

ISLINGTON CENTRE - Eric, Claude and Negash - 28/11/22 - 3pm

Catch-up since last week.

Reading passage (based on article in FT Weekend by Andrew England and Jim Pickard entitled: Qatar rethinks London stakes after ads ban)

It was reported last week that London's transport authority, Transport for London (TfL), had banned Qatar's tourism adverts on London's transport system. The reason for the ban was stated to be Qatar's position on LGBT+ rights and its treatment of migrant workers. One of the consequences of Qatar's attitude to LGBT+ rights is that European football players have not been allowed to wear "rainbow" armband, supporting LGBT+ rights.

TfL is chaired by the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan.

Doha is angered by this decision. It is seen as part of the increasing criticism of Qatar as the host of the World Cup tournament.

Qatar has responded by launching a review of its investments in London. The person who is conducting the review has said that the ban on advertising "has been interpreted as a message from the mayor's office that business is not welcome in London".

The Qatar Investments Authority is one of the biggest investors in London. It owns the well-known department store, Harrods,, the building known as the Shard and is a co-owner of Canary Wharf. It also has a 20 per cent stake in Heathrow Airport.

The ban was also described as "an example of double standards and virtue signalling". This is because TfL accepts advertising from other countries with a similar attitude to LGBT+ rights, such as United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. It has also been pointed out that TfL has several commercial

interests in China, which gives no anti-discrimination protections for LGBT+ people.

Comprehension questions

1. What do the initials TfL stand for?
2. What is TfL?
3. Who is the Mayor of London?
4. What is the reason for the ban on the adverts?
5. How has Qatar responded?
6. Why could Qatar's response be a problem for London?
7. Explain what is meant by "double standards"?
8. Explain what is meant by "virtue signalling"?

Discussion

If you were Mayor of London, would you have made the same decision? If so, why? If not, why not?