waters, researchers thought they could make a more cold-tolerant salmon.

The genetic medley was unsuccessful. Scientists then used it in tandem with a growth hormone, and subsequent research continued along those lines.

The salmon grows to roughly 10 pounds in 16 to 18 months, compared with as long as 32 months in the wild. While salmon already depend on much less food to grow than cattle, swine or chicken, the AquaBounty salmon requires 20 to 25% less feed than ordinary Atlantic salmon.

The company’s Indiana facility features a recirculating water filtration system, which minimises water use. And shipping salmon from Indiana to other US cities within a 500-mile radius will have as much as a 25 times smaller carbon footprint compared with other major salmon importing routes (Norway to New York and Chile to Miami).

Pete Bowyer, farmer manager of the Indiana facility, said these kinds of operations make sense environmentally and business-wise, especially considering salmon is a perennially popular seafood choice in the United States, along with shrimp and tuna.

“The thing about recirculating aquaculture is that you are not really constrained by climate or topography, which traditionally fish farming has been,” Bowyer said.

In 2017, over 356,000 tons of salmon were imported to the US with a value of over $6 billion. “It’s produced in Chile, Norway and Scotland. It’s absurd. In my opinion, this is the direction that the US is headed in,” Bowyer continued as he walked into the hatchery sporting waterproof boots and waders.

Still, not everyone is convinced. Not long after AquaBounty salmon was approved in 2015, Costco Wholesale Corp., one of the largest retailers in the world, announced it had no intention of selling the AquaBounty salmon after backlash during public hearings from consumers. According to dojoins of US supermarket chains that have vowed not to sell GMO salmon, according to the Anti-GMO nonprofit Center for Food Safety.

“I think public perception in the US is that GM is scary,” said Tomas Hook, director of the Illinois–Indiana Sea Grant. “I think it’s a pledge that’s intended to placate some of the public and people who are anti-GMO. At the surface, it might seem better, but it’s genetically modified foods, but when it comes to the way AquaBounty produces salmon, in a lot of cases, it’s more environmentally friendly than the way we traditionally produce salmon.

Seafood is the most popular meat in the world, with global consumption surpassing all land animals combined. But while cows and chickens have been raised on farms for ages, fish have been largely off the menu for human consumption, as aquaculture didn’t become a significant contributor to the seafood market until the latter part of the 20th century.

Experts say the time is now to bring aquaculture into the mainstream. In 2015, 93% of the world’s marine fish stocks were categorised as overfished or fished at peak sustainable levels. Meanwhile, the global population is projected to rise to over 9 billion by midcentury, and ocean productivity is expected to decline as rising concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere create warmer and more acidic waters.

“If you look at the trajectory of fishery harvests around the world, we see a big increase after World War II through the 1970s, as new technologies, particularly in cages, have helped us get better at catching fish,” Hook said. “But sometime around the 1990s, early 2000s, even though we have all these fishing fleets and technology, we basically saw a plateau and decline in fishery harvests. That’s despite a growing population and more people on planet Earth that need protein from fish. The solution that we need to feed people is in aquaculture.”

– Chicago Tribune/TNS

SAMPLE Aquaculture technicians take a sample of Atlantic salmon raised at AquaBounty Farms Indiana

This is purely a commercial decision to make the fish grow faster. But there’s no benefit to the consumer or the environment. I think that’s why a lot of average people would rather eat salmon as nature intended.

– Megan Westgate, executive director of The Non-GMO Project
BPS students distribute Iftar boxes

TEAM 974, a team of students of Birla Public School (BPS), including Raees Najeeb, Haneefa Anandu Hirosh, Mohamed Sabeth Ibrahim, Adnan Shafi, Senin Sharaf, Atif Ashraf, Siddharth Ajan, Shon Shaji, Madhan Manaj, Akshij Bhumon, Anil Rajesh, Mohamed Nidhal and Mohamed Rihal recently distributed Iftar kit on D-Ring road signal to the people who were stuck in traffic. They managed to distribute 80 boxes on Day-1 and 200 boxes on Day-2. Iftar kit included juices, water and dates. A P Sharma, Principal of BPS, also joined the team and appreciated their efforts.

Doha College celebrates its first community Iftar

The Arabic Department of Doha College recently organised its first ever community Iftar at its West Bay campus. The Iftar get-together was attended by over 300 parents. The event kicked off with the welcome speech in Arabic, which was followed by the breaking of the fast. The children dressed in traditional attire enjoyed Garangao treats donated by DC families, including Al Khalaf and Aldarhem. The parents had prepared several dishes that were laid out on the spread for sharing purposes. Dr Steffen Sommer, Principal of Doha College, said, ‘It was a fantastic opportunity to hold an Iftar for the first time at Doha College. The month of Ramadan is a fantastic opportunity for our community to come together and share a meal in the spirit of togetherness, friendship and love, which is what the essence of Iftar is all about. It was particularly important to be able to participate with our fasting community and embrace the innate idea of worshipping by giving up ingrained habits. We felt a closer bond between us than ever before.’

BLOOD DONATION DRIVE: Blood Donors Kerala Qatar Chapter and Radio Malayalam 98.6 FM, in association with Hamad Medical Corporation, BDK Qatar Angels, IBIN Ajayan Projects, Qatar Sparsham, and Save and Child Team, recently organised a blood donation drive at Asian Town. A total of 100 volunteers participated in the drive.
Germany’s struggle to contain burgeoning wolf population

Wolves were reintroduced to the wild in Germany some 20 years ago. Their population has grown well beyond expectations, and frightened residents of some rural areas say entire packs are wandering through their villages at night, writes Simona Block.

Dense forests and sprawling fields are dotted with farms and villages with small houses and large gardens. The idyllic landscape north of Goerlitz in the German state of Saxony radiates peace and quiet.

But ever since the Upper Lusatia region became home to one of Europe’s biggest populations of wolves, that peace has been shattered.

Since the reintroduction of the protected animals about 20 years ago, the wolf population has soared and spread from east to west. They no longer live only in deserted areas and forests, but increasingly also in populated areas such as here in Upper Lusatia.

Saxony is now putting pressure on the federal government to take action. The issue has already caused friction in the cabinet, with agriculture ministers at loggerheads on how best to deal with the wolf issue.

Saxony has been joined by the states of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in launching an initiative in Germany’s upper house, the Bundesrat, that aims at a stronger containment of wolves. The issue is also becoming heated in other states such as Brandenburg, Saxony-Anhalt and Lower Saxony, where wolves are reported to have repeatedly attacked sheep and other livestock.

“Wherever they are, they cause a lot of trouble,” says Hans-Dietmar Dohrmann, the former mayor of the small town of Rothenburg in Saxony, as he clicks through photos and videos of wolf packs taken by wildlife cameras and hunters.

“Every night we hear wolves howling at the old airfield, sometimes from three directions,” says Dohrmann. “And it’s getting more intense. “In October 2018, a man looked out of the window in the dark and there were 10 or 11 wolves in his yard right under the bedroom window.” The animals now also move through villages in packs. “They don’t break away, they look at you but keep their distance.”

This frightens many local people: Children no longer walk to school or cycle in the country, reports Dohrmann. People don’t go mushroom and blueberry hunting alone in the forest any more, either. There are even wolves that approach people and test their reactions.

But people have also learned to deal with it. “We are simply more vigilant than before,” says a woman in Lodenau, a district of Rothenburg. You can’t barricade yourself in, she says. “We’ve got used to the wolves.”

“Every night we hear wolves barking at night and know they’re going through the village again,” says his friend Gerd Eberle. If you can see one, it’s certain eight or 10 will be following, he says.

Upper Lusatia, a region that spans parts of Germany and Poland, now has the highest wolf density in the whole of Europe, with several packs per four square kilometres, a density greater than experts thought possible. But experts consider it highly unlikely, although not completely impossible, that a wolf would ever attack a human.

“If we look at the countries where the wolf has always been present, we can be reassured,” says expert and author Frank Fass, who runs a wolf centre in Lower Saxony.

“Attacks by wolves on humans have been extremely rare there so far.”

According to a Norwegian study, nine people were killed by wolves throughout Europe between 1950 and 2000 – with an estimated 10,000 to 20,000 wolves present at the end of this period. Five of the wolves were rabid, explains Fass.

“A few older colleagues who come to work by bike at dawn are afraid.” On the other hand, the visitors, mostly tourists from outside the region, get to experience true nature and a piece of wilderness.

A new law regulating wolves will soon apply in Saxony. In the future, wolves may be driven away if they approach a residential building or a person less than 100 metres away, do not let themselves be frightened away and public life is disturbed.

If they overcome the protective measures for farm animals twice within two weeks or get within 30 metres of humans and no other deterrence is successful, the animals may also be shot. – DPA
Great new white flowers for the beauty of your garden

2019 looks to be a banner year for new white flowers. One of the most shocking in performance so far is the new Superbena Whiteout verbena, writes Norman Winter.

Each year my colour-design guru son orders plants for use at his client’s homes, shopping centres, apartment communities, and office complexes. Though he is now way better than his dad, I always reserve the right to ask, have you got plenty of blue.

The answer is always, of course, but the question has now been turned to the dad, as he asks me, do I have white in my plantings. Guilty as charged, that is the last colour I think about. 2019 looks to be a banner year for new white flowers. One of the most shocking in performance so far is the new Superbena Whiteout verbena. Great Scott, the flowers are huge making you do a double take when you first see them.

Superbenas have always been a favourite of mine since they made their debut about 16 years ago; I predict the Whiteout will quickly go to must-have plant status. Organic-rich, well-drained soil and plenty of sunshine will give you the green thumb. If you have heavy soil, then you will rejoice when using them in mixed containers where the conditions are more favourable.

If you haven’t tried Superbena verbenas, the name is most appropriate. Fertile, organic-rich well-drained soil may very well give a spring-return in zones 8-10. I assure you though, they are worth every penny spent even growing them as an annual.

Calliope has become the geraniums in which all others are compared to when considered for bloom and rugged perseverance, in the hot humid south. When white showed in the market this year, a lot of designers, son included, were high living.

There is so much you can do with a white geranium including opening the door to the most beautiful red, white, and blue gardens that will sizzle not just during Memorial Day and July 4, but all summer.

If you are a begonia lover, then it’s time to celebrate as Tophat White is new to the market. This begonia is amazing from size-of-plant to the size-of-flower and it’s the first white selection in the XL begonia class. I would say seeing is believing but I still look at them with disbelief. These really are the largest flowers you’ll see in a landscape begonia. I say that, but you’ll want them for containers, too. Tophat begonias are green-leaved and will reach 16 to 20 inches tall and 20 to 24 inches wide with flowers that are 20% larger.

When spring arrives every year with all of its glorious colours, purples, pinks, yellows, and reds, the colour guaranteed to catch your eye every time is white.

Of course, a scientist would most likely say white is not a colour, it absorbs no other colour or wavelength and is pure. This goes in hand with the bride wearing a white dress, or the nurse wearing a white uniform. It’s like the morning you wake and see the pure white snow on the ground that hasn’t been violated in any way. White flowers not only give definition to those shadier areas of the landscape but also offer a sense of cleanliness and purity. They also give a feeling of planning and precision. In other words, the gardener knew what he was doing by carefully planting white.

Notice, I said carefully. While it can be argued that every other colour looks its best partnered with white, they can also be overwhelmed. White is so flashy and bright it can steal the promise or potential of its companions.

Superbena Whiteout falling over the rim of a container, however, will be loved as much as a string of white pearls. It is the reflective capacities of white that make it so outstanding. White is the last colour to disappear as the sun sets in the evening. If it is a moonlit night then they will reflect this light all night. As purple salvias disappear at dusk the companions of Calliope Medium White geraniums will still be glistening and noticed as visitors pass by.

2019 is a banner year to shop at your local garden centre, so I need to challenge you as you shop. Don’t forget the white! — TNS
Armaan Malik promises loads of fun, magical music for fans in Doha

By Mudassir Raja

Armaan Malik, a rising star on the music scene of Bollywood, is all set to perform in Doha on June 7 for the first time. The show will take place at Ali Bin Hamad Al Attiyah Arena from 7:30pm onwards.

In an interview with Community via e-mail, the singing sensation, also called ‘Prince of Romance’, shared his thoughts and plans.

How did you get interested in music?
I grew up surrounded with music. Music has been my lifelong passion. I started singing and taking music lessons at the age of 3 and at the age of 4 I started singing on stage and ever since I’ve never looked back.

Did having family in the music industry help you for a break through?
Be it participating in a reality show at the age of 9 (SaReGaMaPa Lil’ Champs), singing for ads and jingles, and doing playback for composers who do not belong to my family; I never left any stone unturned to make a name and identity for myself independent of my family. I worked really hard from a young age and never used my family’s name to get myself a chance.

How important was MS Dhoni: The Untold Story (2016) for you as you and your brother were carrying the entire album together?
MS Dhoni was a crucial album for both Amaal and Me. It was a huge project and to be the main singer on the album was a huge responsibility on my shoulders. MS Dhoni has probably some of the biggest songs of my career and all the credit goes to Amaal and Manoj Muntashir for creating such timeless melodies. Even Neeraj Pandey Sir, the director of the movie, had a great vision for the album. It felt great to be trusted by such amazing creative minds.

How thrilled are you to be the voice of Aladdin for the Hindi version of the live-action feature film Aladdin?
I am really thrilled to be a part of such an epic movie. It’s an absolute honour to be the voice of such an iconic character. The most exciting part for me was singing the Hindi Version of ‘Channa Mereya’ which is one of my favourite Disney songs of all time.

How do you feel about success of your song Chale Aana?
It’s amazing to see the kind of love I receive for my songs. Chale Aana is a very special song and I am so happy that it has reached out to such a wide audience. It has now reached 43 million views on YouTube and is no. 1 on the iTunes India Charts.

Who gave you the title of ‘The Prince of Romance’?
Well my fans lovingly call me Prince AM and I also happen to sing a lot of romantic songs hence my fans coined the term ‘Prince of Romance’. Since then everyone has been using it. It feels good to own such titles and win the love of so many people.

What have been your all-time favourite tracks to listen to and sing?
Well from my own songs my top 3 would be – ‘Rol Do Na Zara’, Main Rohoon Yu Na Rohoon, and ‘Tere Mere’. Other than my own songs my all time favourite tracks are ‘Humein Tumse Pyaar Kitna’, ‘Channa Mereya’ and ‘Hawaayein’.

Being so young and so successful who were the people you looked up to in the industry when you started your career?
I really look up to Sonu Nigam. He has been a huge inspiration for me ever since I started singing. It was such a great feeling singing a track called the Goggle Song as a duet with him for the movie Mubarakan. It was like a dream come true. He’s definitely a huge inspiration not only to me but even to all the budding singers out there.

Is there anything you would like to change about the music industry in India?
It’s very unorganised. There is no proper system in place. The musicians and songwriters (composers and lyricists) barely see any incomes from royalties etc and it’s sad that other countries follow these payouts as standard practices and we don’t. I hope that this changes. Creators of music shouldn’t be shortchanged in this manner. I would like to change this in our industry.

What would be your message to your fans and aspiring singers?
Well it’s a very tough industry and one may face a lot of rejection early on and throughout the course of one’s career. Today there’s far more opportunity in being discovered online by a composer or producer, rather than actually going out there and pitching for work.

Are you excited about your debut performance in Qatar?
I am super thrilled to be coming to Qatar for the very first time. It’s amazing to be celebrating Eid with all my fans there. It’s my debut concert there and it’s Doha Waves’ 100th show, so definitely it is going to be a huge concert.

It’s going to be a night full of love, magic and loads of fun, Can’t wait to be there already.

“Well it’s a very tough industry and one may face a lot of rejection early on and throughout the course of one’s career. Today there’s far more opportunity in being discovered online by a composer or producer, rather than actually going out there and pitching for work.”
— Armaan Malik, Bollywood singer
When you’re watching the world go by from skyscrapers, there’s a feeling of being at a vantage point as everything you see is, well, in sight. In other words, the illusion is that maybe you control the view! Depending on where you are and what you see, it may be a sight for sore eyes.

The feeling — and view — is slightly more overwhelming when you see the world on top of your head. Skyscrapers have that aura around them — quite like the title of that Pakistani television drama serial aptly entitled Aasman Tak Deewar (Wall to the Sky). It can make you feel small. The storeys, in this case, are just bigger than you!

Doha of today is a world removed from its yore. If you want to figure out how ‘small’ you are, you can drive around the business district in West Bay and find out its signature overwhelming (a spur of the moment coinage, in case you’re wondering having never heard of it)!

In a couple of mesmerising shots here, you can see the measure of tall: structures all wound up and willing to kiss the sky.

It gives ‘head in the clouds’ an altogether different meaning. Provided of course, one does not have batophobia — the fear of being in or next to tall buildings.

— Text by Kamran Rehmat, photos by Bosco Menezes
By Kate Feldman

n 1989, a wealthy real estate developer proudly, loudly and publicly called for the death penalty for five boys, all black or Hispanic, accused of attacking and raping a woman in Central Park. For the next 30 years, the real estate developer would continue his attack, despite a confession, DNA evidence and exoneration.

"BRING BACK THE DEATH PENALTY," Donald Trump wrote in capital letters in a full-page ad that ran in four New York City newspapers, including the Daily News, in 1989, barely two weeks after 28-year-old jogger Trisha Meili was attacked in the park.

"BRING BACK OUR POLICE."

When They See Us, Ava DuVernay’s haunting new Netflix series about the case and its aftermath, doesn’t give Trump a leading role, never becomes an actor to scream his words for him. Instead, he appears in a grainy news clip, one of the few artefacts in the show.

"I think sometimes a black may think they don’t have an advantage or this and that," he says in the NBC News clip. "I’ve said on one occasion, even about myself, if I were starting off today, I would love to be a well-educated black, because I really believe they do have an actual advantage today."

Katrina opens up about her past relationship

Actress Katrina Kaif says there was a phase in her life when she was "consumed" by something else instead of work, and she has no regrets about it.

Katrina expressed her views when she appeared on RFBS with Vogue - Season 3 along with Anaita Shroff Adajania. The show is aired on Colors Infinity, read a statement.

"There has been a major shift in a way that I have started approaching my work and characters. I think I have worked very hard, been very passionate and very focused, in certain ways and about certain things."

"I think the kind of way I worked in Infinity, read a statement."

Katrina, who refrains from talking about her personal life in public, was in a relationship with actor Ranbir Kapoor in the past. They reportedly dated for a couple of years before parting ways in the beginning of 2016.

During the signature BFFs game round, ‘Say it or Strip it,’ when host Neha Dhupia asked Katrina to name a co-star from all her co-stars who she cannot trust with a major secret, she took Ranbir’s name.

The episode will air on Saturday. – IANS

How When They See Us holds Trump accountable

Sharon Salam, Yusuf’s mother, played by Aunjanue Ellis, laughs about the absurdity.

“They need to keep that bigot off TV is what they need to do,” she says.

“Don’t worry about it,” her friend replies. “His 15 minutes almost up.”

For a minute, it plays as a laugh line: what a preposterous thought in 2019, given that we know that Trump’s 15 minutes took him all the way to the White House. He has more power today than anyone, maybe even himself, imagined when he was running newspaper ads in the late ’80s. But he never took back his threats.

He was actively calling for the murder of teenagers, children. This man took out full-page ads in all the papers in New York to call for the murder of children, Joshua Jackson, who plays Mickey Joseph, Anton McCray’s defence attorney, in When They See Us, told The New York Times.

“He will never take responsibility for any of it.”

In 2014, New York City and Mayor Bill de Blasio settled a lawsuit with the five and paid out a total of $41 million, which averaged about $1 million per year behind bars.

A few months earlier, Trump expressed indignity simply at the idea of a payout, calling it a “disgrace.”

“Settling doesn’t mean innocence, but it indicates incompetence on several levels,” he wrote for the Daily News. “These young men do not exactly have the pasts of angels.”

Two years later, in the middle of a presidential campaign that kicked off by accusing Mexicans of being “rapists” and drug mules, Trump again defended his comment.

“They admitted they were guilty,” he told CNN in 2016.

“The police doing the original investigation say they were guilty. The fact that that case was settled with so much evidence against them is outrageous. And the woman, so badly injured, will never be the same.”

Matias Reyes’ confession didn’t matter. The DNA didn’t matter. Only Trump’s snap judgment mattered.

Trump barely appears in the rest of When They See Us, neither on screen nor by name, but his effect on the case is unavoidable, both in history and in DuVernay’s narrative.

Donald Trump’s 15 minutes of fame didn’t end in 1989. Thirty years later, he’s risen to the top.

“The world in which we live, society is so quick to pass judgment. This idea of nuance that’s so necessary, when we have this from the top of our politics, people have taken teams. They’ve taken sides,” Blair Underwood, who plays Bobby Burns, Yusuf Salam’s lawyer, told The New York Daily News.

“If there’s anything good to come out of this, it’s that this individual is so extreme that it forces us to take sides. We’re going to have to course correct. When that happens, how that happens, I don’t know."

I just hope that course correction doesn’t come at the expense of young black bodies.” – New York Daily News/TNS

Mouni not in Bole Chudiya anymore

Mouni Roy is no more a part of the film Bole Chudiya. The producer has said the reason is her “unprofessional behaviour”, but the actress’ spokesperson said the contract wasn’t yet signed due to “discrepancies”.

A poster for the film, starring Nawazuddin Siddiqui in the lead, was launched a few days ago.

But producer Rajesh Bhatia on Friday issued a statement saying: “From the time we have signed her, she and her agency have been highly unprofessional and irresponsible, even after signing the MoU and paying her.”

“Even for the final narration held two days back, she walked in at 5:30pm for a 3pm narration, embarrassing the producers, director and actor.”

Bole Chudiya marks the directorial debut of Shamash Nawab Siddiqui and is produced by Rajesh Bhatia and Khan Bhatia under their banner Woodpecker Movies.

A spokesperson for Mouni confirmed she is “no longer a part of the film”. “Mouni has done many films before and has had a successful career, again defended his comment.

“They admitted they were guilty,” he told CNN in 2016. “The police doing the original investigation say they were guilty. The fact that that case was settled with so much evidence against them is outrageous. And the woman, so badly injured, will never be the same.”

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DROPPED: According to the film producer, Mouni Roy was dropped because of her “unprofessional behaviour” where everyone has vouched for her professionalism. Mr. Rajesh Bhatia… is now claiming that Mouni is not a professional, whereas there are several emails and text messages proving otherwise. Even the contract isn’t signed because of the discrepancies in it.

Mouni, as per her spokesperson, “doesn’t believe in mudslinging” and “she wishes them the very best”.

The film was to go on floors next month. – IANS
**Wordsearch**

D A L T Z W T J Z Q D G I J L
Y I B U N O D E D H A P P Y M
P T S Y F E S H I P Q K C D I
K Y E C Y S T A Z D G S I E S
D O T O O L S N E K U X T S E
E R N Z D U U I O O Y K A S R
T N E M A P R F L C Y I T E A
L D E R O B E E G E N R C P L
U P F W I J J A A E E A E E E
M C F J E T N O G S D H B D B
I O I H B G L T Y I E R C Z M
T I D M R G L A D F L D R R F
S V N Y B B T G N U R X Q G
E Z I M E L A N C H O L Y B S

**Codeword**

Every letter of the alphabet is used at least once. Squares with the same number in have the same letter in. Work out which number represents which letter.

**Sudoku**

Sudoku is a puzzle based on a 9x9 grid. The grid is also divided into nine 3x3 boxes. You are given a selection of numbers and to complete the puzzle, you must fill the grid so that every column, every row and every subgrid contains the digits 1 to 9 with no repetitions.

**Puzzles courtesy: Puzzlechoice.com**
Super Cryptic Clues

Across
1. Woman going to big town to find the truth (8)
2. Legislation does something (4)
3. Where those who serve may be served (5)
4. Disorder could make you enraged (7)
5. Stepping out, missing last scrap (7)
6. European heard in the end (6)
7. Composer having a piece of meat at home (6)
8. Spirit seen in strange light (5)
9. Making ass chew nuts (7)
10. Almost secure cover for one who’s retired (7)
11. Plan produced by doctor getting behind (5)
12. Flower girl likely to lose heart (4)
13. Meat in grass no longer hidden (6)

Down
1. Beautiful woman with a heavenly body (5)
2. Again order right sort of ale and gin (7)
3. Monkey in church - little devil (7)
4. Betting system involving American lawyer until now (2,4)
5. Shrewd woman passing through the outskirts of Coventry (5)
6. Stephenson dismisses female family member (7)
7. Get to an open stretch of water (5)
8. Soft soap and face-cloth (7)
9. Leave Adriatic port (5)
10. Vicar takes bucket outside to come out on top (7)
11. Agree when English record company is set up (6)
12. Try repeating line from Russian author (5)
13. Players crossing line move cautiously (5)
14. Fed up with rotten dates (5)

Wordsearch

Yesterday’s Solution

Codeword
Kids who nap are happier with fewer behavioural problems

Kids who take 30-to-60 minute mid-day naps at least three times a week are happier and have more self-control and grit. They also display fewer behavioural problems as compared to children who skip afternoon naps, says a study.

Published in the SLEEP journal, the study revealed strong connections between the afternoon shut-eye sessions and positive outcomes in a handful of areas in the overall development of kids.

“A study of nearly 1,000 fourth, fifth, and sixth graders ages 10-12 revealed a connection between midday napping and greater happiness, self-control, and grit; fewer behavioural problems; and higher IQ, the latter particularly for the sixth graders.

The most robust findings were associated with academic achievement,” said Adrian Raine, Professor at the University of Pennsylvania in the US. “Children who napped three or more times per week benefit from a 7.6 per cent increase in academic performance in Grade,” Raine said.

During the study, from each of 2,928 children, the researchers collected data about napping frequency and duration once the children hit grades four through six, as well as outcome data when they reached grade six, including psychological measures like grit, happiness and physical measures.

The research team also asked teachers to provide behavioural and academic information about each student. They then analysed associations between each outcome and napping, adjusting for sex, grade, school location, parental education, and nightly time in bed.

“Many lab studies across all ages have demonstrated that naps can show the same magnitude of improvement as a full night of sleep on discrete cognitive tasks. Here, we had the chance to ask real-world, adolescent school children questions across a wide range of behavioural, academic, social, and physiological measures,” said Sara Mednick, Associate Professor at the University of California.

“The more students sleep during the day, the greater the benefit of naps on many of these measures,” she added. – IANS

LIFESTYLE/HOROSCOPE

ARIES
March 21 — April 19

Relations with colleagues could be a bit strained due to increased job stress. If you’ve been thinking of entering a business or partnership, this isn’t the day to decide. Your mind may be a bit muddled. Misunderstandings or misinformation could cause you to doubt the wisdom of the partnership. This needs to be considered objectively. Aries. Your doubts may be groundless.

CANCER
June 21 — July 22

Disconcerting developments in the lives of family members could cause some stress at home. There could be some problems with the structure of the house itself. Perhaps the plumbing or electricity needs attention. If a family member is upset, Cancer, keep the lines of communication open. If there are problems that need attention, get them out of the way now.

LIBRA
September 23 – October 22

Communication with friends or family may not come easily today. Libra. An unusual level of inhibition could keep you from reaching out to others. You might try to shake this off by working too hard, even if you aren’t sure exactly what you want to do. This is a good day to read, study, or work on projects in solitude. A long walk during the day could clear your head and reignite your enthusiasm.

CAPRICORN
December 22 — January 19

Have you been wondering if you’re in the right profession? Disillusionment with your field could have you feeling mildly ill from stress and considering a total career change. Perhaps this is the right course of action to take, but perhaps not. Look into the options available and see how you feel about them, Capricorn, but wait a few days before making any final decisions.

TAURUS
April 20 – May 20

Today you might feel a little under the weather due to physical and emotional stress over the past few days. Take it easy today if you can. This isn’t the day to be too busy or start new projects. Miscommunication could cause an upset or two, Taurus, so try to maintain your cool. Don’t make mountains out of molehills. Nothing will come up that can’t be handled.

LEO
July 23 – August 22

Don’t be surprised if many visitors come to your door today. A relative or co-worker could be in a black mood, which could spill over to you, as you’re feeling more intutive than usual. Realise that this isn’t coming from you, Leo, and let it go! Misinformation could come your way by phone, e-mail, or mail. Check out the facts before you buy into it.

SCORPIO
October 23 – November 21

Your intuition is likely to be operating at a very high level today, Scorpio. This isn’t a good day to be around sick or depressed people. You will probably pick up their gloom and it could possibly spoil your day. This is a good day to finish old projects that you may have postponed. Your insights and ingenuity are likelier than usual to give you the motivation you need.

SAGITTARIUS
November 22 – December 21

Fear about your financial security could plague you today, Sagittarius. Dissatisfaction with some of work you’ve been doing and delays in reaching some of your goals might have you wondering what you could do better. Doubts about a friend’s motives might cause you to waver in your trust of that person. Take the time to consider everything objectively. All is probably not as it seems.

AQUARIUS
January 20 – February 18

Unsettling news from far away could have you somewhat upset and a little depressed. The temptation to withdraw and brood might seem too strong to resist, but this may not be the best course of action. Getting things done is likely to be the best therapy in emotional situations like this, Aquarius. So if there’s a new project you’ve been considering, this is the day to start it.

PISCES
February 19 – March 20

A friend might be ill, causing you considerable worry. One of the goals you’ve been trying to reach could be delayed in some way, causing frustration. Your financial situation could also be on your mind. You could be worrying needlessly. Pieces. The situation is cloudy and may not be as unsettling as it seems. You may have received some misinformation. Check the facts before making yourself crazy.


IT IS THE FIRST FUNDAMENTAL SOURCE OF ISLAMIC SHARIAH (ISLAMIC LAW). ALLAH, MOST HIGH, SAYS (WHAT MEANS): “…A QUR’AN WHICH WE HAVE GIVEN (TO YOU) SERIATIM (SEPARATED OUT) IN ORDER THAT YOU MAY RECITE IT TO THE PEOPLE AT INTERVALS AND WE HAVE CAUSED IT TO COME DOWN SUCCESSIVELY (BY STAGES).” [QUR’AN 17:106] BUT VERSE 6:7 OBSERVES (WHAT MEANS): “IF WE HAD SENT UNTO YOUR (O MUHAMMAD) A WRITTEN MESSAGE ON PARCHMENT, SO THAT THEY COULD TOUCH IT WITH THEIR HANDS, THE UNBELIEVERS WOULD HAVE BEEN SURE TO SAY: ‘‘THIS IS NOTHING BUT OBVIOUS MAGIC.’” [QUR’AN 6:7]


STAGES OF THE REVELATION OF THE QUR’AN

THE MEANING OF ‘‘TANZEEL’’

LEXICALLY, THE TERM ‘‘TANZEEL’’ IS DERIVED FROM THE ARABIC ROOT ‘‘NAZAL’’ WHICH MEANS THE DESCENT OR THE MOVEMENT FROM A HIGH PLACE DOWN TO A LOWER ONE. THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED IN THE PROCESS OF REVELATION WHERE THE ANGEL JIBREEL (GABRIEL) USED TO COME DOWN FROM THE HEAVENS WITH A VARYING NUMBER OF VERSES OF THE QUR’AN TO DELIVER TO PROPHET MUHAMMAD SALLALLAHU ‘ALAYHI WA SALLAM (MAY ALLAH EXALT HIS MENTION). THE EXACT NATURE OF THIS ‘‘NIZOOL’’ AND HOW JIBREEL ACTUALLY BROUGHT THE QUR’AN WITH HIM ARE MATTERS OF THE UNSEEN, THE DETAILS OF WHICH ALLAH CHOSE NOT TO CLARIFY FOR US, PERHAPS BECAUSE THEY INVOLVE MATTERS THAT MAY BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR HUMANS TO IMAGINE OR GRASP. WHAT WE SHOULD UNDERSTAND IS THAT THIS ‘‘NIZOOL’’ HAPPENED IN A FASHION THAT IS BEFITTING TO THE GREATNESS AND SACREDNESS OF THE WORD OF ALLAH. ALLAH ALMIGHTY SAYS ABOUT THE HOLY QUR’AN (WHAT MEANS): “(IT IS) A QUR’AN WHICH WE HAVE DIVIDED (INTO PARTS FROM TIME TO TIME), IN ORDER THAT THOS (O MUHAMMAD) MIGHT RECITE IT TO PEOPLE AT INTERVALS: WE HAVE REVEALED IT BY STAGES (IN 23 YEARS).” [QUR’AN 17:106]

THE QUR’AN WAS REVEALED IN TWO STAGES:


THese two verses indicate that the Qur’an was revealed in a single blessed night in the month of Ramadan that is called the ‘‘Night of Power, or Decree.’’

STAGE TWO: THIS STAGE OF REVELATION LASTED FOR ABOUT 23 YEARS IN WHICH THE QUR’AN WAS SENT DOWN IN RESPONSE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF EVENTS AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SEQUENCE NEEDED TO COMPLETE THE DELIVERY OF THE MESSAGE.

THE PROPHET SALLALLAHU ‘ALAYHI WA SALLAM (MAY ALLAH EXALT HIS MENTION) AFTER RECEIVING REVELATION, WOULD AUTOMATICALLY MEMORIZE THE QUR’ANIC VERSES THAT WERE REVEALED TO HIM AND WOULD RECITE THEM TO WHOMEVER WAS IN HIS COMPANY, AND ORDER THEM (THE COMPANIONS MAY ALLAH BE PLEASED WITH THEM) TO WRITE THEM DOWN IMMEDIATELY. THE MESSENGER SALLALLAHU ‘ALAYHI WA SALLAM (MAY ALLAH EXALT HIS MENTION) HIMSELF USED TO KEEP A COPY OF THE REVEALED PORTIONS IN HIS HOUSE. THE QUR’AN, THE LAST OF ALLAH’S SCRIPTURES, IS DIVIDED INTO 114 ‘SURAH’ (CHAPTERS) OF UNEQUAL LENGTH. IT IS THE FIRST FUNDAMENTAL SOURCE OF ISLAMIC SHARIAH (ISLAMIC LAW). ALLAH, MOST HIGH, SAYS (WHAT MEANS): “…A QUR’AN WHICH WE HAVE GIVEN SERIATIM (SEPARATED OUT) IN ORDER THAT YOU MAY RECITE IT TO THE PEOPLE AT INTERVALS AND WE HAVE CAUSED IT TO COME DOWN SUCCESSIVELY (BY STAGES).” [QUR’AN 17:106]


Recording cynical speeches of the unbelievers, Almighty Allah Says (what means): “WHY HAS THE QUR’AN NOT BEEN VOUCHSAFED TO HIM (MUHAMMAD) IN ONE SINGLE WHOLE?” [QUR’AN 25:32]

And the answer to that is the verse (which means): “…THAT YOUR HEART (O MUHAMMAD) MAY BE STRENGTHENED, WE HAVE REHEarsed IT TO YOU IN SLOW, WELL-ARRANGED STAGES, GRADUALLY.” [QUR’AN 25:32] THERE IS NO NATION THAT HAS EVER CARED ABOUT, REVISED, AND PRESERVED ITS DIVINE SCRIPTURE AS THE MUSLIM NATION HAS CARED ABOUT, REVISED AND PRESERVED THE QUR’AN. UNLIKE THE OTHER DIVINE SCRIPTURES, THE QUR’AN IS NOT KEPT IN THE HANDS OF A PARTICULAR GROUP OR ELITE OF THE MUSLIMS, AND FOR THIS REASON, IT IS NOT SUBJECT TO SUSPICION THAT IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN TAMPERED WITH OR ALTERED. RATHER, IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN WITHIN THE REACH OF ALL MUSLIMS. – ISLAMWEB.NET
By Azmat Haroon

Hundreds of Muslims rush to mosques across Qatar to join prayers during Ramadan, especially during the last 10 days of the holy month when special late night prayers are held. It’s hard to miss the cars parked on the pavements and road sides in front of every mosque, and worshippers that often spill into streets due to the overflow in mosques, especially during Friday prayers.

“The fact is that the number of worshippers in mosques is far larger in Ramadan in Qatar than any other month of the year because for Muslims, it is the month of spiritual reflection. The reward for every prayer is also far greater and so Muslims put extra effort in their devotion and worship while fasting. These changes are in plain sight in a country like Qatar in Ramadan because the entire country lights up and the teachings of Islam are upheld in private and public spheres by many.”

Wasif Khan – a teacher and a Khatib based in Dallas often visits Qatar but this year he spent his first Ramadan here.

“We’ve been primarily praying at the Education City Mosque. There is a good mix of community present at the mosque, with many families who come together for prayers and Taraweeh. The mosque has a very inviting atmosphere, they have different programmes such as Qur’an competitions, a kid’s corner, and then there are the community Iftar and Suhoor. And most importantly, the recitation of the Qur’an is beautiful,” says Khan.

He believes that the increase in visitors of mosques is one of the beauties of Ramadan as it brings families and communities together. “Crowds in Ramadan are far greater in the mosques compared to the rest of the year. The number of people visiting the mosque has increased during the last 10 days of Ramadan. Many people come for the late night prayers, and they have Suhoor together,” he explains.

Some Muslims devote the last 10 days of Ramadan for Itikaf, which means that they sit in isolation in mosque or at home with the intention of solely dedicating their time to the worship of Allah.

Khan has two siblings settled in Qatar who he frequently visits. This was the first time he spent Ramadan in a Muslim country and he says that the difference in observing Ramadan in Qatar and in the US is almost shocking.

“In the US, you have music in the malls and you see people carrying around a tasbeeh (prayer beads) and you are reminded of zikr (remembrance of Allah). But here in the malls, you see people carrying around a tasbeeh (beads of prayer) and you are reminded of zikr (remembrance of Allah).”

When you come from the West and compare the environments, it almost comes as a shock. The entire society moves in line with the principles Islam upholds. You hear the call to prayer in the malls and in your homes. There is a constant reminder for prayers and so it’s a paradigm shift.”

Khan is a digital systems and marketing expert by profession, and says he often meets people who enquire about different aspects of faith and religion.

“When it comes to deen (faith), people often ask, what is the bare minimum we can do? They say ‘I pray five times a day and I fast’ and so isn’t that enough? That’s the kind of mind-set I constantly come across. But the idea is to constantly push yourself to do more. Laylatul Qadr is the night where next year’s decree is sent out, apart from its many rewards. So the attitude should be to do as much you can,” Khan argues.

“In Islam, Laylatul Qadr, also known as the Night of Decree or the Night of Power, is the holiest day of the year. It is the night when the first verses of the Holy Qur’an were revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It is one of the nights of the last ten days of Ramadan. Some scholars define ‘Qadr’ in the context of ‘destiny or decree’ (qadar). To them, this means that this is the night in which the destiny of each person is decided. It would be this night in which a person’s sustenance, lifespan, and other critical matters would be sealed for the coming year.

Consequently, any prayers held on this night such as reciting the Qur’an and remembering Allah is considered better than acting for one thousand months which do not contain the night of Qadr.

Khan says that he is thinking about relocating from Dallas to Qatar because of the unique atmosphere of the country and the beauty of celebrating Ramadan in a Muslim country like Qatar.

“If you compare Qatar with the rest of the countries in the Middle East, you will see that Qatar has a different and a unique feel to it. There is a special focus on education, and people value education and progress. Also, for many of us living in the West, Qatari leadership and its approach in the aftermath of the June 5 blockade was astonishing. There was integrity and maturity with which Qatar handled the crisis and it was extremely impressive.”