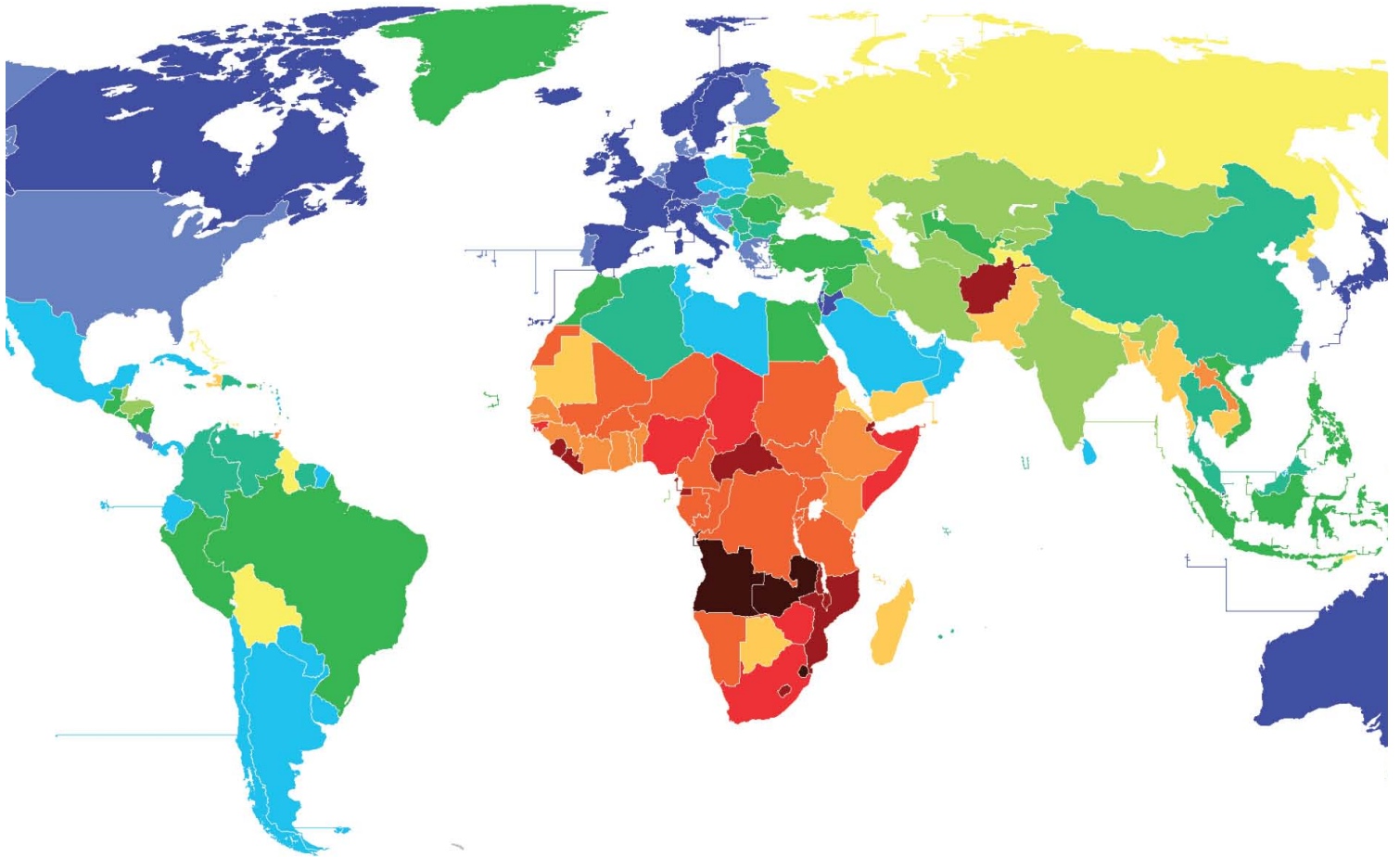


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**RIOTS TURN DEADLY IN INDIA AS PATEL CLAN
DEMANDS INCLUSION IN GOVERNMENT
QUOTAS**

SINGAPORE GOES TO THE POLLS ON SEPT 11

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Headlines

GRISLY DISCOVERY IN MIGRANT CRISIS SHOCKS EUROPE

VIENNA — The legions of desperate migrants fleeing war and mayhem in the Middle East and Africa have long known they were risking harm from unscrupulous smugglers and death at sea to reach the safety of Europe. But it became shockingly clear on Thursday that they now face the same dangers within Europe's own borders.

A white truck filled with the decomposing bodies of as many as 50 smuggled migrants was found abandoned on the outskirts of Vienna in the summer heat. The discovery came just as European leaders were meeting in a nearby palace to devise new ways to cope with the migration crisis.

News about the corpses instantly overshadowed the meeting and transfixed Europe with new worries that the scope and complexity of the crisis had escalated.

European Union officials have been struggling for ways to control the tens of thousands of migrants who are now reaching the continent, without forfeiting the free movement between member countries that is a fundamental part of life in the 28-nation bloc. Now its members are confronting human traffickers who are exploiting the open borders.

"We are all shaken by this terrible news that up to 50 people have lost their lives because they got into a situation where smugglers did not care about their lives," said Germany's chancellor, Angela Merkel, at a news conference at the Vienna meeting. "Such a tragic death."

Ms. Merkel emphasized what she called the need for Europe to pull together and ease the migration crisis, part of the biggest wave of migrants since World War II. But the meeting ended on a discordant note with no apparent consensus on how to proceed.

The death toll at sea is already greater than 2,500 and is rising almost every day, with news reports on Thursday that a ship carrying hundreds of migrants had sunk off the coast of Libya. Now the truck discovery has made it clear that the illegal trade in humans has broadened from arranging perilous journeys across the Mediterranean to profiteering from the tens of thousands now pouring in through the Balkans.

Until recently, the flow was mostly restricted to the southern countries, particularly Italy. But as new routes through Greece and the Balkans have become popular, the pressure to stem the flow has broadened and deepened.

The people in the truck were thought to be among the migrants on their way through Central Europe and toward the wealthier countries — particularly Germany — in the north.

The precise death toll had yet to be determined by Thursday night, but more than 20 bodies — and as many as 50 — were believed to be in the truck, said Hans Peter Doskozil, director of the police in the eastern state of Burgenland. He added that the count was hindered by the advanced state of decomposition.

The discovery was made after a highway worker alerted the police around 11:40 a.m. that the truck, with Hungarian license plates, was parked in the emergency lane of a highway that links Budapest and Vienna, in the Neusiedl am See region, near the Hungarian border. Mr. Doskozil said the truck had probably set off from east of Budapest on Wednesday, and was abandoned either late that night or early Thursday.

Janos Lazar, chief of staff to Hungary's prime minister, Viktor Orban, said that the authorities believed the truck had been part of a human trafficking operation, and that the victims "were illegal migrants who were trying to reach the West through Hungary or with the help of Hungarians."

Hungarian officials said they had assigned investigators to help the Austrians with the case.

Mr. Doskozil said the investigators would comb the cab of the truck to establish the identity of the driver. By afternoon, the authorities said the truck had been towed to an undisclosed location where the bodies could be removed and identified.

"It is clear that this is a case of organized criminality where a lot of money is at stake and business is made out of human suffering," Mr. Doskozil said.

The discovery was a new twist on a summer of tragedy for migrants, who have drowned at sea by the hundreds and been injured or worse in accidents during their attempts to reach safety and jobs in the European Union.

Just a day earlier, Italian officials announced the discovery of 50 bodies in the hold of a ship that appeared to have departed Libya bound for Italy.

The Balkan overland route has replaced the Mediterranean passage as the favored route for migrants this summer. The change has severely affected Austria, which

has been struggling to cope with the masses of migrants, and officials have grown increasingly concerned about smugglers.

Eighty suspected smugglers were detained between July 1 and Aug. 1 of this year, bringing the overall number to 278, the Interior Ministry said. But this is only a fraction of the more than 800 investigations into people-smuggling brought this year by prosecutors nationwide, many against unknown perpetrators, the ministry said.

Defendants convicted of smuggling for money face prison sentences of up to two years for a first offense, and up to five years for repeat offenders. Defendants convicted of “endangering the lives of others” or belonging to a criminal ring can face up to 10 years in prison.

Many migrants entering Hungary from Serbia are processed in a rudimentary way in southern Hungary and then take trains — at no charge — from the southern city of Szeged to Budapest.

Once there, they are discouraged from taking trains to Austria by the Hungarian authorities, who are responding with tough measures. Last weekend, the Hungarian police made an example of illegal travelers, hauling at least 175 people off a train headed west toward Munich, volunteer organizations said.

The nongovernmental groups say this sort of action encourages — albeit unintentionally — a tendency among the migrants to cross into Austria by road, hiding in taxis, private cars or trucks.

The meeting of European leaders ended not only inconclusively but also with outright dissent by the foreign ministers of Serbia and Macedonia, two nations on the path of the new route, who complained that they were not getting enough help to cope with the influx.

“Unless we have a European answer to this issue, none of us should be under any illusion that this will be solved,” Foreign Minister Nikola Poposki of Macedonia said.

Hungary’s hard line with the migrants has included the accelerated building of a fence along the border with Serbia in an effort to block the flow of tens of thousands who have worked their way up the length of the Balkans in recent weeks.

The border fence has threatened to complicate and even cut off what has become an increasingly accessible route for the migrants. In recent interviews, humanitarian aid workers and the migrants themselves said the fence would not

stop the migrants but would force them to find other ways to make it to wealthy European Union countries farther north, often with the help of human traffickers.

The conference in Vienna Thursday was originally intended to foster rapprochement among the nations of the Western Balkans, who themselves fought wars in the 1990s that produced what was then Europe's largest post-1945 wave of refugees.

Germany and others are anxious to classify all the former Yugoslav states, and Albania, as safe countries so that their inhabitants desist from seeking asylum in Germany, choking accommodation and other resources needed for migrants from the Middle East and Africa.

But the current migrant crisis had already forced its way on to the agenda in recent weeks, and Thursday's tragedy overshadowed any attempts to resolve the region's problems.

Ms. Merkel, the European Union's foreign policy chief, Federica Mogherini, and Balkan heads of government attended the conference. Ms. Merkel and Chancellor Werner Faymann of Austria, expressing sorrow over the deaths, called them a chilling reminder of the need to give shelter to migrants fleeing war.

"This shows once more how necessary it is to save lives and to fight people smugglers," Mr. Faymann said.

"Those who look back to World War II history know that there were people who depended then on asylum" to survive. Today, too, "it saves lives," he added.

Images in the Austrian news media showed a white vehicle with a rear cooler compartment, emblazoned with the word "Hyza" in brown letters, with a chicken standing in for the letter Y, surrounded by police cars. A Slovakia-based company by the name of Hyza told the Austrian news agency APA that it had sold more than a dozen of its vehicles in 2014 but that it had no further knowledge about them.

Austria's interior minister, Johanna Mikl-Leitner, called it a "dark day" and urged everyone across the European Union to move harshly against human traffickers. "These are not well-minded helpers," she said. "They are not concerned with the welfare of the migrants. They care only about profit."

By The New York Times

RIOTS TURN DEADLY IN INDIA AS PATEL CLAN DEMANDS INCLUSION IN GOVERNMENT QUOTAS



An estimated half a million protesters participated in a rally in Ahmedabad, India.

Ahmedabad - Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has appealed for calm after a rally that drew half a million members of a powerful clan resulted in a night of rioting that left six dead and dozens of buses and police stations torched. Protesters from the influential Patel, or Patidar, community gathered on Tuesday to demand inclusion in government programs for the

disadvantaged, but the demonstration erupted into mob violence, as agitators threw stones, battled police and set a state minister's home ablaze.

On Wednesday, the skirmishes continued and curfews remained in effect in various trouble spots throughout Gujarat, the home state of the prime minister.

Among those killed were a father and son caught in a protesting crowd on their way home from work and then killed when police fired on a crowd in Ahmedabad. AFP reported a third person was killed in Ahmedabad, where an estimated half a million people had gathered.

Two people died from police gunfire in Palanpur, and a third was killed by paramilitary fire in Mehsana, according to police officials.

TV stations reported that police fired tear gas to disperse the crowds in some parts of the state, where Mr Modi was chief minister for 12 years.

"Violence will not benefit anyone," Mr Modi said in a video message. "The only way forward is to have a peaceful dialogue."

The violence was sparked on Tuesday when police briefly detained the movement's charismatic young leader, 22-year-old Hardik Patel. Disruptions ensued around the state.

"Our movement is nonviolent," Mr Patel told the television channel NDTV on Wednesday. "We have not triggered any violence." He promised that his campaign would "intensify" in the coming days.

Members of his clan historically have been politically powerful landowners, businessmen and diamond polishers in India, and they been a driving force in the country's diaspora. More than 40 per cent of motels in the United States are owned by Indians, for example, many with the last name Patel.

But long-held resentment of what the Patels see as the government's preferential treatment of the underprivileged, twinned with economic woes, came to a boil this summer in a series of rallies and protests.

"We are angry. We are frustrated. We want the system changed," said Ankit Patel, 25, who said he was passed over for admission to a master's program at a state university in favour of three classmates from tribal communities who had lower marks.

Hardik Patel rocketed to prominence in recent weeks when he appeared at dozens of rallies throughout the state, asking that Patels be included in a system - known as reservation - that provides quotas for seats in state universities and for government jobs. The baby-faced activist has been hailed as a hero by his followers, who have spread photos of him posing with guns on social media.

"He has shaken Gujarat in the last 50 days," said Manoj Patel, 29, the owner of a textile-export firm who attended Tuesday's rally.

At the rally, hundreds of thousands gathered in an exhibition ground at a university in the state's commercial capital to cheer as Hardik Patel stood in the heat and spoke before long rows of mostly young men in white Gandhi caps. Mr Patel vowed that they would "snatch" their protections from the government if they had to, called for a general strike and said he would stay at the venue on a hunger strike until his concerns were heard.

Since its independence from Britain in 1947, India has sought to protect its Dalit and tribal communities by reserving special seats in universities as well as some government jobs.

Those set-asides were later expanded to include some socially disadvantaged castes, a designation called "Other Backward Classes", according to Sonalde Desai, an expert on caste and a professor of sociology at the University of Maryland. Mr Modi, who rose from humble origins as the son of a tea seller to become prime minister, is from a caste that falls into this category.

In contrast, the Patel clan counts among its ranks numerous politicians, including Vallabhbhai Patel, one of the revered founders of the country. On Tuesday, his image was everywhere - on masks, on T-shirts - in Gujarat.

Such a background will make the Patel demand for inclusion into the OBC category a difficult sell, analysts say, although some Patels argue that the caste-based system should be scrapped altogether in favour of distribution of government assistance by economic need. Gujarat's chief minister, Anandiben Patel, has said that expanding the state's existing quota system would violate a Supreme Court ruling on the matter.

"These are very, very politically powerful, extremely well-off people," said newspaper columnist Aakar Patel, whose family lives in the Gujarati city of Surat, India's diamond-polishing centre. "It is incredible to me that they should even be making this demand."

Some analysts wonder how Hardik Patel's Patidar Anamat Andolan Samiti movement coalesced so rapidly this summer. Social scientist and author Achyut Yagnik suggested that many of the state's youths have a "sense of deprivation" and feel left out of progress in Gujarat, the home state of Mr Modi, who rode to national victory last year showcasing his state's economic success.

"He hasn't done anything for us. We start sweating at the mention of his name," said one protester, Keyur Patel, 25. In the past, the Patels have been strong supporters of Mr Modi and his political party.

Gujarat, like the rest of India, has high numbers of unemployed young workers. The state government said in November that 900,000 "educated but unemployed

youths," including 30,000 with postgraduate degrees, had registered with various state employment exchanges between 2011 and 2014.

Yet many at the rally on Tuesday voiced typical middle-class concerns over salaries, the cost of student tuition and the desire for better, more stable jobs.

"We need a reservation for university admissions," said Kalavatiben Patel, 43, a homemaker in Ahmedabad. "Our children get good marks, good percentages, and they don't get admissions. It would be a level playing field."

She said her daughter, Shraddha, 25, was not accepted into a government college, so the family paid for her to go to a private university. She's now attending Northeastern University in Boston on a scholarship.

But Pradeep Patel, 56, a farmer, social worker and organiser, said it was a mistake to think of all Patels as affluent and not in need of government help.

"Many of us have had to sell land in distress and open grocery stores and paan [betel leaf and tobacco] shops," he said. "Not everyone is a businessman. That is just a myth. There is a Gujarati saying, 'All Patels are happy'. That's just a saying. It's not the truth."

By The Sydney Morning Herald

Environment

GREEN GROUP: MM TRAFFIC 'DEADLY'

Contrary to Transportation Secretary Joseph Emilio Abaya's claim that Metro Manila's traffic problem is "not fatal," a group of environment advocates said yesterday that it is indeed "deadly."

Dr. Leo Olarte, chairman of the Coalition of Clean Air Advocates of the Philippines, reminded Abaya that monstrous traffic jams aggravate the deadly effects of unabated motor vehicle emissions on the health and lives of people living in the metropolis.

"If you're a patient with cardiovascular ailments (or predisposed to it) the intensive particulate matter (PM) or soot exposure that you can be subjected to, when caught in traffic jams for several hours, can possibly trigger episodes of heart attack, stroke and even sudden death right there and then even when you're inside your air-conditioned cars," he said.

The Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) chief was recently quoted as saying that the worsening traffic problem in Metro Manila "may be ruining the day for thousands daily, but at least it's not fatal."

Olarte said data from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources show that 80 percent of air pollution in the National Capital Region "can be directly traced to unabated emissions of motor vehicles."

He also said the rampant corruption in the emission testing of motor vehicles, which is under the control of the Land Transportation Office (LTO), "incidentally an agency under the DOTC, is a major reason why Metro Manila is plagued with smoke-belching motor vehicles that pollute the air we all breathe."

Olarte urged Abaya to order LTO chief Alfonso Tan to "do his job" and end corruption in the emission testing process.

By Yahoo



SINGAPORE GOES TO THE POLLS ON SEPT 11

It's the first time since 1997 that a general election will be held on a weekday

Political parties and their supporters swung into action (on 25 August), after President Tony Tan Keng Yam dissolved Parliament and news followed that the general election would be held on Sept 11.

At People's Action Party (PAP) branches and opposition party offices across the island, activists finalised their candidate line-ups and worked to ensure that campaign flags, posters and, especially, nomination papers would be in order.

Nomination Day will be next Tuesday, Sept 1, with the minimum of nine days to campaign before Cooling-off Day on Sept 10. Polling Day will be a public holiday.

It is the first time since 1997 that a general election will be held on a weekday. Some PAP activists said holding the polls on Sept 12 would have clashed with community events planned for the last day of the Chinese Seventh Month.

The widely anticipated news came two days after Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said at the National Day Rally that he would be calling the elections soon, and that they would be a critical one for the country. (He) underlined his message that this general election is about renewing and reinforcing the PAP's slate in Parliament to give Singapore the best leadership team to take the country forward.

"I called this general election to seek your mandate to take Singapore beyond SG50, into its next half century," he said in a Facebook post. "You will be deciding who will govern Singapore for the next five years. More than that, you will be choosing the team to work with you for the next 15-20 years, and setting the direction for Singapore for the next 50 years."

The elections, Singapore's 12th since independence, are likely to be the first since 1963 to see the PAP challenged in all seats.

As many as nine opposition parties have indicated that they will put up a fight in all 89 seats across 16 group representation constituencies (GRCs) and 13 single-member

constituencies (SMCs). The largest opposition party, the Workers' Party (WP), has said that it is targeting 28 seats.

The elections will be the first in 60 years without the presence of founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, who died in March.

Observers said the timing may be to the PAP's advantage, given the positive sentiments from the Golden Jubilee celebrations and the unprecedented expressions of solidarity in the week of national mourning following Mr Lee's death.

The polls will also take place against the backdrop of global economic uncertainty, with international markets routed in recent days. The full-year growth forecast for Singapore itself has been revised downward to 2 per cent to 2.5 per cent.

There are rising concerns too over global security and, indeed, Polling Day will be on the anniversary of the Sept 11, 2001 terror attacks on the United States. The snap 2001 elections called here after those attacks and amid a global recession saw the PAP's vote share surge by 10 points from 65 per cent in the 1997 polls to 75.3 per cent.

The 2006 General Election, the first led by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, saw the PAP get 66.6 per cent of the vote. But the 2011 election proved a watershed, when a rising opposition tide tapped into simmering discontent over housing affordability, immigration and cost of living issues to drag the PAP's vote share down to 60.1 per cent.

That election saw the WP winning its first GRC, ousting a high-powered PAP team led by Cabinet minister George Yeo. The WP retained Hougang SMC at the polls and went on to win Punggol East SMC in a by-election in 2013.

Since 2011, the Government has embarked on a range of policy measures - some of which had been in gestation before the polls - to address voter concerns, and analysts say this year's elections will show how its efforts have been received.

Said Dr Gillian Koh of the Institute of Policy Studies: "The GE will be a good measure of voters' sentiment on whether the Government has helped citizens access and afford the key essentials in life: if they think the Government has dealt with the immigration issue that was also tied to higher costs and congestion, and if they feel that the Government has, in the last four years, given them a stronger sense of

security and assurance about work, family life and developing a fair and inclusive society."

However, she felt a segment of voters would also hold the view that it is important to have some opposition representation in Parliament "to ensure that the Government is indeed responsive to the needs and concerns of Singaporeans".

This is a theme the opposition parties can be expected to use to appeal to voters. The Singapore Democratic Party began introducing its candidates yesterday, and the WP will do so from today.

The PAP has announced its line-up in all but four GRCs and Fengshan and Punggol East SMCs. It will name its teams for Marine Parade and Nee Soon GRCs today.

Yesterday, Mr Lee said that strong support from Singaporeans is critical for the country to move ahead in a challenging environment and to stay special.

"Here many races live in peace, and many from humble homes make good. We will surely meet challenges ahead, but whatever the world throws at us, as one people, we will overcome," he said on Facebook.

"If you are proud of what we have achieved together, and support what we want to do for our future, please support me and my team. We have to do it with you, in order to do it for you, and for Singapore. Together, we can keep Singapore special for many years to come."

By The Straits Times

Economics

SINGAPORE DOLLAR SURGE BOON FOR JOHOR

JOHOR BARU, Aug 25 — The recent surge in the value of the Singapore dollar against the ringgit is opening opportunities for Malaysian businesses, especially for those in Johor Baru.

With the republic's dollar at an all-time high of RM2.97 at most moneychangers in the city yesterday, many are saying the strength of the Singapore dollar can only be good for Malaysia's economy, particularly for Johor.

As things stand right now, the Singapore factor is worth at least RM50 billion a year to the Johor economy, said state executive councillor for tourism and domestic trade, Datuk Tee Siew Keong.

"I know the impact of the Singapore dollar on the Johor economy. An average of 16 million tourists a year from Singapore visit Malaysia and a vast majority enter the country via Johor Baru. It is their first stop and assuming they spend a night or two here before moving to other places, the money they spend is substantial," he said.

"And then, we have Malaysians living in Johor Baru who travel daily to Singapore for work. The government estimates there are 400,000 of them. Assuming they earn S\$2,000 (RM6,040) each on average a month, the (total amount) they bring home annually is staggering.

"I have done some calculation and I think RM50 billion a year to the Johor economy, from the tourists and Malaysians working in Singapore, is a fair amount (to quote)," Tee added.

He stressed now is the right time for businessmen in Johor to consider exploring the Singapore market, given the value of ringgit against the Singapore dollar.

"Agricultural products like fruits and vegetables (for example) ... there is huge potential there, and Johor being an agricultural state, we can grow enough for the export market."

The furniture business, according to Tee, is also an attractive option.

"Labour costs are cheaper here. Wood products are cheaper here and therefore, the cost of furniture like cabinets, tables and chairs are definitely much lower compared to those made in Singapore."

The Johor Premium Outlet (JPO), a duty-free shopping complex with an estimated 130 brand-name outlets, is also bracing for an influx of Singapore shoppers.

“We have always been popular with Singaporeans, but lately, there has been an increase in their numbers here. The reasons are obvious. It’s about the strength of their dollar.

“Singaporeans are mature shoppers. They know what they want and generally, handbags and shoes are their priority, and at JPO, there is always value for money,” said JPO chief operating officer Jean Marie Harry.

But the obvious benefit the strong Singapore dollar has on the Johor economy is hotel accommodation, especially on weekends or eve of public holidays.

“Weekends bring good business for us. We are always about full-house on weekends and 60 per cent of our guests are Singaporeans,” said Mahadi Mathana, the manager of four-star KSL Hotel here.

“At an average of RM250-RM280 per room per night, it’s a steal for Singaporeans to stay a night or two, do some shopping and have a nice meal. In fact, most of the hotels in the city are always full on weekends and Singaporeans are the ones filling up the rooms,” Mahadi said.

By Yahoo

Science and Technology

STUDY OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS FINDS TRAUMA PASSED ON TO CHILDREN'S GENES

New finding is clear example in humans of the theory of epigenetic inheritance: the idea that environmental factors can affect the genes of your children

Genetic changes stemming from the trauma suffered by Holocaust survivors are capable of being passed on to their children, the clearest sign yet that one person's life experience can affect subsequent generations.

The conclusion from a research team at New York's Mount Sinai hospital led by Rachel Yehuda stems from the genetic study of 32 Jewish men and women who had either been interned in a Nazi concentration camp, witnessed or experienced torture or who had had to hide during the second world war.

They also analysed the genes of their children, who are known to have increased likelihood of stress disorders, and compared the results with Jewish families who were living outside of Europe during the war. "The gene changes in the children could only be attributed to Holocaust exposure in the parents," said Yehuda.

Her team's work is the clearest example in humans of the transmission of trauma to a child via what is called "epigenetic inheritance" - the idea that environmental influences such as smoking, diet and stress can affect the genes of your children and possibly even grandchildren.

The idea is controversial, as scientific convention states that genes contained in DNA are the only way to transmit biological information between generations. However, our genes are modified by the environment all the time, through chemical tags that attach themselves to our DNA, switching genes on and off. Recent studies suggest that some of these tags might somehow be passed through generations, meaning our environment could have and impact on our children's health.

Other studies have proposed a more tentative connection between one generation's experience and the next. For example, girls born to Dutch women who were pregnant during a severe famine at the end of the second world war had an above-

average risk of developing schizophrenia. Likewise, another study has showed that men who smoked before puberty fathered heavier sons than those who smoked after.

The team were specifically interested in one region of a gene associated with the regulation of stress hormones, which is known to be affected by trauma. "It makes sense to look at this gene," said Yehuda. "If there's a transmitted effect of trauma, it would be in a stress-related gene that shapes the way we cope with our environment."

They found epigenetic tags on the very same part of this gene in both the Holocaust survivors and their offspring, the same correlation was not found in any of the control group and their children.

Through further genetic analysis, the team ruled out the possibility that the epigenetic changes were a result of trauma that the children had experienced themselves.

"To our knowledge, this provides the first demonstration of transmission of pre-conception stress effects resulting in epigenetic changes in both the exposed parents and their offspring in humans," said Yehuda, whose work was published in *Biological Psychiatry*.

It's still not clear how these tags might be passed from parent to child. Genetic information in sperm and eggs is not supposed to be affected by the environment - any epigenetic tags on DNA had been thought to be wiped clean soon after fertilisation occurs.

However, research by Azim Surani at Cambridge University and colleagues, has recently shown that some epigenetic tags escape the cleaning process at fertilisation, slipping through the net. It's not clear whether the gene changes found in the study would permanently affect the children's health, nor do the results upend any of our theories of evolution.

Whether the gene in question is switched on or off could have a tremendous impact on how much stress hormone is made and how we cope with stress, said Yehuda. "It's a lot to wrap our heads around. It's certainly an opportunity to learn a lot of important things about how we adapt to our environment and how we might pass on environmental resilience."

The impact of Holocaust survival on the next generation has been investigated for years - the challenge has been to show intergenerational effects are not just transmitted by social influences from the parents or regular genetic inheritance, said Marcus Pembrey, emeritus professor of paediatric genetics at University College London.

“Yehuda’s paper makes some useful progress. What we’re getting here is the very beginnings of a understanding of how one generation responds to the experiences of the previous generation. It’s fine-tuning the way your genes respond to the world.”

Can you inherit a memory of trauma?

Researchers have already shown that certain fears might be inherited through generations, at least in animals.

Scientists at Emory University in Atlanta trained male mice to fear the smell of cherry blossom by pairing the smell with a small electric shock. Eventually the mice shuddered at the smell even when it was delivered on its own.

Despite never having encountered the smell of cherry blossom, the offspring of these mice had the same fearful response to the smell - shuddering when they came in contact with it. So too did some of their own offspring.

On the other hand, offspring of mice that had been conditioned to fear another smell, or mice who’d had no such conditioning had no fear of cherry blossom.

The fearful mice produced sperm which had fewer epigenetic tags on the gene responsible for producing receptors that sense cherry blossom. The pups themselves had an increased number of cherry blossom smell receptors in their brain, although how this led to them associating the smell with fear is still a mystery.

By The Guardian

Arts

ITALIAN PAINTING DAMAGED IN TAIWAN COULD BE A FAKE: EXPERT

Doubts emerged Wednesday over the authenticity of an Italian painting supposedly worth \$1.5 mn, which hit headlines after a 12-year-old boy punched a hole through it as he tripped and fell during an exhibition in Taiwan.

Organisers said the "Flowers" painting, which forms part of a collection of 55 artworks in Taipei, was by Italian artist Paolo Porpora and dated back to the 1600s.

But a report in Taiwan's Apple Daily said the painting seemed identical to an artwork entitled "Composizione con vaso di fiori," a 17th-century piece by Mario Nuzzi, which was listed in the 2012 catalogue of the Della Rocca Casa d'Aste auction house, with a guide price of 25,000 to 30,000 euros (\$28,700-\$34,000). The work went unsold.

David Sun, head of TST Art of Discovery Co which sponsored the Taiwan exhibition, insisted that the two paintings were different, without going into details.

His defence of the show, however, has failed to quell suspicions from professionals and the media.

"From a professional's perspective, if the paintings are so old and expensive, they should not have been exposed to an environment without constant temperature and humidity," curator Sean Hu of Taipei-based Hu's Art Company told AFP.

"There are too many questions about it.... No one knows if the paintings are genuine or fake."

Video footage released by the organisers shows the boy on Sunday tripping over a platform in front of the artwork and then bracing himself against the painting to break his fall. He then looks around helplessly before walking away.

The 200-centimetre painting was restored on site Monday and is now back on display. The organisers decided not to seek damages from the boy's family, according to Taiwan's Central News Agency.

A self-portrait by Leonardo Da Vinci worth 200 million euros (\$231 million) is also on display, according to the exhibition's website.

By Yahoo



UNDER THE MACROSCOPE

Under the Macroscopic is a weekly summary of what's happening around the world and what's worth pondering. Stay on top of international and local news with this bulletin produced by the Raffles Economics and Current Affairs Society