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Detailed study needed on integration of AI with other advanced tech: Sheikh Khalid

■ 11th Doha Islamic Finance Conference held under the patronage of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani

By Pratap John
 Business Editor

A senior official has called for a detailed study on the integration of artificial intelligence with other advanced technologies in view of AI's rapid advancement and integration into various sectors.

Addressing the 11th Doha Islamic Finance Conference in Doha yesterday HE the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, Sheikh Dr Khalid bin Mohammed bin Ghanem al-Thani said AI's rapid advancement and integration into sectors such as healthcare, education, law, economics, literature, and entertainment, will make it an "indispensable part" of intellectual, professional, and financial operations.

"This transformation will introduce a new work paradigm that has never existed before and cannot be overlooked. Therefore, it is essential to study the integration of AI with other advanced technologies."

Sheikh Dr Khalid said discussions at the conference will focus on establishing standards for AI quality control, developing mechanisms to address its errors, and defining the associated responsibilities.

Additionally, the conference will explore the integration of AI with blockchain technology, particularly in areas such as endowment (Waqf) and electronic games.

"We look forward to the research and recommendations that will emerge from this conference, offering valuable insights for both researchers and industry professionals."

In his address, Dukhan Bank Chairman Sheikh Abdulla bin Fahad bin Jassim al-Thani said the transformative impact of fintech on Islamic banking has been profound, with both AI and blockchain technology emerging as key drivers of this shift.

AI is instrumental in improving financial forecasting, enhancing risk analysis, and enabling the personalisation of banking services with greater efficiency.

He noted blockchain offers a transparent and secure environment for operational continuity and smart contract management. The integration of these two technologies opens new horizons for Islamic banks to develop innovative tools that promote financial inclusion and sustainability while ensuring the highest levels of reliability, security, and Shariah compliance.

"At Dukhan Bank, we are proud to be at the forefront of financial institutions adopting innovation and advanced tech-



HE the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, Sheikh Dr Khalid bin Mohammed bin Ghanem al-Thani. **PICTURE:** Shaji Kayamkulam

nology in Islamic finance. We have embraced this direction as the core of our new identity, and our commitment to this approach has resulted in unprecedented achievements both locally and globally," Sheikh Abdulla noted.

The one-day conference was held under the patronage of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani.

Titled 'Integration of Blockchain and AI: The Future of Islamic Finance', the event was attended by dignitaries and experts including HE the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Sheikh Faisal bin Thani al-Thani; HE the Minister of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs, Ghanem bin Shaheen bin Ghanem al-Ghanem; Qatar Financial Centre CEO Yousuf Mohamed al-Jaida; International Islamic Fiqh Academy Secretary General, Prof Dr Koutoub Sano; and Chairman of the Conference's Higher Organising Committee, Prof Dr Khalid bin Ibrahim al-Sulaiti.

Organised by Bait Al-Mashura Finance Consultations, the conference was supported by the official sponsorship of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), strategic partnership of Dukhan Bank, diamond sponsorship of General Directorate of Endowments at the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, and bronze sponsorship of QFC. **Page 3**

home will increasingly be on improving margins by introducing higher value-added supply chain services, supported by its solid capital base.

This base is set to be bolstered as a result of the planned issue of a subordinated perpetual sukuk, which was recently approved by GWC's Extraordinary Assembly General Meeting in compliance with Shariah principles, with a total value of QR2bn (or its equivalent in other currencies). The agency also highlighted GWC's credit strengths, including strong cash flows, as the company works on increasing overall occupancy at its existing facilities in Qatar while simultaneously aiming to grow the proportion of higher margin 3PL (third-party logistics) and 4PL (fourth-party logistics) revenues in its overall top line.

Sheikh Abdulla said, "Capital Intelligence is one of the largest rating agencies in the world, and therefore, its first-time rating of GWC with a stable outlook is an international endorsement of the strength of the business model. "It clearly reflects the company's leadership position in the logistics sector and the significant progress it has made in enhancing its performance, alongside



GWC Managing Director Sheikh Abdulla bin Fahad bin Jassim bin Jaber al-Thani, and Acting Group CEO Matthew Kearns.

the current expansion strategy to diversify income sources, maintain stable cash flows, and ensure sustainable profitability." GWC's Acting Group CEO Matthew Kearns said, "This rating aligns closely with the efforts to enhance GWC's performance



in the logistics sector, support small and medium-sized enterprises, foster innovation, focus on sustainability, and contribute effectively to the diversification of the national economy and Qatar's National Vision 2030.

"The rating also serves as a major catalyst to further improve performance in the upcoming period and deliver the best value for shareholders."

GWC is maintaining its position as the premier provider of warehousing and distribution solutions across diverse sectors, serving entrepreneurs, micro, small and medium enterprises, as well as multinational corporations. GWC's contributions to the logistics sector were recognised with multiple awards in 2024. The AI Wukair Logistics Park was named 'Project of the Year' by Meed projects showcasing GWC's ability to deliver forward-thinking infrastructure that meets the evolving needs of the market. Additionally, Qatar's General Authority of Customs honoured GWC for its efforts in streamlining customs processes, further cementing its reputation as a trusted logistics partner.

GWC was also ranked ninth regionally in the transport and logistics category on Forbes Middle East's Sustainability Leaders 2023 and 2024. The prestigious list recognises 105 companies leading impactful sustainability initiatives across the region.

QCB governor meets US ambassador



HE the Governor of the Qatar Central Bank, Sheikh Bandar bin Mohammed bin Saoud al-Thani met US ambassador Timmy Davis in Doha yesterday. During the meeting, they reviewed the key facets of bilateral co-operation between the two countries, with a focus on enhancing collaboration within the financial and banking sectors.

Estithmar Holding appoints Juan Leon as new group CEO

Estithmar Holding has appointed Juan Leon as new group chief executive officer, replacing Mohammed bin Bader al-Sada.

The board appointed Leon with full executive authority as group CEO, effective April 9, 2025. Leon brings over 25 years of experience across diverse sectors, including healthcare, real estate, services, ICT (information and communication technology), media and major sports events. He has held a wide range of senior and managerial roles spanning key corporate functions such as sales, operations, compliance, and governance, consistently driving business growth, strategic transformation, and operational excellence. The board expressed confidence in Leon's appointment, emphasising his ability to lead the company through a new



Juan Leon.

phase of growth, building upon the remarkable achievements of Estithmar Holding since its inception. Leon completed advanced executive education at Harvard Business School - Advanced Management Programme (AMP) and HEC Paris - Global Executive in Business Management. The board also expressed

gratitude to al-Sada, during his tenure as group chief executive the company achieved numerous milestones, featuring an increasing investment value for shareholders, geographical expansion, diversified investments, in addition to a remarkable leap in financial performance.

CI ratings 'international testament' to strength of GWC business model: Sheikh Abdulla

■ International rating agency Capital Intelligence assigns first-time long- and short-term ratings on Qatar National Scale of 'qaA-' and 'qaA2', on GWC with "stable" outlook

Capital Intelligence's first-time rating of Gulf Warehousing Company with a stable outlook is an "international endorsement of the strength" of the company's business model, said GWC Managing Director Sheikh Abdulla bin Fahad bin Jassim bin Jaber al-Thani.

GWC yesterday announced that CI assigned the company first-time long- and short-term ratings on the Qatar National Scale of 'qaA-' and 'qaA2', respectively. The outlook on the ratings is "stable". The international agency confirmed that GWC is by far the largest logistics services provider in Qatar, and it has a dominant market share in its home market. Moreover, it enjoys a strong financial position, while its wholly owned subsidiary, Flag Logistics, launched in early 2024, is performing well with promising future expansion opportunities. According to CI, GWC's current focus at

11th Doha Islamic Finance Conference supported by official sponsorships



Organised by Bait Al-Mashura Finance Consultations, the 11th Doha Islamic Finance Conference was supported by the official sponsorship of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, strategic partnership of Dukhan Bank, diamond sponsorship of General Directorate of Endowments at the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs, and bronze sponsorship of the Qatar Financial Centre. **Right:** A view of the delegates at the conference. **PICTURES:** Shaji Kayamkulam

Call to focus on adapting emerging tech to develop Shariah-compliant smart financial solutions

By Pratap John
Business Editor

Prof Dr Khalid bin Ibrahim al-Sulaiti, Chairman of the Higher Organising Committee of the 11th Doha Islamic Finance Conference, has said that focus must now shift towards adapting and advancing emerging technologies to develop smart financial solutions that remain true to the principles of Shariah.

He was addressing the 11th Doha Islamic Finance Conference in Doha yesterday.

Prof Dr al-Sulaiti said rapid technological advancements have evolved beyond being mere supportive tools; they are now key drivers reshaping global economic and financial systems.

He said the integration of blockchain and AI stands out as one of the most significant trends shaping the future of the financial sector, offering smart solutions that merge blockchain's transparency and decentralisation with AI's deep analytical capabilities and precision-driven decision-making.

"As this synergy continues to evolve, a critical question emerges: what will the future of Islamic finance look like?"

"At the Doha Islamic Finance Conference, we have taken it upon ourselves to actively con-



From left: Prof Dr Khalid bin Ibrahim al-Sulaiti, Chairman of the Higher Organising Committee of the 11th Doha Islamic Finance Conference, and Prof Dr Koutoub Sano, Secretary-General, International Islamic Fiqh Academy. **PICTURES:** Shaji Kayamkulam

tribute to shaping the future landscape of Islamic finance. It is no longer enough to passively observe or debate the potential benefits of emerging technologies. The focus must now shift towards adapting and advancing these innovations to develop smart financial solutions that remain true to the principles of Shariah and add significant value to Islamic financial markets."

Prof Dr al-Sulaiti added: "While man-made laws often struggle to keep pace with rapidly evolving realities – constantly repositioning and revising their texts – Shariah Law remains steadfast, grounded in divine revelation from the One

whose knowledge encompasses all things. This sacred revelation reflects the wisdom of the 'All-Knowing', as stated in the Holy Qur'an: 'But Allah bears witness to that which He has revealed to you – He has sent it with His knowledge. The angels too bear witness. And Allah alone is sufficient as a Witness.' Hence, whether addressing longstanding matters or newly emerging challenges, Shariah law has never fallen short in its ability to encompass and tackle them."

Prof Dr Koutoub Sano, Secretary-General, International Islamic Fiqh Academy, stated: "All financial institutions must reassess their tools and struc-

tures, adopting new approaches and flexible frameworks in response to advancements in blockchain and AI. Islamic finance, with its balance of tradition and modernity, offers an economic model that promotes both economic effectiveness and ethical integrity.

"Its principles aim to create an economic system that fosters the growth, circulation, and protection of wealth, ensuring transparency and contributing to the well-being of individuals, societies, and the global community. There are vast opportunities to harness the potential of blockchain and AI to propel the Islamic financial sector to new heights!"

Hamad Port becomes part of MSC Clanga service line to enhance Qatar's export opportunities



Hamad Port has now become part of MSC's Clanga service line, strengthening trade links with China, Singapore, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. This new addition enhances Qatar's export opportunities, providing a direct route from Hamad Port to Shanghai, offering a fast and competitive service to the Far East. A plaque exchange ceremony was held aboard the MSC vessel, part of Clanga service line, marking the first call to Hamad Port.

Oman's Sohar International signals merger intent with Ahli Bank

Oman's Sohar International Bank has said it plans to explore a merger with smaller rival Ahli Bank SAOG, in a potential deal that would create a lender with around 11.1bn Omani rials (\$28.84bn) in assets, reports Reuters.

Sohar International's board has resolved to send a letter of intent to Ahli's board to explore a potential merger between the two banks, the lender said in a statement. Ahli did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the matter.

The proposed deal comes amid a wave of consolidation in the Gulf's banking sector, as lenders seek to boost scale, cut costs, and remain competitive in a crowded market. In Oman, several smaller banks have explored tie-ups in recent years to navigate tighter margins, rising compliance costs, and economic shifts linked to energy transition efforts.

Last year, Sohar International completed a merger with HSBC Bank Oman. Ahli Bank also fielded interest from domestic rival Bank Dhofar for a possible merger in 2023. "Shareholders of Ahli Bank will receive a share consideration in Sohar International," it said in the letter, adding that the bank will take over all assets and liabilities of Ahli Bank after the merger closes.

Sohar International held total assets worth 7.36bn Omani rials (\$19.12bn) as of December 31, while Ahli Bank reported assets of more than 3.7bn Omani rials.

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QSE index bounces back with 130 points gain; M-cap adds QR8.18bn

By **Santhosh V Perumal**
Business Reporter

Tracking the international bourses, the Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE) yesterday bounced back with more than 130 points gain as more than 96% of the traded constituents made positive returns to investors.

An across the board buying - especially in the insurance, realty, telecom and industrials sectors - led the 20-stock Qatar Index rise 1.34% to 9,896.65 points, although it touched an intraday high of 9,972 points.

The Gulf institutions' stronger buying interests lend support to the main market, whose year-to-date losses truncated to 6.35%.

The foreign individual investors' higher net buying had its influence in the main bourse, whose capitalisation added QR8.18bn or 1.43% to QR579.8bn on the back of large and midcap segments.

The foreign institutions' weakened net profit booking had its effect on the main market, which saw as many as 0.49mn exchange traded funds (sponsored by AlRayan Bank and Doha Bank) valued at QR1.16mn change hands across 31 deals.

The local retail investors were seen bullish but with lesser intensity in the main bourse, whose trade turnover and volumes were on the decline.

The Islamic index was seen outperforming the other indices of the main market, which saw no trading of treasury bills.

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

The Total Return Index soared 1.34%, the All Share Index by 1.34% and the All Islamic Index by 1.64% in the main market.

The insurance sector index shot up 4.1%, realty (2.68%), telecom (1.95%), industrials (1.76%), banks and financial services (1.12%), consumer goods and services (0.96%) and transport (0.11%).

Major gainers in the main bourse included Qatar Insurance, Industries Qatar, Ezdan, Al Mahhar Holding, Qatar General Insurance and Reinsurance, Aamal Company, Qatar Islamic Bank, QIB, Baladna, Salam International Investment, Qatari Investors Group, Qamco, Gulf International Services, Mesaieed Petrochemical Holding, QLM, Mazaya Qatar, Vodafone Qatar, Ooredoo and Gulf Warehousing Company. In the venture market, Techno Q saw its shares appreciate in value.

Nevertheless, Milaha and Qatar Electricity and Water were the two entities that witnessed decline in their share prices.

The Gulf institutions turned net buyers to the tune of QR17.73mn compared with net sellers of QR15.27mn on April 7.

The foreign individual investors' net buying strengthened substantially to QR12.12mn against QR0.39mn the previous day.

The foreign institutions' net profit booking decreased perceptibly to QR31.19mn compared to QR35.66mn on Monday.

However, the domestic institutions' net selling expanded noticeably to QR7.69mn against QR2.91mn on April 7.

The Gulf individual investors' net selling grew marginally to QR2.06mn compared to QR1.22mn the previous day.

The Qatari retail investors' net buying weakened drastically to QR3.88mn against QR45.69mn on Monday.

The Arab individual investors' net buying shrank notably to QR7.2mn compared to QR8.93mn on April 7.

The Arab institutions had no major net exposure for the ninth straight session.

The main market witnessed 24% slump in trade volumes to 217.49mn shares and 17% in value to QR564.45mn but on 34% jump in deals to 47,509.

In the junior bourse, trade volumes plummeted 25% to 0.03mn equities, value by 36% to QR0.07mn and transactions by 63% to six.

Vietnam trade delegation visits Hamad Port



A delegation from the Agency for Foreign Trade - Ministry of Industry and Trade in Vietnam yesterday visited Hamad Port. The team, led by the Deputy Director-General of the agency, were briefed on the port's state-of-the-art facilities and terminals, along with a detailed explanation of the port's operational methods and mechanisms. The visit included discussions on ways to enhance co-operation in the field of ports.

Aamal's Ebn Sina Medical forges partnership with BeiGene for innovative oncology treatments in Qatar

By **Peter Alagos**
Business Reporter

Ebn Sina Medical has signed a strategic partnership with BeiGene making it the local partner and distributor for the latter's range of oncology medicines, enhancing the availability of innovative oncology treatments in Qatar.

Ebn Sina Medical general manager Dr Essam Faragalla and BeiGene Mena region general manager Mohammed al-Kapany signed the agreement in the presence of Aamal CEO Rashid bin Ali al-Mansoori, BeiGene New Markets, head of Go-To Market Strategy & Commercial Operation Markus Dannenberger, and other dignitaries.

Ebn Sina Medical is a subsidiary of Aamal Company and a leading supplier of pharmaceutical, hospital, and healthcare products in Qatar, while BeiGene is a known global oncology company.

The collaboration reflects Ebn Sina Medical's commitment to delivering high-quality medicinal products to the local market, benefiting healthcare providers and patients alike.

In a speech, al-Mansoori emphasised that the medical sector in Qatar has witnessed remarkable progress over the past two decades with the establishment of prestigious healthcare facilities that deliver services at world-class standards.

According to al-Mansoori, the partnership marks a significant addition to the range of



From left: BeiGene New Markets, head of Go-To Market Strategy & Commercial Operation Markus Dannenberger, BeiGene Mena region general manager Mohammed al-Kapany, Ebn Sina Medical general manager Dr Essam Faragalla, and Aamal CEO Rashid bin Ali al-Mansoori during the signing ceremony. PICTURE: Thajudheen

treatment options available to cancer patients, representing "a paradigm shift", which further elevates the position of Qatar's medical sector by introducing innovative therapies and fostering collaboration with leading global healthcare companies.

Al-Mansoori said: "This collaboration strengthens Qatar's medical sector by improving patient access to the latest oncology treatments. Ebn Sina Medical's strong market position makes it a trusted partner for renowned global pharmaceutical companies like BeiGene. I look forward to seeing the positive impact this partnership will have on healthcare in Qatar."

For his part, Faragalla stressed that Ebn Sina Medical's partner-

ship with BeiGene marks "an important step" in expanding access to advanced oncology treatments in Qatar.

Faragalla also pointed out that the partnership is fully aligned with Ebn Sina Medical's vision to be an active contributor to the development of Qatar's healthcare ecosystem by fostering innovation and increasing access to modern therapeutic solutions.

He said: "Our goal is to support healthcare professionals with the tools they need to improve patient care. Through strategic collaborations like this, we continue to strengthen the healthcare system and enhance treatment options for patients facing complex health challenges."

Faragalla also noted that the

strategic alliance aligns with Ebn Sina Medical's mission to enhance patient care by providing access to world-class medicinal products and supporting the evolving needs of Qatar's healthcare sector.

Al-Kapany expressed BeiGene's commitment to expanding access to innovative and affordable cancer treatments for more patients around the world.

He said: "This partnership with Ebn Sina Medical reflects our shared goal of improving outcomes for people living with cancer in Qatar."

"Together, we're working to ensure that patients and healthcare providers have access to the high-quality therapies they need - where and when they need them."



An across the board buying -- especially in the insurance, realty, telecom and industrials sectors -- led the 20-stock Qatar Index rise 1.34% to 9,896.65 points yesterday

Eurozone bond yields edge up as markets play it safe

Reuters
London

Eurozone government bond yields edged up in less volatile trading yesterday after wild swings the day before as traders weighed up US trade policy and hoped negotiations with Washington could help avert an escalating

dispute. The European Commission said on Monday it had offered a "zero-for-zero" tariff deal as EU ministers agreed to prioritise negotiations as US President Donald Trump's broader 20% tariff on the European Union is set to come into effect on Wednesday. Faced with sectoral tariffs on its steel and aluminium

as well as its cars, the Commission on Monday evening proposed its first retaliatory tariffs at 25% on a range of US imports in response to the metals tariffs rather than the broader levies. German 10-year bond yield, the benchmark for the euro zone bloc, steadied at 2.621%, up around 4 basis points

from the end of trading the previous day, when the yield rose 7 bps, according to LSEG data. Euro zone bond prices were volatile on Monday as initial buying due to safety-bids turned to heavy selling towards the end of the European trading session due to a report of a potential pause in tariffs.

Qatar participates in 14th AIM Investment Summit in Abu Dhabi

QNA
Abu Dhabi

Represented by the Ministry of Municipality, the State of Qatar is participating in the 14th AIM Investment Summit hosted by Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates.

The summit kicked off on Monday and will conclude today, with broad participation from decision-makers, experts, and investors from worldwide.

Assistant Undersecretary for Urban Planning Affairs at the Ministry of Municipality Turki bin Fahad Abdullah al-Turki led the State of Qatar's delegation at the summit.

The summit will discuss the latest trends and developments in the global investment landscape, ways to address current and future economic challenges, and enhance international co-operation to find sustainable solutions that support the building of a more balanced and resilient global economy.

The summit will be attended by high-level officials, including heads of state, more than 60 min-



The summit kicked off on Monday and will conclude today, with broad participation from decision-makers, experts, and investors from worldwide.



isters and central bank governors, 30 city mayors, 16 heads of global financial exchanges, 1,250 speakers, and 600 exhibitors, with more than 400 panel discussions and 13 roundtable meetings. Through its participation in this international event, the Ministry of Municipality aims to strengthen its strategic partnerships and explore unique investment opportunities that contribute to the development of sustainable urban development projects and smart cities. This reinforces its efforts in infrastructure development and reflects its commitment to adopting global best practices in urban planning.

