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GULF TIMES BUSINESS



FIRST EDITION : Page 4

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COMMERCIAL BANK

Vodafone Qatar, Samsung Gulf Electronics sign strategic MoU

Vodafone Qatar and Samsung Gulf Electronics have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) at the Web Summit Qatar 2025.

The partnership seeks to leverage the combined skills and resources of the companies to drive innovation, enhance customer experiences, and develop advanced solutions that meet the evolving needs of businesses and consumers in Qatar.

The MoU was formally signed by Mohamed Mohsin Alyafei, Acting Enterprise Business Unit director at Vodafone Qatar, and Hongseok Lee, Qatar managing director of Samsung Gulf Electronics, in the presence of Vodafone Qatar COO Baran Yurdagul.

Through the collaboration, Vodafone Qatar will expand its portfolio, introducing a wider selection of Samsung products and services for both consumers and businesses. Vodafone Qatar's employees will also benefit from the implementation of a comprehensive staff training as part of the strategic alliance.

Yurdagul said, "In line with the

Qatar National Vision 2030 and our commitment to contributing to the country's digital transformation, we are proud to partner with Samsung Gulf Electronics.

This MoU marks a significant milestone, and together, we aim to develop innovative solutions that will help enterprises in Qatar achieve greater efficiency and success, while contributing to knowledge sharing and supporting the growth of businesses in the region."

Lee said, "We're proud to partner with Vodafone Qatar in this exciting new venture. This MoU marks the beginning of a long-term collaboration that will drive growth for both companies and contribute to the advancement of technology in Qatar."



The MoU was formally signed by Mohamed Mohsin Alyafei, Acting Enterprise Business Unit director at Vodafone Qatar, and Hongseok Lee, Qatar managing director of Samsung Gulf Electronics, in the presence of Vodafone Qatar COO Baran Yurdagul.

Meeza to scale its data centre infrastructure to meet rising demand

By Santhosh V Perumal
Business Reporter

With Qatar witnessing excessive demand for data centres, Meeza is scaling its infrastructure to meet the growing needs of enterprises, government agencies, and hyperscalers.

"Our upcoming data centre expansions will significantly enhance our capacity, efficiency, and artificial intelligence (AI) readiness, allowing us to support high-performance computing, machine learning, and sovereign cloud solutions," Mohamed Ali al-Ghathani, chief executive officer, Meeza said in its 2024 annual report, which was recently presented before shareholders at the annual general assembly meeting.

With data centre demand in Qatar exceeding supply, Meeza is committed to aggressively scaling its infrastructure to meet the growing needs of enterprises, government agencies, and hyperscalers, he said. Scaling data centre is one of Meeza's three key priorities that drive sustainable growth and long-term value creation.

Given that Meeza's data centre facilities are now fully utilised, it has begun the next phase of expansion to achieve the vision to enhance its data centre offering to support the country's ambitions, according to Meeza chairman Sheikh Hamad bin Abdulla bin Jassim al-Thani.

The company operates five certified data centres (M-Vaults 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), providing a total of 14MW of IT capacity, with expansion plans already underway to expand M-Vault 4 and advanced design phases in M-Vault 6 and M-Vault 7 to meet increasing demand from enterprises, government entities, and hyperscalers.

With digital transformation accelerating across sectors, Meeza is committed to expanding its secure, high-availability data centre footprint to support the increasing demand for computing power, data storage, and sovereign cloud solutions.

Meeza is investing in the expansion of its M-Vault data centre portfolio, increasing capacity to support high-growth workloads, the report said, adding the company is designing high-performance computing (HPC) environments into its new data centres, enabling AI training, machine learning, and data-intensive applications. Meeza continues to provide secure, regulatory-compliant data centre colocation services, ensuring data sovereignty and local cloud adoption.

"Through these initiatives, Meeza is not only meeting Qatar's growing digital infrastructure needs but also reinforcing its role as a trusted partner for hyperscalers, enterprises, and government institutions," it said.

Stressing that AI is at the core of Meeza's future growth strategy, the board report said through Meeza.AI, the company is developing AI solutions that enhance automation, security, and data intelligence across its service offerings. As businesses and governments continue to migrate towards cloud-first strategies, Meeza said it is committed to delivering secure, scalable, and high-performance cloud solutions that cater to enterprise, hyperscalers, and regulatory requirements.

Highlighting that Meeza has shown strong fundamentals and is in a favourable position to capitalise on global industry trends, the board said the combination of high-growth, high-margin, and defensive revenue streams makes it a compelling long-term investment.

QIMC eyes Q1 2025 opening of Corniche Park Towers

By Peter Alagos
Business Reporter

Qatar Industrial Manufacturing Company (QIMC) is eyeing to open the Corniche Park Towers, one of its ambitious real estate projects, in the first quarter of the year, according to a top official.

"[The] Corniche Park Towers, which, according to specialists, is a new architectural masterpiece that will adorn the Doha Skyline," QIMC chairman Sheikh AbdulRahman Mohammed Jabor al-Thani told shareholders during the company's Annual General Assembly held recently in Doha.

The Corniche Park Towers is part of the company's strategy to diversify investments and add quality to QIMC's investment portfolio, stated Sheikh AbdulRahman, who explained that "the towers will provide an exceptional living and work-



QIMC Chairman Sheikh AbdulRahman Mohammed Jabor al-Thani speaking to shareholders during the company's Annual General Assembly in Doha. PICTURE: Thajudheen

ing experience by combining elegant design and contemporary architecture for luxury offices and apartments with excellent facilities, making it an ideal destination for housing and investment. Work is underway to open it in the first quarter of 2025."

During the meeting, Sheikh AbdulRahman also announced the start of production at QIMC's Gulf Glass Factory, the company's latest project in its industrial products portfolio.

He noted that the factory is part of the company's

objectives to enhance local production and meet the growing demand for industrial products. "The facility for producing high-quality glass containers will contribute to meeting the needs of the local and regional markets and enhancing the growth of the manufacturing sector in Qatar," he pointed out.

Work is also underway at one of QIMC's subsidiaries, Qatar Wood and Plastic Products Company, for future expansion to meet the industrial needs of the country, according to Sheikh AbdulRahman.

Other subsidiaries, Qatar Sand Treatment Plant and Qatar Paving Stones continue to supply the Qatari market with high-quality washed sand and paving stones, while the Gasal Industrial Gases Company in both Mesaieed Industrial City and Ras Laffan Industrial City continues to supply the market's industrial projects, "achieving

excellent financial results consistently," noted Sheikh AbdulRahman, who added that the "efforts of the remaining companies continue in attracting and reaching new markets across the globe."

Sheikh AbdulRahman also told shareholders: "I am pleased to review the performance of QIMC for the year 2024. It was a year full of challenges that we faced with continuous development and adaptation to market challenges, to achieve the expected returns and enhance the company's position in the industrial sector within the country."

"We are proud of our investments in 21 industrial projects in the State of Qatar, which constitutes the core of our long-term strategic plan. These projects vary in multiple industrial fields, contributing to enhancing our production capabilities and expanding our presence in various sectors."

QSE fully waives trading fees on ETFs, aims at improved market liquidity

Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE) has completely waived its trading fees on exchange-traded funds (ETFs), effective from March 16, as part of efforts to enhance the attractiveness of ETFs for both investors and brokers, while significantly improving liquidity in the market.

This decision reflects the QSE's commitment to stimulating ETF trading by reducing financial burdens on investors, increasing market liquidity, and enhancing investment competitiveness. By providing a low-cost trading environment, the bourse aims to encourage portfolio diversification and expand the investor base for ETFs.

The elimination of trading fees is expected to stimulate trading activity in ETFs and boost assets

under management, contributing to the development of a competitive investment environment in line with global best practices.

"This initiative is part of QSE's Strategic Vision (2024-30) to enhance market efficiency and boost investment attractiveness. By waiving our ETF trading fees, we aim to attract more investors, enhance ETF liquidity, and position the QSE as a more competitive market regionally and globally, and this comes in line with Qatar's Third National Development Strategy (2024-30) and Third Financial Sector Strategy," said Abdulaziz Nasser al-Emadi, acting chief executive officer of QSE.

Through this initiative, the QSE aims to create an attractive investment environment for both local and international investors. It also

seeks to strengthen the role of ETFs as a key investment tool in the Qatari financial markets, enabling investors to better leverage the diversification and liquidity benefits offered by ETFs.

According to Market Notice No. 008 of 2014, the 50% maximum rebate on trading commissions set by the Qatar Financial Markets Authority applies only to equity trading. Similar to fixed income instruments, brokers are permitted to offer higher discounts on ETF trading commissions.

The decision to waive trading fees on ETFs comes after the QSE recently removed the minimum trading commission of QR30, replacing it with a fixed proportional commission rate of 0.00275 with no minimum threshold.



The decision reflects the QSE's commitment to stimulating ETF trading by reducing financial burdens on investors, increasing market liquidity, and enhancing investment competitiveness. By providing a low-cost trading environment, the bourse aims to encourage portfolio diversification and expand the investor base for ETFs



'LNG set to play pivotal role in energy markets, race to 2050 net zero emissions'



Dr Anas Alhajji.

■ **Speaking to Al-Attiyah Foundation, industry expert Alhajji shares bullish outlook on LNG market and explores ramifications of US declaration of National Energy Emergency**

Liquefied natural gas (LNG) is set to play a pivotal role in the energy markets and the ongoing race to net zero emissions by 2050, according to industry expert Dr Anas Alhajji. Speaking to the Al-Attiyah Foundation, Alhajji shared a bullish outlook on the LNG market and explored the ramifications of US President Donald Trump's declaration of a National Energy Emergency, its impact on energy markets, and the implications for Middle Eastern oil producers. He expressed cautious optimism about the LNG market despite advancements in energy-efficient technologies. He stated, "We remain bullish on LNG despite technological advancements that reduce energy consumption. Natural gas remains integral to the global energy mix, particularly as green energy policies encounter resistance". Global LNG demand is expected to rise significantly over the coming years, driven

by increased energy requirements in Asia and Europe as these regions seek to secure cleaner energy alternatives. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), global LNG trade hit a record high in 2023, with demand projected to grow by more than 3% annually through 2030. Key growth markets include China and India, which are ramping up imports as part of their strategies to reduce air pollution and transition to lower-emission fuels. Europe, still grappling with the energy crisis prompted by geopolitical tensions, has increasingly turned to LNG to diversify its energy sources. Data from industry reports indicate that European LNG imports surged by nearly 60% last year, compensating for reduced Russian pipeline gas supplies. "Qatar, already a dominant player, is well-positioned to capitalise on this rising demand with its ambitious North Field expansion project," Alhajji noted. On Trump's decision to declare a National Energy Emergency, he explained, "One of the reasons for declaring this emergency is to undo President Biden's climate actions. Although Biden did not officially declare a climate emergency, he implemented policies

as if he had. Trump's move aims to counter those initiatives." Delving into energy demand and production dynamics in the US, Alhajji noted the primary impact will be on the demand side. "Removing subsidies for electric vehicles and criticising them, despite their market presence, will likely increase gasoline demand," he said. He further noted the challenges of boosting production, adding, "Even if Trump promises a production surge, achieving this is unlikely given current record-high US oil and gas production levels." Looking ahead to 2025, Alhajji predicts volatility in the oil market due to factors like ongoing sanctions on Russia and Venezuela, as well as potential tariffs on Canada and Mexico. He emphasised the pivotal role of Opec+ in stabilising markets and mitigating volatility. Alhajji's podcast offers listeners a thorough examination of current energy market dynamics and provides invaluable insights into geopolitical, economic, and technological forces shaping the industry. The podcast is available on Al-Attiyah Foundation's website and all major streaming platforms.

QSE settles marginally higher amid recession fears in US

By Santhosh V Perumal
Business Reporter

Amidst recession fears in the US, the Qatar Stock Exchange yesterday settled marginally higher on the back of transport and real estate sectors.

The domestic institutions were increasingly net buyers as the 20-stock Qatar Index rose 0.06% or six points to 10,531.81 points, recovering from an intraday low of 10,475 points.

The foreign individuals continued to be bullish but with lesser vigour in the main market, which has reported 0.37% losses year-to-date.

The foreign funds were seen net profit takers in the main bourse, whose capitalisation was up QR0.32bn or 0.05% to QR616.97bn on the back of microcap segments.

The Arab institutions were increasingly net sellers in the main market, which saw as many as 2,951 exchange traded funds (sponsored by Masraf Al Rayan and Doha Bank) valued at QR0.03mn change hands across eight deals.

The local retail investors turned bearish in the main bourse, whose trade turnover grew amidst lower volumes.

The Islamic index was seen declining vis-à-vis gains in the other indices of the main market, which saw no trading of treasury bills.

The Gulf individuals were increasingly net sellers in the main bourse, which saw no trading of sovereign bonds.

The Total Return Index was up 0.06% and the All Share Index by 0.07%; while the All Islamic Index shrank 0.14% in the main market.

The transport sector index gained 0.55%, real estate (0.12%), industrials (0.05%) and banks and financial services (0.03%); whereas telecom declined 0.11%, insurance (0.08%) and consumer goods and services (0.01%).

Major gainers in the main bourse included Nakilat, Aljirah Holding, Qatar Oman Investment, Al Mahhar Holding, Zad Holding and Barwa.



The domestic institutions were increasingly net buyers as the 20-stock Qatar Index rose 0.06% or six points to 10,531.81 points, recovering from an intraday low of 10,475 points.

Nevertheless, about 59% of the traded constituents were in the red with major losers in the main market being Qatar Industrial Manufacturing, Dukhan Bank, Imma Holding, Dlala, Qamco, Al Faleh Educational Holding, Ezdan, Vodafone Qatar, Milaha and Gulf Warehousing.

In the junior bourse, Techno Q saw its shares depreciate in value.

The domestic institutions' net buying increased substantially to QR56.89mn compared to QR1.26mn on March 9.

The Arab individuals' net profit booking declined perceptibly to QR3.21mn against QR5.1mn the previous day.

However, the foreign institutions turned net sellers to the tune of QR21.39mn compared with net buyers of QR1.31mn on Sunday.

The Gulf institutions' net profit booking strengthened drastically to QR19.3mn

against QR4.34mn on March 9. The local retail investors were net sellers to the extent of QR13.59mn compared with net buyers of QR5.55mn the previous day.

The Gulf individual investors' net profit booking grew marginally to QR1.06mn against QR0.8mn on Sunday.

The foreign retail investors' net buying weakened marginally to QR1.65mn compared to QR2.12mn on March 9.

The Arab institutions had no major net exposure.

The main market witnessed an 8% contraction in trade volumes to 121.77mn shares but on 21% surge in value to QR390.3mn and 70% in deals to 15,244.

In the venture market, trade volumes grew more than 43-fold to 0.22mn equities, value by about 48-fold to QR0.62mn and transactions by 48-fold to 48.

GCC bonds hold up amid wider emerging market selloff: Report

By Pratap John
Business Editor

GCC bonds managed to outperform their emerging market peers, though only by managing to hold flat last week, according to Emirates NBD.

Regional sovereign bonds turned lower last week – down 0.2% – while corporate bonds and sukuk managed modest gains.

Kuwait was the standout at a country level with Bloomberg's index of its bonds up 0.3% last week while the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar were flat or marginally negative, the bank said in a report.

Turkish and Egyptian USD-denominated bonds were weaker last week with drops of 0.3% and 1.6% respectively in their bond indexes.

Regional PMIs have shown some good performance since the start of the year, reflecting good pipelines of project work, resilient consumption and an improving balance of payments position in Egypt's case. However, MENAT credit markets won't be isolated from volatility in markets more generally and bonds may suffer if investors take more of a risk-off approach and seek haven assets.

The slide in oil prices that has gathered pace since the start of the year will likely raise some anxiety over fiscal sustainability as oil prices in the mid \$60/b to low \$70/b range implies fiscal deficits across most of the GCC economies.

For now credit spreads remain relatively stable across GCC bonds even as there has been a widen-

ing in broader EM spreads. While near-term fiscal pressures will require more borrowing from sovereigns, market access remains strong and backed by still considerable reserves.

The UAE's economy expanded by 3.8% in the first nine months of 2024, reaching a total of AED1.32tn. The non-oil economy expanded by 4.5% during the period while we estimate the oil sector expanded by more than 1%.

On an annual basis, Emirates NBD estimates the economy expanded by 3.9% in Q3 compared with the same period a year earlier with the non-oil sector expanding by 4.6%.

Based on activity data for Q4, 2024 it would appear that there was an acceleration in activity in the final months of the year, supporting its estimate of strong non-oil activity in 2024.

The Turkish Central Bank cut its one-week repo rate by 250bps last week, taking the benchmark rate down to 42.50%, the lowest since December 2023.

Slowing inflation (39.1% year-on-year in February, down from a recent peak of 75.5% in May last year) has given the TCMB room to ease off from the record high of 50.00% at which rates were held through much of 2024, with a cumulative 750bps of cuts so far and more anticipated.

The bank's statement drew attention to improving inflation expectations and anticipated that 'increased coordination of fiscal policy will also contribute' to the disinflation.

Bloomberg QuickTake Q&A

What Trump's tariffs mean for global exchange rates

By Alice Atkins and Vinicius Andrade

The \$7.5tn-a-day currency market has become a focal point for investors as President Donald Trump enacts the biggest US tariff increases in a century. Changing global trade patterns affect the outlook for growth and inflation, which in turn can impact exchange rates. Here's how it all works.

How do tariffs impact currencies?

If a country's products are subject to US import duties, they will become more expensive for American consumers. That reduces demand for those products and for the currency that's required to buy them – hitting that currency's value and boosting the US dollar. By the same token, if other countries impose retaliatory tariffs on imported US goods, demand for dollars may fall. Tariffs can also lead to inflation in the nation imposing them as imported goods become more expensive. This in turn may boost expectations that the country's central bank will tilt toward higher interest rates. And higher rates boost returns on local bank deposits, adding further support for the currency. However, it gets more complicated if tariffs lead to a more prolonged bout of inflation. This eventually dampens consumer spending and causes

businesses to spend less due to higher input costs. That can reduce the country's appeal as an investment destination and therefore the demand for its currency. Trump has acknowledged to Americans there could be a "little disturbance" ahead in the US economy but defended his plan, saying it will raise trillions in revenue and rebalance trading relationships he called unfair.

Who benefits and who loses when currencies are volatile?

Investment banks and brokerages can profit from swings in currencies as it creates more opportunities to capitalise on price differences. But for companies that trade across borders, volatile exchange rates make it costlier to do business as they're forced to spend more to hedge their currency exposure. After a long period of relative calm in currency markets, banks have been hiring more options traders, and hedge funds have increased their positions in expectation that Trump's tariffs will cause sizeable moves in exchange rates. Investors who buy overseas assets are also exposed to currency risk and many have been increasing their hedging, according to Jefferies.

Are currency markets more volatile now?

Aside from some pronounced moves in individual currencies, the overall

level of foreign exchange volatility has been relatively contained since Trump took office. Tariff threats have turned into action against Canada, Mexico and China but there's still a lot of uncertainty around whether negotiations could see tariff measures pared back. The White House has already given automakers in Mexico and Canada a one month exemption and Trump is considering offering relief on some agricultural products. That could send the Mexican peso and Canadian dollar rebounding from recent lows.

What have Trump's tariffs done to the US dollar?

The Bloomberg Dollar Spot Index surged to its strongest level in over two years at the beginning of February on expectations that Trump's tariff agenda will fuel inflation and delay Federal Reserve interest-rate cuts. But a string of recent weak economic data saw investors change their focus to the outlook for growth. Markets were still positioned for further dollar strength in early March, though money managers were having to grapple with crosscurrents that could alter the outlook, including an aggressive ramp up in defence spending in Europe and retaliatory tariff measures from other regions.

What has been the reaction in the Canadian dollar and Mexican peso?

Canada and Mexico were among the

Dollar Touched its Strongest Level in Over Two Years

Move has since pared on trade war uncertainty and weak US economic data



first countries to be on the receiving end of Trump's tariff threats and both currencies plunged against the dollar when the levies were announced in early February. Canada's so-called loonie touched 1.45, its weakest versus the dollar in over two decades, while the Mexican peso slumped to levels just shy of 21 per dollar, the lowest since 2022. Since then, there's been some volatility amid implementation delays and negotiations, but foreign exchange forecasters broadly anticipate the currencies will remain

near their recent lows in the coming months.

What about the Chinese yuan?

The yuan came under the spotlight amid market chatter that Beijing may have to devalue its currency to blunt the impact of Trump's new tariffs on Chinese imports and boost an already fragile economy. During the last trade war, the People's Bank of China allowed the yuan to

slide to its weakest since the global financial crisis as it sought to support local exporters. Lately, the PBoC has ramped up its defence of the currency instead, underscoring its tough stance on maintaining a stable yuan. The central bank's supportive measures – such as its steady daily reference rates, increases in offshore bill sales, delays in interest-rate cuts and a pause of government bond buying – have helped to support the offshore yuan after it fell close to a record low in January.

Media City Qatar attracts over 100 firms during Web Summit Qatar 2025

More than 100 companies applied for registration with Media City Qatar during Web Summit Qatar 2025, further strengthening the country's growing media ecosystem. The registrations are being facilitated through the partnership with Qatar Financial Centre (QFC), established under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in January 2024. As part of the agreement, qualifying media companies pre-approved by Media City Qatar are seamlessly registered through QFC, benefiting from a streamlined process that enables them to operate under permitted activities. Entities that registered during the summit will also receive significant incentives, including a waiver on registration and annual fees for the first four years. Engineer Jassim Mohamed al-Khori,

CEO of Media City Qatar, said: "Seeing the interest from so many companies at Web Summit Qatar 2025 is a testament to the growing appeal of Qatar's media sector and the strength of our expanding ecosystem. Once finalised, these partnerships will bring fresh ideas, diverse expertise, and new opportunities that will contribute to a more vibrant and competitive industry. "By continuously broadening our network, we are directly supporting Qatar National Vision 2030, driving the growth of a knowledge-based economy and positioning the country as a global destination for media and innovation." In addition, Media City Qatar played a key role at Web Summit Qatar 2025, sponsoring the Media Village, a dynamic space where

over 600 international journalists and industry leaders connected and exchanged insights, while also engaging with visitors, entrepreneurs, industry leaders, investors, companies, and startups at its strategic booth within the Startup Qatar Pavilion, an initiative by Invest Qatar. Further demonstrating its commitment to innovation, Media City Qatar signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Huawei on February 24 for the development of a state-of-the-art smart media campus. Media City Qatar continues to contribute to the growth of Qatar's media industry by fostering innovation, attracting global partnerships, and creating opportunities for emerging and established players alike.



Media City Qatar played a key role at Web Summit Qatar 2025, sponsoring the Media Village, a dynamic space where over 600 international journalists and industry leaders connected and exchanged insights, while also engaging with visitors, entrepreneurs, industry leaders, investors, companies, and startups at its strategic booth within the Startup Qatar Pavilion, an initiative by Invest Qatar.

Qatar is set to host first edition of 'Gulf-Africa Businesswomen's Forum'

Qatar Chamber and Al Maraya Exhibition and Conferences Company recently signed an agreement to co-operate in organising the first edition of the 'Gulf-Africa Businesswomen's Forum'.

The agreement was signed by Qatar Chamber acting general manager Ali Bu Sherbak al-Mansouri and the Al Maraya Exhibition and Conferences CEO Jaber al-Mansouri at the chamber's Doha headquarters.

The forum, scheduled to take place from May 5 to 6, 2025, at the Marriott Hotel, aims to showcase investment opportunities in the Gulf and African markets, foster economic partnerships among businesswomen, and facilitate the exchange of experiences and knowledge on the latest trends in entrepreneurship and sustainable development.

Bringing together a distinguished group of female entrepreneurs and investors from Gulf countries and Africa, the forum seeks to promote economic and investment co-operation between businesswomen in both regions.

Qatar Chamber board member Ibtihaj al-Ahmadani, also president of the Qatari Businesswomen Forum, said the event presents a valuable opportunity to discuss key issues and challenges facing co-operation between Gulf and African businesswomen.

Al-Ahmadani also highlighted Africa as an attractive investment destination across various sectors, noting the growing Gulf interest in expanding in-



Qatar Chamber board member and Qatari Businesswomen Forum president Ibtihaj al-Ahmadani.

vestments in the continent. She emphasised the chamber's keenness in sponsoring the forum, which aligns with its priority of strengthening collaboration among businesswomen.

She also stressed that the Qatari Businesswomen Forum places great importance on supporting women entrepreneurs and paving the way for them to play a vital role in the Qatari economy.

Ali Bu Sherbak al-Mansouri underscored the chamber's commitment to sponsoring the forum, which brings together an elite of businesswomen from the Gulf and Africa to discuss opportunities for co-operation and explore investment prospects on both sides.

He emphasised that this sponsorship reflects the chamber's interest in supporting businesswomen and enhancing their role in economic development. He



Qatar Chamber acting general manager Ali Bu Sherbak al-Mansouri and the Al Maraya Exhibition and Conferences CEO Jaber al-Mansouri after signing the agreement at the chamber's headquarters.

added that the forum would serve as an ideal platform for fostering communication between Gulf and African businesswomen, opening new horizons for trade and investment co-operation.

Al-Mansouri expressed his gratitude to Al Maraya for organising the event, noting that Qatar Chamber places great importance on initiatives that strengthen co-operation between the Qatari private sector and its counterparts globally.

Jaber al-Mansouri expressed keenness to co-operate with Qatar Chamber in organising the forum, noting that it offers a valuable opportunity to empower businesswomen and expand their business in regional and international markets.

He said more than 120 wom-

en entrepreneurs from all GCC countries, as well as North African and other African nations, are expected to participate in the forum. Al-Mansouri emphasised that the forum's objectives go beyond networking and meetings, aiming to establish lasting bridges for future co-operation in trade and investment within women's entrepreneurship.

The forum will host four former African female presidents and two African ministers of economy, along with several female CEOs of major African companies.

It will also feature a series of panel discussions aimed at reviewing success stories and highlighting promising sectors that could offer investment opportunities for businesswomen from both the Gulf and Africa.

Invest Qatar and Aqarat to showcase Qatar's realty investment opportunities at MIPIM 2025 in France

Invest Qatar, the Investment Promotion Agency of Qatar, and the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (Aqarat) will participate in MIPIM 2025, the world's premier real estate event in Cannes, France, highlighting Doha's thriving realty sector and diverse investment opportunities.

The Qatar pavilion will serve as a hub for leading real estate developers, including the United Development Company (UDC) and Qetaifan Projects, fostering connections between Qatar's real estate leaders and the global community.

"Our participation at MIPIM offers an ideal opportunity to engage with global investors and highlight Qatar's thriving real estate sector, which is projected to maintain its growth trajectory with an annual growth rate of 4.1% by 2028.

With a strong regulatory framework, stable economy and world-class infrastructure, we look forward to attracting investment and driving sector growth," said Sheikh Ali Al-Waleed al-Thani, chief executive officer of Invest Qatar.

In line with the national real estate promotion strategy, aimed at diversifying the economy and attracting foreign investment, Invest Qatar will showcase the country's economic strengths, world-class infrastructure and investor-friendly policies, making it an attractive destination for global real estate investors.

"MIPIM 2025 provides a vi-

tal opportunity to engage with industry leaders and investors looking for high-growth markets. Qatar's evolving real estate landscape, backed by government supported regulations and a thriving economy, makes it an attractive destination for long-term investment," said Khalid bin Ahmed al-Obaidli, chairman, Aqarat.

Qatar's real-estate sector continues to grow, driven by investor-friendly policies and strategic initiatives, including the Real Estate Regulatory Authority strategy launched in December 2024.

This strategy reinforces Qatar's commitment to a transparent, well-regulated market and aligns with the Third National Development Strategy 2024-30; further enhancing investment opportunities and economic growth.

"This sector presents exceptional investment opportunities, reflecting our nation's ambitious vision," said Sheikh Nasser bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, chairman and managing director, Qetaifan Projects.

"As a leader in Qatar's real estate sector, UDC is proud to showcase its groundbreaking projects at MIPIM 2025. With a strong focus on innovation and sustainability, UDC continues to set new benchmarks in urban development, as reflected in our record-breaking achievements on The Pearl and Gowan Islands," said Yasser Salah al-Jaidah, president and chief executive officer, UDC.

QU, HyperThink honour 10 startups at third Qatar Entrepreneurship Awards



Winners at the third Qatar Entrepreneurship Awards.

As many as 10 startups were honoured at the third edition of the Qatar Entrepreneurship Awards, instituted by Qatar University (QU) and HyperThink Systems.

This year's awards include E-Commerce/Delivery Startup of the Year - Pass; HealthTech Startup - MCare 360; Deep-Tech Startup - EMMA; Green-Tech Startup - AlgaQ; FinTech Startup - Spendvisor; EduTech Startup - Aisthesis; Social Entrepreneur - Startup Grind; Startup of the Year - Pay Later; Woman Entrepreneur of the Year - Reema al-Kuwari, chief executive officer of Adeer; and Entrepreneur of the Year - Abdullah al-Hemaidi, chief executive officer of Rafeeq.

In addition to these recognitions, an exceptional trophy of appreciation, resiliency in entrepreneurship was awarded to Mohammed al-Darwish, founder of Al Rawnaq Trading Company. QU and HyperThink Systems

launched the third edition of the awards, celebrating innovation and entrepreneurial excellence and honouring outstanding entrepreneurs who have demonstrated remarkable creativity and success across various sectors.

A new category was announced for the next year edition of the award by adding "Young and Talented Entrepreneurs" targeting young generation to participate.

"These awards provide a vital platform for emerging businesses to thrive, create lasting impact, and contribute to the development of Qatar's entrepreneurial ecosystem. Through our collective efforts, we are empowering the next generation of leaders who will shape the future of our nation and beyond," said Dr Khalid al-Hashimi, Director of the CEOE (Center for Entrepreneurship and Organisational Excellence) at QU. Awadesh Chetal, chief executive officer of HyperThink Systems, said the awards have once again

highlighted the remarkable innovation, resilience, and entrepreneurial excellence shaping Qatar's dynamic business ecosystem.

"This prestigious event not only celebrates groundbreaking ideas and visionary leadership but also reinforces the critical role of entrepreneurship in driving economic diversification and sustainable growth. At HyperThink Systems, we are proud to support initiatives that foster technological advancement, empower startups, and cultivate an environment where bold ideas can thrive," he said.

The event featured a speech from keynote speaker, Michael Lints, a partner at Golden Gate Ventures. The Qatar Entrepreneurship Awards serves as a vital platform for fostering innovation and encouraging entrepreneurial spirit, ultimately contributing to Qatar's sustainable development and creating an ecosystem that inspires future leaders across various industries.

Ooredoo expands digital entertainment portfolio with Blacknut Cloud Gaming through its partnership with MobiBox

Ooredoo Group has partnered with MobiBox to introduce Blacknut Cloud Gaming, along with other digital services, to its Go Play Market platform, expanding access to upgraded cloud gaming experiences across its footprint.

The agreement was officially signed at MWC 2025 in Barcelona and represents a significant leap forward in the adoption of cloud gaming in Mena, paving the way for further expansion into additional Ooredoo markets.

Through the partnership, Ooredoo customers in Qatar, Kuwait, and Oman will be among the first in the region to enjoy Blacknut's extensive catalogue of over 500 premium cloud-based games, playable instantly on smartphones, smart TVs, and tablets with no additional hardware required, eliminating the need for expensive consoles or high-end PCs.

By integrating Blacknut into Go Play Market, Ooredoo's one-stop entertainment marketplace, the company is making high-quality gaming more accessible while ensuring hassle-free payment solutions. Customers can subscribe effortlessly without credit cards or bank accounts, upgrade their gaming experience with a few taps, and enjoy a growing digital ecosystem that also includes live TV, video-on-demand, music, and audiobooks.

Rene Werner, Group Chief Strategy officer, Ooredoo, said: "Cloud gaming is in high demand, and by integrating Blacknut into Go Play Market, Ooredoo's entertainment marketplace, we are making next-generation gaming more accessible for our customers. Ooredoo is building a dynamic digital ecosystem that evolves with consumer needs while reinforcing our position as a leading digital services provider."

MobiBox plays an important role in this collaboration, handling the payment integration to enable frictionless subscriptions through direct carrier billing. This enables Ooredoo's users to access Blacknut's cloud gaming catalogue. MobiBox will also help in running targeted advertising campaigns for Blacknut to drive user engagement and expand its reach. Hussein Taki, managing partner, Mobi-



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Box, said: "Partnering with Ooredoo Group is a significant milestone for MobiBox, enabling us to simplify payments and expand access to Blacknut's cloud gaming through seamless carrier billing. Beyond payments, our AI-driven, compliant marketing strategies ensure Blacknut reaches new audiences, driving engagement and making cloud gaming more accessible across the region."

Nabil Laredji, VP New Business & Licensing at Blacknut: "Ooredoo's commitment to digital innovation paired with MobiBox's user-centric philosophy makes them ideal partners to bring our platform to the region. This partnership reinforces the evidence of a growing demand for premium cloud gaming and demonstrates the power of telco-driven distribution in reaching new audiences for the benefit of users."

Available in six countries, Ooredoo's Go Play Market platform connects users to top-tier entertainment services, all in one place. With the addition of Blacknut Cloud Gaming, Ooredoo is further expanding its digital ecosystem to meet the evolving needs of consumers.