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Tutors defy ban

Licensed tuition centres hit hard by private tutors

DOHA: Despite a blanket ban imposed by the Ministry of Education on private tuition several years ago, the practice is thriving in Qatar due to high demand from the rising student population.

Several licensed tuition centres in the city have been hit hard by the stiff competition from individuals offering tuition in the privacy of homes and other places. The high house rents and the rising cost of living seem to have prompted more residents to indulge in this illegal practice.

The increase in the number of schools and the growing size of the student community in the country has apparently boosted private tuition.

"We have lost many of our students, because there are hundreds of school teachers and housewives conducting private tuition. Besides, some private schools are also offering evening tuition at their premises.

running a tuition centre in Doha. The Ministry of Education, while banning private tuition, had allowed teachers to conduct tuition in the school premises, under supervision of the schools. The school monitoring was intended to curb the unhealthy practices associated with private tuition. This system has continued since then, financially benefiting the teachers as well as the institutions.

The Ministry ban had a short-term impact on controlling the practice, but the loosely-implemented ban didn't stop many teachers from going back

to the old system. "Private tuition are a universal phenomenon often described as an inevitable evil. It is not easy to wipe out the practice as long as there are students who genuinely need it," said a senior academic. With private tuition becoming increasingly rampant in the country, the fees charged by the tutors are also going up adding to the financial burden on several middle income families.

The fees are as unorganised and uncontrolled as the practice itself. There are "experts" who allegedly mint money by "working hard" seven days a week. The fees vary according to the subject as well as the student. There are also differences depending on nationality of the student and the nature of the curriculum.

The rates for individual coaching are higher compared to tuition offered to a group of students. "Earlier the fee was levied on a monthly basis but now many tutors are charging their students based on a hourly rate. An Indian school student seeking



The Emir welcomes Palestinian President



UN on alert ahead of Bashir arrest warrant decision

KHARTOUM: Peacekeepers in Sudan are on high alert for fear of a potential hostile reaction against foreigners if the International Criminal Court accepts a recommendation to issue a warrant for the arrest of President Omar Al Bashir.

The United Nations has 9,800 peacekeepers overseeing a 2005 peace deal that ended two decades of deadly conflict in south Sudan. With the African Union, it also runs a joint peacekeeping mission in the western region of Darfur which has 15,200 police and troops.

Given the importance of their work, both missions are endeavouring to continue business as usual ahead of the court's announcement of its decision, which could come as early as this week.

But they have raised security to Phase Four, the highest level on the United Nations' planning below large-scale evacuation, officials of the joint UN African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) said.

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