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Published in QATAR since 1978

**GULF TIMES**

0 668039 136499

**WEDNESDAY** Vol. XXXXVI No. 13641

February 4, 2026  
Sha'ban 16, 1447 AH

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# PM rallies global investors

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani took part in the opening of the second edition of the global investor meeting, held on the sidelines of Web Summit Qatar 2026. During the event, he also met with founders of high-growth companies and international investors, discussing opportunities for collaboration and innovation. The global investor meeting is an initiative organised by the Government Communications Office in co-operation with the Qatar Investment Authority. It aims to bring together leading global investors and technology company founders to establish strategic partnerships and support economic growth in Qatar and the wider region. This year's edition brings together a select group of entrepreneurs and investors from 16 countries, representing around 40 companies and 50 investment institutions. **(QNA)**



# Qatar locks in 27-year LNG deal with Japan

## QatarEnergy-JERA partnership boosts energy co-operation

QatarEnergy signed a 27-year Sales and Purchase Agreement (SPA) with JERA for the supply of up to 3mn tonnes per year (mtpy) of LNG from Qatar to Japan. Under the terms of the SPA, signed on the sidelines of the 21st International Conference and Exhibition on Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG 2026) in Doha, deliveries will commence in 2028. The agreement was signed by HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi, also the President and CEO of QatarEnergy, and the Global CEO and Chair of Jera Inc, Yukio Kani, in the presence of senior executives from both companies. Commenting on the occasion, HE al-Kaabi said: "We are delighted to further strengthen our long-standing relationship with JERA, a strategic partner and one of the leading LNG players globally, and to reaffirm our continued commitment to supporting Japan's long-term energy needs." The minister added: "Our collaboration, which dates back to the early 1990s, is a testament to the enduring ties between our two companies and to our common desire to ensure that safe and reliable LNG supplies continue to support Japan's economic development."

JERA is a Japan-based energy company that participates in the entire energy value chain ranging from upstream development, fuel procurement and power generation to wholesale sales of electricity and gas. Today, JERA is a global company with the largest power generation capacity in Japan and one of the largest fuel handling capacities in the world. QatarEnergy also signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and JERA for supplying Japan with additional liquefied natural gas (LNG) quantities during emergency situations. The MoU, signed on the sidelines of the 21st International Conference and Exhibition on Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG2026) in Doha, stipulates QatarEnergy's response in the event of unforeseen emergencies that could affect Japan such as natural disasters. The MoU also includes mechanisms for bilateral consultation on appropriate response measures in such situations. The memorandum of understanding underlines QatarEnergy's critical role in ensuring energy security to all its customers through access to supplemental LNG volumes during emergencies and supply disruptions. It also underscores Qatar's ability to provide stable LNG supplies as well as it well established reputation as a reliable and trustworthy energy provider. **(QNA)**

# Qatar engaged with Iran to de-escalate tensions

## Partial reopening of Rafah Crossing not enough: MoFA

By Ayman Adly  
Staff Reporter

HE Dr Majed Mohamed al-Ansari, Adviser to the Prime Minister and Official Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), yesterday disclosed that diplomatic talks and high-level visits between Qatar and Iran leaderships were ongoing to de-escalate the situation and maintain regional stability. Speaking at yesterday's MoFA weekly briefing, Dr al-Ansari stressed that all regional and international stakeholders are engaged in continuous discussions aimed at returning to diplomatic solutions and the negotiating table. The goal is to prevent any escalation and preserve stability and peace across the region. Qatar, he said, has consistently implemented all necessary precautionary measures to safeguard its security, sovereignty and citizens amid potential regional escalations. Prolonged disputes and rising tensions serve no-one's interests, particularly given Iran's status as a



HE Dr Majed Mohamed al-Ansari

neighbour with shared historical ties. A tense regional future would harm everyone involved. Dr al-Ansari noted that all parties – including Iran, the US and Turkiye – are collaborating closely with Qatar, which has always prioritised diplomatic and peaceful dispute resolution for the benefit of all. On the Gaza Strip, he emphasised the urgent need to fully reopen the Rafah Crossing to enable free movement for Palestinians seeking treatment, education and other humanitarian needs. The crossing must also stay open for aid deliveries, as humanitarian issues should remain separate from political disputes.

While welcoming the partial reopening as a positive development, Dr al-Ansari said it falls far short of requirements. Over 20,000 patients urgently require medical care but cannot access it due to the ongoing standoff. Qatar, he added, is working tirelessly with partners – including Egypt, the US, the European Union and various international entities – to alleviate suffering and halt what he termed a "full crime against humanity." Addressing repeated accusations against Qatar from Israeli Knesset members, Dr al-Ansari declared: "We completely reject all attempts to use Qatar's name in the internal political conflicts of the Israeli government." He pointed out that Qatar's name is routinely dragged into Israel's domestic disputes, despite Qatar never attacking Israel. Israel, by contrast, launched an unprovoked assault on Qatar, killing civilians and damaging civilian infrastructure – for which its prime minister later formally apologised, pledging never to repeat such actions. Qatar, Dr al-Ansari reaffirmed, consistently promotes peace and stability while rejecting hostile posturing, having no involvement whatsoever in Israel's internal political matters.

## At summit, startups show their mettle

By Shaima Sheriff  
Staff Reporter

Entrepreneurs from across the region and beyond converged in Doha for Web Summit Qatar 2026, where startups presented technology solutions spanning accessibility, e-commerce, customer retention and AI, while leveraging the summit to connect with investors and international partners. Muhammad Wafeeq, founder and CEO of Wafeeq Technology, a digital platform for the deaf and hard of hearing, highlighted the summit's potential, saying, "I want to show our solution to the world because at the Web Summit you can meet different countries, different startups, different technology, different solutions." Wafeeq, whose platform has already won four national awards in Qatar for digital experience and social impact, credited the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology and Qatar Development Bank for supporting the company's journey. Similarly, Lamma AI, a

Bahrain-based startup offering instant e-commerce solutions for Instagram store owners, described the summit as a networking goldmine. "We had a lot of partnerships and a lot of investor visits to our booth. I think Web Summit is a great event for networking," said a representative, emphasising the practical opportunities the event provides for scaling their business. **To Page 7**



Muhammad Wafeeq

# Doha dazzles the tech world at Web Summit 2026

## Participants hail organisation, scale, energy

By Ayman Adly  
Staff Reporter

Web Summit Qatar 2026 has drawn widespread praise from international participants, who say its organisation, scale and energy rival the world's top technology gatherings and cement Doha's status as a global events hub. Business leaders, founders and investors highlighted not only the summit's professional execution and high-calibre attendance, but also Qatar's growing appeal as a destination for innovation, investment and quality living. They told *Gulf Times* that Doha has established itself as a global hub for the effective organisation of high-end international events, as this summit – which has gathered industry pioneers, startups,



established businesses and experts in one place – has provided excellent business opportunities and an active platform to connect with others in the industry. Faisal Amir Malik, chief technology officer, solution sales and marketing, Huawei Enterprise Business, said the summit has been a great opportunity to reach out to potential partners, as Huawei aims to provide complete and compre-

hensive ICT solutions with adequate infrastructure for Accelerate Industrial Intelligence (ACT). This, he noted, will enhance government tech services and speed up digital transformation. He described Web Summit Qatar as among the best globally in its field, citing the great turnout and strong participation from both the government and private sectors. Adrien Dubuisson, regional

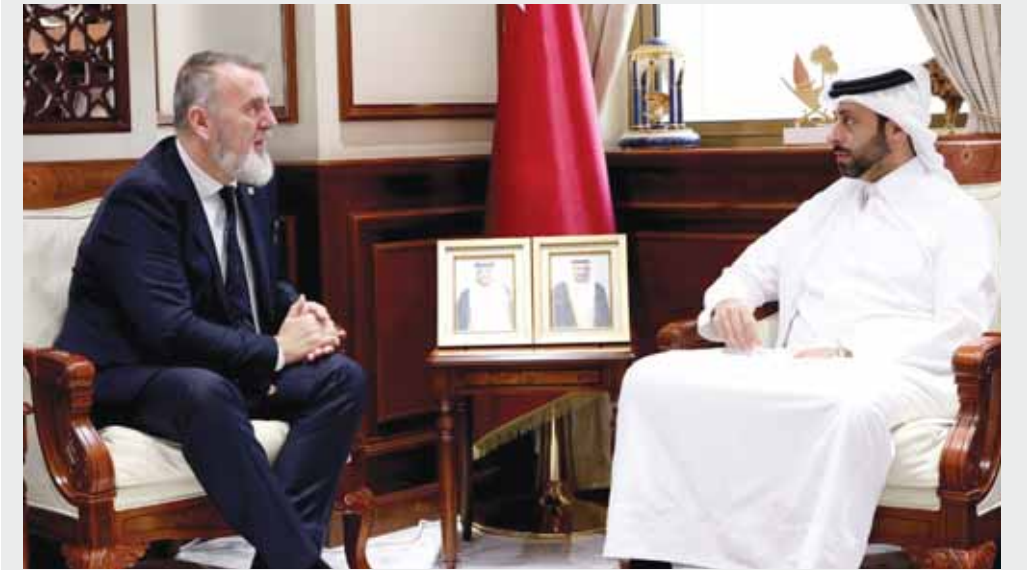


marketing manager at Figma, a French design and prototyping company, praised the layout and organisation of the stalls and pavilions, which make participants easily accessible to visitors without crowding. He stressed that visitors to the summit are genuinely interested in serious business, making it a great opportunity for startups to reach potential partners and customers. He also

described Doha as a safe, convenient, exceptionally clean and well-organised city where many Europeans could enjoy living, thanks to its excellent services, facilities and international community. He particularly enjoyed cycling on the Corniche and praised the transport system. Dhrubojyoti Saha, from Sundew, India, said the summit is one of the best in its field in terms of or-

ganisation, accessibility, services and the quality of participants and visitors. He believes the general atmosphere is full of enthusiasm and offers great potential for businesses to expand and grow their reach. He expressed admiration for Doha as a city of ultra-modern architecture and infrastructure that still maintains and preserves its original identity and heritage. Otto Korpela, from Sulvana MEA, Finland, said Qatar is an excellent market for AI, with great potential for companies to expand and grow. He noted that the summit benefits from ample, well-organised space that gives participants excellent visibility. Vladislav Bakhtyurin, marketing manager at OnlyOffice, Uzbekistan, pointed out that the summit has dedicated open spaces for all participants, making them easily visible and accessible. He said the excellent quality of customers and business opportunities at the event has been a pleasant surprise that exceeded his expectations. **To Page 7**

## Municipality minister meets German state of Thuringia's minister



HE the Minister of Municipality Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah al-Attiyah met yesterday with Minister of Digitalisation and Infrastructure of the German state of Thuringia Steffen Schutz, and his accompanying delegation. The meeting explored aspects of co-operation between the two sides in areas of mutual interest, particularly in strengthening co-operation in the infrastructure field. (QNA)

## Qatar participates in high-level roundtable on AI at World Government Summit in Dubai

Qatar participated in a high-level closed session titled "Harnessing Artificial Intelligence and Enhancing National Readiness", held on

the sidelines of its attendance at the World Government Summit 2026 in Dubai. Qatar was represented at the session by HE the Minister of Fi-

nance Ali bin Ahmed al-Kuwari. The session discussed the evolving use of artificial intelligence in productive sectors globally and across the Middle East and North Africa, as well as regional co-operation opportunities to maximise the benefits of these technologies.

It also reviewed public policy priorities for building an effective innovation ecosystem and bridging the digital divide.

Furthermore, the session addressed the impact of artificial intelligence on labour markets, emphasising the importance of supporting the workforce through education and skills development, alongside the role of fiscal policies in mitigating risks associated with AI adoption in the financial sector. (QNA)



## Qatar takes part in UN session on social development

Qatar participated in the opening session of the 64th session of the UN Commission for Social Development.

Qatar was represented at the meeting by HE the Minister of Social Development and Family Buthaina bint Ali al-Jabr al-Nuaimi.

In her address, Her Excellency explained that the session was being held just a few months after the Second World Summit for Social Development, which was hosted by Qatar in November 2025, QNA reported from New York.

She emphasised that the country has solidified its position as a leading global destination for dialogue and international co-operation. Al-Nuaimi noted that the Summit achieved great success and positive global feedback, and that the Doha Political Declaration

served as an important roadmap for translating ambitious commitments into practical actions to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

She also pointed to Qatar's continued notable progress across all pillars of its National Vision, particularly in the field of social development, where the family is placed at the heart of social policies, alongside efforts to empower women, enhance the role of youth, and support persons with disabilities and the elderly.

Her Excellency highlighted the launch of the Ministry of Social Development and Family's National Strategy for the period 2025-2030, under the theme: "From Care to Empowerment," which aims to enhance community participation and expand social protection. She reviewed achievements related to

women's empowerment, including the 2025 amendments to the Civil Human Resources Law, which expanded leave entitlements and supported work-family balance, leading to an increase in women's participation in the workforce to more than 63%, in addition to their leadership roles in higher education institutions.

Underscoring the importance of empowering youth, HE al-Nuaimi noted the issuance of Law No. (22) of 2025 on the rights of persons with disabilities and the State's commitment to international standards in this field.

She also announced the Rawda Award for Excellence in Social Work, which recognises impactful initiatives.

She concluded her address by reaffirming Qatar's continued support for the Palestinian cause.

### Al-Khulaifi meets Spanish state secretary for foreign, global affairs

HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi, held a meeting yesterday via video conferencing with State Secretary for Foreign and Global Affairs of Spain, Diego Martinez Belio. During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral co-operation and ways to support and enhance them.

They also discussed the latest developments in the region, particularly in the Gaza Strip, the occupied Palestinian territories, and Iran, in addition to recent developments in Latin America. Furthermore, several mediation files of mutual interest were discussed, with both sides stressing the importance of strengthening co-ordination and consultation in this regard. (QNA)

## Essa Al Sulaiti Law Firm Joins the Ranks of the World's Leading Law Firms Through Strategic Partnership with Interlaw Global



- Interlaw Global welcomes Essa Al Sulaiti Law Firm into its network of elite international law firms, reinforcing the firm's position as a leading Qatari institution and expanding its cross-border legal capabilities to support companies and investments according to the highest global standards.
- Strengthening the international presence of Qatari legal expertise



Essa Al Sulaiti Law Firm has announced its strategic partnership with Interlaw Global, joining as the network's accredited member representing Qatar. This recognition reflects the firm's standing among the world's top-tier law firms and its commitment to delivering exceptional legal services.

The partnership agreement was signed in Qatar during an official visit by Interlaw Global's delegation, highlighting the strong collaboration between both parties and their shared commitment to advancing legal excellence regionally and internationally.

Interlaw Global is a prestigious network of leading independent law firms across major commercial and financial centers worldwide, known for its strict membership standards, professional excellence, integrity, and ability to provide high-quality cross-border legal services.



Commenting on the milestone, Mr. Essa bin Mohammed Al Sulaiti, Chairman of Essa Al Sulaiti Law Firm, said:

"Joining Interlaw Global marks a pivotal moment in our firm's journey. This partnership reflects the trust placed in our expertise and our position in both regional and global markets. It aligns with our strategy to support clients in their international ventures



and cross-border transactions, ensuring the highest standards of legal service in line with the values that define our firm."

Mr. Michael Pattinson, Chariman of Interlaw Global, added:

"We are proud to welcome Essa Al Sulaiti Law Firm to the Interlaw network. Their professionalism and deep legal expertise fully align with our vision of delivering world-class legal services."

This partnership strengthens Essa Al Sulaiti Law Firm's international reach, offering seamless access to global legal expertise while maintaining deep local knowledge of Qatari law. It underscores the firm's commitment to combining local insight with global standards, positioning it as a trusted legal partner for clients navigating increasingly interconnected markets.



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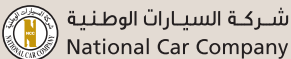


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## Commercial Bank and MBG Corporate Services host exclusive ERM & BCP workshop

Commercial Bank recently hosted an exclusive Advisory Workshop on Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) and Business Continuity Planning (BCP) in collaboration with MBG Corporate Services.

This session highlighted the importance of navigating disruptions and ensuring the continuity of critical business functions. Participants gained insights into risk identification and assessment, explored key risk categories affecting businesses, and learned how ERM supports decision-making. The workshop also provided a comprehensive overview of the BCP framework, equipping participants with practical strategies to protect their companies during times of crisis.

Fahad Badar, EGM and Chief Wholesale and International Banking Officer at Commercial



Bank said: "Supporting our clients in strengthening enterprise risk management and business continuity planning is central to Commercial Bank's role as a trusted financial partner. Hosting workshops of this nature

reflects our commitment to equipping businesses with the insights, frameworks, and practical tools needed to navigate an increasingly complex risk landscape. Through initiatives like this, we continue to play an active role in strengthening the resilience of our clients and supporting the long-term stability of the wider business ecosystem."

Commenting on the workshop, Naresh Manchanda of MBG Corporate Services, said: "Building resilient, future-ready organisations starts with strong risk management and continuity planning. By staying ahead, you can turn risk into opportunity. Together with Commercial Bank, we are equipping businesses with the tools and insights they need to prepare for any scenario and strengthen long-term resilience."

## PM receives phone call from Italian deputy PM

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani received yesterday a phone call from Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation of Italy Antonio Tajani. They discussed the co-operation between the countries and ways to support and strengthen them, the latest developments in the region, in addition to a number of topics of mutual interest. The two sides also stressed the importance of intensifying regional and international efforts to reduce escalation and tension in the region through dialogue and peaceful means to consolidate regional security. (QNA)



# Lusail University, QAA sign pact to strengthen academic co-operation

Lusail University and the Qatar Aeronautical Academy (QAA) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for co-operation in relevant fields, with HE the Minister of Transport Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Thani in attendance.

This signing was part of strengthening academic partnerships, training, and integrated education pathways between the two sides.

The MoU is intended to broaden collaboration avenues in academic, training, and research areas, contributing to sharing expertise and knowledge, as well as upgrading educational programmes and supporting students and graduates in alignment with labour market needs and Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV2030).

Overall, the collaboration fields include exchanging teaching and training expertise, streamlining access to information through shared desktop databases, in addition to collaborating in provid-

ing joint training opportunities, organising student, sports, cultural, and social activities, and convening scientific meetings, lectures, and workshops, thereby enhancing knowledge and expertise exchange between the two sides.

Director-General of QAA, Sheikh Jabor bin Hamad al-Thani, affirmed that the signing represents a significant step towards broadening the academic and training horizons between the two institutions.

The MoU comes within the framework of a joint commitment to advancing the national workforce, sharing expertise, and backing scientific research through academic bridging programmes and joint training, in pursuit of having a pool of qualified professionals that keep up with the rapid evolution of the aviation industry, Sheikh Jabor noted.

Sheikh Jabor stressed that he is confident this collaboration will open wider fields for joint work and help support the path of edu-

cation and specialised training in alignment with QNV2030.

Lusail University President Dr Nizam Hindi emphasised that this jointly signed MoU represents an incredible step in the co-operation path between the two sides and underscores the university's commitment to having flexible and integrated academic pathways in place to support students and graduates, thereby contributing to linking academic education with labour market needs.

Dr Hindi pointed out that the Academic Bridge Program (ABP) will provide QAA graduates with incredible educational opportunities that strengthen their career paths and open wider apertures for progress and excellence.

In essence, this collaboration underscores the QAA-Lusail University commitment to serving education and society, shoring up integration between academic and applied education, which will positively be reflected on students and educational enterprises in Qatar. (QNA)

## Shafallah Center partners with Microsoft to empower people with disabilities

A leading disability support centre in Qatar has announced a partnership with Microsoft Qatar aimed at expanding digital inclusion and improving access to technology for people with disabilities.

The Shafallah Center for Persons with Disabilities, which operates under the Qatar Foundation for Social Work, said the collaboration seeks to create long-term social impact by empowering people with disabilities, with a particular focus on children and young people.

Under the initiative, beneficiaries will be equipped with future-ready digital skills and given improved access to Microsoft technologies and accessibility solutions. The programme is designed to help participants prepare for emerging technology fields and a rapidly evolving labour market in Qatar.

The partnership also includes support for teachers and students to obtain internationally



recognised Microsoft certifications upon successful completion of relevant training programmes. In addition, beneficiaries will have opportunities to engage directly with Microsoft employees through mentoring and guidance schemes.

Executive Director of the Shafallah Center, Maryam Saif al-Suwaidi, said the partnership reflects the centre's commitment to building effective strategic alliances that enable people with disabilities to benefit from digital transformation.

She added that the initiative aligns with Qatar National Vision 2030 and national legisla-

tion protecting the rights of people with disabilities, particularly in education, training and employment.

Al-Suwaidi stressed the importance of tailoring programmes to the specific needs of Shafallah's beneficiaries, with an emphasis on practical training and modern learning methods that promote independence and self-confidence.

General Manager of Microsoft Qatar, Ahmed al-Dandachi, said the company believes technology should be accessible to everyone and that inclusion is fundamental to building more empowered and sustainable societies. (QNA)

## Subsidiaries of AZF sign pact with QFC to boost sports sector

The subsidiaries of Aspire Zone Foundation (AZF), in collaboration with the Qatar Financial Centre (QFC), yesterday, signed a two-year strategic memorandum of understanding (MoU) at Web Summit Qatar to enhance co-operation in supporting and developing the sports sector in Qatar.

The MoU also aims to advance the sports complex and sports business accelerator, and to attract local and international companies operating in the sports sector. This collaboration seeks to expand business opportunities and strengthen investments in this vital field. The agreement was signed by Ali Abdulla al-Mutawaa, chief of business development and enterprise management officer at AZF; Mansoor Rashid al-Khater, CEO of QFC; Nasser al-Taweel, deputy CEO and chief legal officer at QFC; and Hanan Atwan al-Shammari, strategic partnership director of AZF.



MoU signing between subsidiaries of Aspire Zone Foundation (AZF) and the Qatar Financial Centre (QFC), yesterday.

The areas of co-operation between the two parties include promoting joint projects and initiatives and supporting the business and innovation ecosystem within the sports sector, in line with Qatar's vision to strengthen the sports economy and develop sustainable investment opportunities. This collaboration is part of national efforts to boost investment and grow the country's sports economy. The partnership reflects the

commitment of both parties to supporting an integrated sports ecosystem and achieving Qatar's vision for developing the sports sector in accordance with global best practices. Officials from both sides affirmed that this MoU represents an important step toward building sustainable strategic partnerships that support Qatar's aspirations to become a global hub for sports and investment.

## EU delegation, Aspire Academy set to expand co-operation

The delegation of the European Union to Qatar has reaffirmed its strong and constructive partnership with Aspire Academy, highlighting years of successful collaboration built on shared values of excellence, innovation, and social development through sport. Building on this solid foundation, the ambassador of the European Union to Qatar, Dr Cristian Tudor, and the director general of Aspire Academy, Ivan Bravo, held a meeting at Aspire Academy premises yesterday, and agreed to expand their co-operation through new joint initiatives that reflect their shared ambition for sustainable and long-term collaboration.

A key milestone in this next chapter will be the third stop of Aspire Academy's Workshop Tour – and its first visit to Europe – taking place in Romania, an EU member state, in April. The initiative aligns closely with the European Union's commitment to promoting social development, innovation, and sustainability through sport. In addition, it was agreed to conduct a joint Corporate Social Responsibility initiative in Qatar in May, in connection with Europe Day on May 9. The event will harness the unifying power of sport to promote inclusiveness, social cohesion, and support for underprivileged communities, reflecting core values at the heart of the European Union's engagement in Qatar and worldwide. Tudor stated: "Our partnership with Aspire Academy is a strong example of how sport can serve as a bridge between cultures and as a driver for innovation, sustainability, and social inclusion. We look forward to



(From left) Dr Cristian Tudor and Ivan Bravo.

expanding this co-operation both in Qatar and in Europe, reinforcing our shared commitment to empowering communities through sport." Bravo said: "Over the past few years, Aspire Academy has been delighted to support the EU Delegation in the State of Qatar by providing both venues and expertise for the (united) Summer Camps. "I am particularly proud of the strong collaboration we have built, which has allowed us to bring smiles to the faces of hundreds of underprivileged children from Syria and Gaza, whom we were honoured to host. "Building on this successful partnership, we are now pleased to move forward with a new endeavour, 'The Workshop Tour Europe - Bucharest 2026' in collaboration as well with the Romanian Football Federation and UEFA (European football's governing body). This initiative represents an additional step in football performance knowledge sharing but at the same time an opportunity to empowering young people through education, sport, and sustainability through CSR activities," Bravo added.

## Teyseer Services and TechPreneur Solutions Announce Strategic Deployment of AI Powered Computer Vision to Advance Health and Safety Standards in Commercial Kitchens



Teyseer Services WLL, a leading Qatari company delivering integrated services across critical sectors, and TechPreneur Solutions WLL, a Qatar-founded artificial intelligence company specializing in applied and responsible AI, have announced during Web Summit Qatar a strategic collaboration to deploy an AI-powered computer vision solution aimed at enhancing health, safety, and hygiene standards in commercial kitchen environments.



The collaboration reflects Teyseer's long term AI strategy, focused on embedding artificial intelligence into core operations to drive quality, resilience, and regulatory excellence. Through this initiative, TechPreneur serves as Teyseer's local AI partner, delivering the end to end design, implementation,

and governance of the computer vision solution in full alignment with Qatar's regulatory, privacy, and data sovereignty requirements.

The AI powered computer vision system leverages advanced machine learning and edge based video analytics to transform static CCTV infrastructure into an intelligent, real time operational layer. The solution continuously monitors critical health and safety practices—including PPE compliance, hand hygiene duration, workspace cleanliness, and fire safety risks—while providing real time alerts, analytics, and audit ready insights to support proactive decision making.

"At Teyseer, artificial intelligence is a strategic capability—not an experiment," said Saad Nasser, Head of Business development of Teyseer Services WLL. "By integrating AI powered computer vision into our operations, we are strengthening health and safety standards, reducing operational

risk, and setting a new benchmark for responsible technology adoption across essential services in Qatar."

"This collaboration demonstrates how AI can be operationalized at scale to deliver tangible national value," said Eng. Rwdah Al Subaiey, Founder & CEO of TechPreneur Solutions. "Our role as a local AI partner is to translate advanced computer vision into trusted, compliant, and impact driven solutions—supporting organizations like Teyseer in leading Qatar's journey toward smarter, safer, and more resilient operations."

The collaboration and its outcomes have been highlighted during Web Summit Qatar, positioning the initiative as a real-world example of how local enterprises and Qatari AI innovators are deploying advanced technologies to

address operational challenges and elevate industry standards.

National Value and Strategic Impact

Aligned with Qatar National Vision 2030, the deployment contributes to:

Advancing food safety, hygiene, and workforce protection

Strengthening regulatory compliance and operational governance

Reducing risk through real time, data driven oversight

Demonstrating responsible and scalable AI adoption within Qatar

The collaboration reinforces the role of locally developed AI capabilities in supporting national priorities, building trust in emerging technologies, and accelerating sustainable digital transformation across critical service sectors.



# Qatar prioritises digital tech to strengthen legal work: minister

HE the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali bin Issa al-Hassan al-Mohannadi said yesterday that Qatar prioritises leveraging digital and cutting-edge technologies in supporting and strengthening legal and legislative government efficiency as part of the nation's strategic transition towards a knowledge-based economy.

Addressing a panel discussion within the third Web Summit Qatar 2026, the minister added that organising this global technological event embodies the national path toward digital transformation, demonstrating Qatar's standing as a global platform that convenes tech and innovation minds, as well as high-ranking global investors, alongside founders and heads of enterprises specialising in tech fields.

He recalled the Smart Legislative Advisor initiative that had been launched by the Council of Ministers Secretariat General as part of a bundle of ambitious initiatives that keep up with Qatar's digital agenda 2030, including the interactive electronic platform for procedures of preparing government legislation.

HE al-Mohannadi clarified that this initiative broadly leverages AI-powered tools in preparing, reviewing, and unpacking legislations, as well as upgrading accuracy and quality levels, in addition to reducing legal review duration up to seven times compared to the previous situation. These initiatives are executed in tandem with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), the minister outlined.

Al-Mohannadi recalled that this programme will trigger a paradigm shift in government legislative work, whose idea evolved from a similar successive experience at the Ministry of Municipality to streamline the procedures of building permits through leveraging artificial intel-



HE the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali bin Issa al-Hassan al-Mohannadi

ligence to address the challenges of legislative work in terms of scale, complexity, and time required.

The minister highlighted the implementation of the programme in co-operation with Scale AI, spearheaded by MCIT, noting that it contributed to reducing the legislative processing and review time from almost 35 days to nearly five days, while enhancing accuracy, consistency, and the quality of legislative outputs, and maintaining full human oversight and professional legal responsibility.

He called on innovators, technologists, and policymakers to engage in responsible dialogue on practical challenges, and to propose ideas that are testable and to develop to serve the legal sector in the country.

In response to a question regarding the priority of digital transformation in the Ministry of Justice, al-Mohannadi emphasised Qatar's belief that technology is the future, as reflected in the Ministry's Strategic Plan 2025-2030, which is witnessing a comprehensive digital transformation of its projects and services, with nearly 90% of its services having been converted into digital services.

He added that digital transformation in the legal sector boosts speed and efficiency, but it also enhances trust, accessibility, and strengthens the rule of law. He noted that technology was an enabling tool to achieve better justice, not a substitute for legal responsibility or adherence to professional standards.

Regarding collaboration with partners and innovators, the minister noted that digital transformation of the legal sector represents a strategic national priority, affirming Qatar's pursuit of building a flexible and transparent legal and judicial ecosystem that meets the needs of citizens and investors.

He referred to the issuance of Law No 19 of 2025 amending certain provisions of the Legal Profession Law as a transformational step to enhance the role of the legal profession and support the private sector, alongside efforts to modernise the legislative framework and build partnerships with the private sector, academic, and international institutions.

HE al-Mohannadi elucidated that the Doha Legal Forum, whose inaugural edition recently concluded, aligns with this approach, alongside international platforms such as the Web Summit. (QNA)

## QIC's pavilion at Web Summit attracts global tech community



Qatar Insurance (QIC), the leading insurer in Qatar and the Mena region, is participating as a Diamond Sponsor at Web Summit Qatar 2026, which runs until February 4 at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre.

QIC's pavilion saw a strong turnout from the global tech community, including innovators, entrepreneurs, investors, and representatives from leading tech companies.

Visitors explored QIC's vision to build the region's first insurance-powered digital ecosystem, its evolution from a leading insurer into a fully integrated digital ecosystem, and how this shift is redefining digital services in Qatar.

The pavilion also hosted a series of seminars and panel discussions led by QIC's executives, along with regional and international experts. These sessions highlighted the latest trends in launching digital products, developing digital business strategies, and building high-impact ventures across the Mena region.

On the third day of the Summit,



the QIC pavilion featured a distinguished lineup of speakers and experts in panel discussions on AI and the development of digital ecosystems across the health, lifestyle, and travel sectors. On the Summit's

fourth and closing day, QIC will host a Demo Day, showcasing innovative ideas and solutions from entrepreneurs and startups seeking to join QIC's digital ecosystem and scale their operations in regional markets.

## QIC chairman visits pavilion at Web Summit Qatar



QIC chairman Sheikh Hamad bin Faisal bin Thani al-Thani visited the company's pavilion yesterday at the Web Summit Qatar 2026.

During the visit, Sheikh Hamad was briefed on the summit's programme, as well as QIC's vision for shaping the future of digital services in Qatar and the wider region, as showcased through its participation. Sheikh Hamad also reviewed the latest developments in the implementation of QIC's digital strategy, along with

the progress achieved to date in the company's journey towards building the region's first insurance-powered digital ecosystem, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Qatar Central Bank's Third Financial Sector Strategic Plan. Sheikh Hamad attended part of the panel discussions hosted at the pavilion, which brought together experts from Qatar and around the world to explore the present, future of innovation, investment in digital ecosystems at both the local and regional levels.

## Vodafone Qatar, UDST sign pact for talent development, innovation at Web Summit

Vodafone Qatar and the University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to establish a framework for co-operation across talent development, training, and innovation, strengthening collaboration between industry and academia in Qatar.

The MoU was signed by Abdulla Ali al-Misnad, chief administrative officer at Vodafone Qatar, and Dr Rachid Benlamri, vice-president, Academics at UDST, during Web Summit Qatar 2026, reflecting a shared commitment to supporting national human capital development and fostering practical, future-ready skills aligned with Qatar's digital and economic priorities.

Through this collaboration, Vodafone Qatar and UDST will explore opportunities to support talent development, knowledge exchange, and innovation initiatives that strengthen workforce readiness and applied learning, with a focus on enhancing practical skills, industry exposure, and collaboration between academia and the private sector.

Abdulhadi al-Sahli, head of Media Relations and CSR at Vodafone Qatar, said: "In our ongoing efforts to support Qatar's transition into a digital economy, Vodafone Qatar is committed to empowering local talent and collaborating with academic institutions. Our partnership with the University of Doha for Science and Technology reflects our belief that education and skills development are fundamental to



Abdulla Ali al-Misnad, chief administrative officer at Vodafone Qatar (right), and Dr Rachid Benlamri, vice-president, Academics at UDST, during the signing ceremony held at Web Summit Qatar 2026.

building a future-ready workforce.

"By bridging the gap between Qatar's youth and industry, this collaboration helps ensure young talent is equipped with the practical tools and real-world experience needed to succeed, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030."

Commenting on the agreement, Najla al-Naemi, director of National and International Affairs at UDST, said: "Collaborations with leading telecommunications partners such as Vodafone Qatar are essential to strengthening applied education and

ensuring our graduates are equipped with future-ready skills.

"Announcing this MoU at Web Summit underscores the importance of global platforms in showcasing and advancing such initiatives. This agreement reflects UDST's commitment to connecting academia with industry, supporting innovation, and contributing to national workforce development and the strategic goals of Qatar."

To learn more about Vodafone Qatar's services and solutions, visit website (<https://www.vodafone.qa/en/business/home>).



### Public Announcement

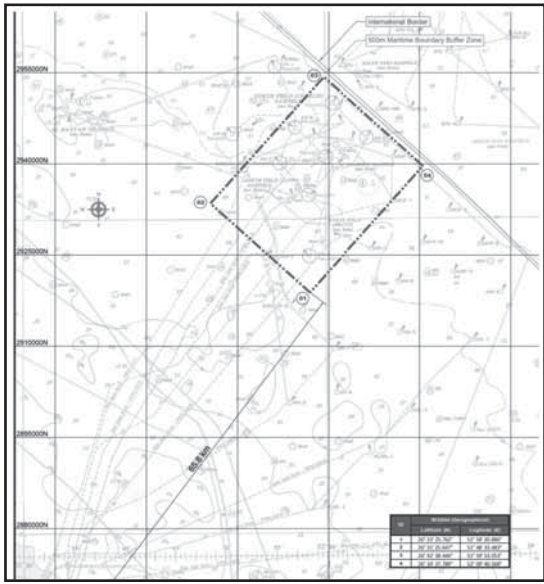
To all Ships, Fishermen and Mariners

Marine Survey works in Al Shaheen Field by Vessel Quest Horizon  
Subsea Survey Works Offshore Qatar from 10-Feb-2026 to 30-Apr-2026

PPursuant to and under directives from the Registration and Seafarers Affairs Department, Ministry of Transport, State of Qatar, this announcement is to inform all Vessels, Mariners, and Fishermen that Horizon Geosciences intends to undertake Marine Survey works in Al Shaheen Field in the locations bound by the coordinates shown in the diagram below by Vessel Quest Horizon.

All Vessels, Mariners, and Fishermen are expected to keep clear of the survey locations during the operations.

Horizon Geosciences & NOC takes no responsibility for any loss or damage caused to outside parties in association with this operation, following publication of this notice.



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For Queries call +974 6688 5887

# MoPH, partners to mark World Cancer Day

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), in collaboration with its partners in the health sector, is joining the global community in marking World Cancer Day observed on February 4 annually under the theme *United by Unique*.

The observance of World Cancer Day is a leading example of active partnership and ongoing collaboration between the MoPH and key stakeholders in cancer control, including the Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC), Sidra Medicine and Qatar Cancer Society (QCS).

It aims to promote access to people-centred health systems, highlight the unique nature of each cancer journey from diagnosis to recovery, dispel myths and stigma associated with the disease, and educate the public on cancer prevention, early detection and the importance of timely diagnosis.

As part of this occasion, the MoPH is intensifying awareness efforts to educate community members about cancer.

Sheikh Dr Mohamed bin Hamad al-Thani, the director of the MoPH's Department of Non-Communicable Disease Prevention Programmes, said: "World Cancer

Day is a reminder that prevention and timely diagnosis are shared responsibilities."

"We will continue working with partners across all sectors to reduce risk factors, expand access to evidence based services, and ensure that every person can reach screening and care without delay, with dignity and confidence," he said. "Today, we renew our partnership across government entities, healthcare providers, civil society, academia and the private sector to protect lives and build a healthier Qatar for generations to come."

"World Cancer Day reaffirms that every cancer experience is unique, and that people-centred care is not merely a slogan, but a practical approach that makes a real difference in the lives of patients and their families," said QCS chairman Sheikh Dr Khalid bin Jabr al-Thani.

"Qatar has made tangible progress in this area through its continued support for the development of a comprehensive healthcare system that prioritises prevention and early detection and provides high quality therapeutic and supportive care in line with international best practices," he added.

"At the HMC, we continue to strengthen Qatar's national cancer services through an integrated, patient-centred approach that provides patients with world class specialist cancer care, including cutting edge diagnostics, advanced treatments and long term follow up," said HMC National Centre for Cancer Care and Research chief executive and medical director Dr Mohamed Salem.

"Through the National Centre for Cancer Care and Research and our partnerships across the healthcare sector, we are committed to ensuring that every patient has access to high quality, timely and comprehensive cancer services," he added.

"On this World Cancer Awareness Day, we stand united in our mission to reduce the impact of cancer on our communities," said PHCC Screening Programmes director Dr Shaikha Abu Shaikha. "Raising community awareness remains our strongest tool; together, we can prevent many types of cancer by adopting healthy lifestyles and undergoing regular screening whenever appropriate."

"Paediatric cancer care is not only about treating the disease; it is about caring for the whole child," said Dr Chiara Cugno, act-



Sheikh Dr Mohamed bin Hamad al-Thani



Sheikh Dr Khalid bin Jabr al-Thani



Dr Mohamed Salem



Dr Shaikha Abu Shaikha



Dr Chiara Cugno

ing chief of Paediatric Haematology, Oncology and Bone Marrow Transplantation at Sidra Medicine.

"On World Cancer Day, we reaffirm our commitment to delivering multidisciplinary, high quality paediatric haematology oncology and bone marrow transplantation care that reflects our team's HOPE motto: *Health, Outcome, Progress and Education* – through clinical excellence, research driven advancement, genuine partnership with families, and training the next generation of compassionate physicians and healthcare professionals," she added.

## QIIB launches campaign for its Visa cardholders, offering travel packages to FIFA World Cup 2026

QIIB has announced the launch of a unique new campaign for its Visa cardholders, both credit and debit, offering them the chance to win travel packages to attend FIFA World Cup 2026 matches, courtesy of Visa.

The campaign is open to all QIIB Visa cardholders, both existing and new, giving them the opportunity to enter a draw to win one of nine trips.

Each prize includes two flight tickets and access to FIFA World Cup 2026 matches, including Group stage, Round of 32, Quarter-Finals and Semi-Finals.

To qualify, customers simply need to use their cards during the campaign period, which runs from February 2-28, 2026.

As part of the campaign, customers will earn two draw entries for every QR1,000 spent internationally using their QIIB Visa credit or debit cards.

For local spending, every QR1,000 spent with a QIIB Visa credit card earns one entry.

To be eligible for the draw, customers must accumulate a minimum spend of QR20,000 by the end of the campaign period.

"We are pleased to offer our valued customers an exceptional opportunity to attend the FIFA World Cup 2026 with Visa, the world's most anticipated and prestigious sporting event," said QIIB chief business development officer Khalid Abdulrahman al-Shaibei. "At QIIB, we are always committed to delivering innovative offers that elevate the customer experience and provide real, tangible value."

"This campaign, launched in partnership with Visa, gives customers even greater chances of winning the more they use their cards, especially for international transactions, which earn double entries into the draw," he said. "It's an open invitation for our customers to take full advantage of their cards' benefits and start experiencing the excitement well ahead of the tournament."



Khalid Abdul Rahman al-Shaibei

"QIIB continues to design campaigns that align with the global passion for football, offering rewarding opportunities that reflect our customers' aspirations," al-Shaibei continued. "At the same time, we remain focused on delivering the best in electronic payment and digital banking solutions."

"Visa is delighted to partner with QIIB on this exciting campaign, giving cardholders the chance to experience the FIFA World Cup 2026 live," said Shashank Singh, Visa's vice-president and general manager for Qatar and Kuwait.

"As we continue to enhance secure and seamless digital payment experiences, initiatives like this bring added value to customers while celebrating the region's deep passion for football," he said. "We are proud to help fans get closer to the action on the world's biggest sporting stage."

The draw to select the winners will take place after the campaign concludes, in accordance with the announced terms and conditions.



## Visit Qatar to host first Sneaker Con in Doha

Visit Qatar has announced that it will host the inaugural edition of Sneaker Con Qatar, bringing "The Greatest Sneaker Show on Earth" to Doha.

The globally recognised convention will take place at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC) during the three-day Eid al-Fitr holidays, offering visitors an engaging experience, creativity, and live entertainment.

Positioning Doha as a regional hub for contemporary fashion and street culture, Sneaker Con Qatar will welcome thousands of sneaker enthusiasts, collectors, creators, and fans from across the region and beyond.

Spanning 7,000sq m, the event will showcase the full Sneaker Con experience, where global sneaker culture meets local identity.

The three-day programme will include live basketball and skateboarding activations, interactive workshops, and a curated main stage with a variety of shows.

The Doha edition will feature a curated mix of global and regional vendors, offering everything from the rarest grails to the latest releases, alongside live buying, selling, and trading on the show floor.

Sneaker Con Authenticated will provide expert on-site verification, ensuring confidence in every transaction, while an international Cash Out Crew will be on hand to purchase sneakers directly from attendees bringing their collections to the event.

In line with Visit Qatar's commitment to accessibility and community engagement, entry to Sneaker Con Qatar will be complimentary.

Pre-registration is required, with free tickets available exclusively through the Platinumlist platform.

## Participation in Web Summit underscores Audit Bureau's pursuit of smart solutions

The assistant president for Performance and Compliance Oversight at the State Audit Bureau, Jassim al-Mannai, said has that the bureau's participation in Web Summit Qatar 2026 underscores its strategic transition toward digital transformation and pursuit of smart solutions in oversight operations, thereby contributing to supporting oversight decisions based on unified auditing standards.

Through this participation, he told the Qatar News Agency (QNA), the bureau is committed to capitalising on cutting-edge technologies, particularly artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, in unpacking huge volumes of data, as well as accelerating access to fraud and unknown pattern detection indicators.

These technologies, al-Mannai underlined, reinforce oversight operations.

He indicated that, through this participation, the bureau unveiled a new smart platform for auditing use cases, unpacking big data, and identifying underlying fraud risks.

The official also pointed out that the platform has sophisticated analytical tools and AI-powered technologies and machine learning, to enable auditors to review unlimited quantities of data to extract risk and detect fraud, all presented through interactive dashboards.

Al-Mannai said that the bureau intends to develop the platform further in the future by enhancing the data integration and sharing capabilities.

He highlighted the pivotal role played by AI, machine learning, and data analytics as key tools to support proactive oversight, enhance the ability to detect risks, and improve the quality of audit and oversight decisions, while stressing the importance of governance and the responsible use of these technologies.

The official noted that the bureau's participation in the Web Summit reaffirms its role in developing the oversight system, leveraging modern technologies to increase audit efficiency, and achieve the highest levels of compliance and transparency. – QNA

## Web Summit Qatar 2026 praised for blend of media and technology

Lebanon's Minister of Information Dr Paul Morcos (pictured) said that the 3rd Web Summit Qatar was the standard for media summit that keeps with the times due to the clear blend of media, technology, and digital progress on display.

Speaking to the Qatar News Agency (QNA) on the sidelines of his participation in Web Summit Qatar 2026, the minister said that a highlight of the third edition was its expansion beyond media affairs to focus also on investment and technology.

He noted that in the modern era, media was no longer an independent sector, but has become closely intertwined with technology and digital transformation.

Morcos stressed the importance of leveraging the advantages of technology to develop media messaging, accelerate the delivery of news, and expand its reach, while cautioning against its drawbacks and emphasising the need to strengthen media relations and link them to technological and investment progress.

The minister described the summit as world class, combining the traditional and the modern and highlighting the role of technology as a fundamental element in enhancing the effectiveness of media work.

Regarding the objectives of his country's participation in the Web Summit, Morcos said that the aim was to build media and investment partnerships not only with government entities in Qatar, but also with the private sector, especially start-ups and the investment community.

He added that the summit provided an opportunity to invite investors to visit Lebanon and invest there, noting that markets emerging from crises and wars, such as Lebanon, represent a promising investment environment and a distinctive market moving toward stability.

Morcos also affirmed the depth of Lebanese-Qatari relations, noting Qatar's steadfast support for Lebanon during various hardships.

The minister added that Beirut looks forward to strengthening co-operation with Doha in the coming phase, particularly in the media and investment sectors, and anticipated the emergence of Qatari-Lebanese partnerships as Lebanon gradually returns to stability. – QNA



## Qatar Society of Engineers participates in regional forum

The Qatar Society of Engineers is participating in the 27th Gulf Engineering Forum and its accompanying conference, held in Kuwait under the theme *Challenges of Smart Infrastructure Projects*.

The forum and conference agenda features panel discussions presented by experts in investment and the financial sector as well as leading academic researchers, focusing on the themes of financial and environmental sustainability and the challenges of investment and environmental engineering projects in the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries.

On the sidelines of the forum, pioneers of Gulf engineering, heads of engineering societies, and win-



ners of the Gulf Engineering Forum Project Awards were honoured, including Qatari engineers.

In a related development, Dr Abdullah Hassan al-Mehshadi was unanimously elected as deputy secretary-general of the Gulf Engineering Union for the next three-year term.

The Qatar Society of Engineers delegation

showcased Qatar's pioneering experience in sustainability and smart infrastructure, presenting specialised working papers addressing investment and sustainability challenges and innovative solutions in smart infrastructure projects, with a focus on engineering and environmental dimensions. – QNA



## Qatar Primary Materials Company embarks on digital transformation journey with Google Cloud and QDS

Qatar Primary Materials Company (Alawalia), a leading provider of primary materials in Qatar, has announced a strategic collaboration with Google Cloud at Web Summit Qatar 2026 to accelerate its digital transformation.

The enterprise agreement, facilitated by official implementation partner QDS, will empower Alawalia to leverage Google Cloud's advanced, scalable, and flexible cloud capabilities to modernise its operations and drive long-term growth.

The signing ceremony was attended by Alawalia chief executive Abdulaziz Ibrahim al-Tamimi, Google Cloud regional general manager Ghassan Kosta, and QDS general manager Mohammad Alam.

"This partnership with Google Cloud and QDS is a strategic step towards realising our vision for a digitally advanced and efficient Alawalia," said al-Tamimi.

"Leveraging Google Cloud's powerful infrastructure and innovative solutions will not only enhance our operational capabilities but also enable us to deliver



Qatar Primary Materials Company (Alawalia) and Google Cloud have signed a collaboration agreement at Web Summit Qatar 2026.

greater value to our customers and stakeholders," he said. "We are confident that this collaboration will be a key driver of our future growth and success."

"We are thrilled to partner with Alawalia and QDS to support Qatar's digital future," Kosta said. "This agreement is a testament to the trust that Qatari enterprises place in Google Cloud to power their digital transformation journeys."

"We are committed to providing our customers with the most advanced and reliable cloud technologies to help them

innovate, scale, and succeed in a rapidly evolving digital landscape," he continued. "We look forward to a successful collaboration with Alawalia and to supporting their continued growth and innovation."

This collaboration signifies a major milestone in Alawalia's digital journey, enabling the company to enhance its operational efficiency, agility, and innovation.

This partnership reflects a shared commitment to adopting leading-edge cloud

technologies to achieve strategic business objectives.

By moving to Google Cloud, Alawalia will be able to optimise its technology investments, align with evolving business needs, and benefit from a more sustainable and efficient information technology (IT) infrastructure.

The collaboration also supports Qatar's broader digital transformation ambitions by enabling the adoption of secure, scalable cloud technologies across key national sectors.

# HBKU launches Unesco chair on digital tech, human behaviour

Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) has launched the Unesco Chair in Digital Technologies and Human Behaviour.

Situated within the HBKU's College of Science and Engineering (CSE), the new chair will explore the intersection between digital technologies and human behaviour, promoting digital well-being, ethical use of technology, and positive societal transformation.

It will focus on addressing challenges such as Internet addiction, cyberbullying, and misinformation through impact-driven research and active engagement to support healthier digital ecosystems.

The chair strengthens the HBKU's role as a convening platform for global dialogue on the societal implications of adopting emerging technologies and rapid digital transformation, building on the university's demonstrated commitment to the ethical use of technology, including its hosting of the "AI Ethics: The Convergence of Technology and Diverse Moral Traditions" conference.

By linking scientific research with behavioural insights and policy-oriented outcomes, the Unesco chair further positions the HBKU as a catalyst for impact and a trusted partner for international organisations, governments, and academic institutions shaping the future of digital societies.



The launch event, held at Education City's Minarete, marks a significant commitment to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly education, decent work, inclusive institutions, and reduced inequalities.

By bringing together academics, researchers and policymakers, the event translated global development priorities into concrete discussions on how digital technologies can be designed and managed to promote human dignity, social cohesion and development.

By bringing together academics, researchers and policymakers, the event translated global development priorities into concrete discussions on how digital technologies can be designed and managed to promote human dignity, social cohesion and development.

CSE professor and Unesco chairholder Dr Raian Ali said: "Digital technologies, especially social media, artificial intelligence (AI), and mobile computing, are at the forefront of contemporary behavioural change."

"These tools influence how we communicate with the world and each other, redefining interactions, personal identity, and even our mental health," he said. "Through the Chair's activities, the HBKU affirms our commitment to harnessing the power of partnerships and evidence-based research to shape policies and advance solutions that address and mitigate the negative impact of emerging technologies."

"It is a great pleasure to mark the official launch of the Unesco Chair on Digital Technologies and Human Behaviour at the HBKU, a timely milestone as societies worldwide confront the social, ethical and human consequences of rapid digital transformation," said Salah Khaled, the director of the Unesco Regional Office for the Gulf States and Yemen. "The Unesco Chairs act as bridges between knowledge and policy, translating cutting-edge research into practical guidance for governments, institutions and communities, while fostering international co-operation."



Amal ElFallah Seghrouchni

## Web Summit Qatar 2026 'strengthens' the digital presence of Arab world and Africa

Morocco's Minister of Digital Transition and Administration Reform Amal ElFallah Seghrouchni has described the 3rd Web Summit Qatar as a successful platform for learning about the latest developments in digital technology and artificial intelligence (AI), praising the event's organisation and the warm welcome extended to participants.

Speaking to the Qatar News Agency (QNA) on the sidelines of her participation in the summit, she said that Morocco had been able, through this engagement, to sign a number of partnership and co-operation agreements with international partners in the digital field, adding that these initiatives help strengthen the presence of the Arab world and Africa on the global digital stage.

Seghrouchni noted that Morocco and Qatar enjoy strong fraternal relations, adding that the summit had provided an opportunity to discuss joint startup projects that could begin in Morocco and continue in Qatar, or vice-versa, in a way that boosts technological co-operation and strengthens bridges between the countries.

These partnerships, she stated, seek to create added value for the people and to unify the Arab-African voice in the field of digital innovation.

Seghrouchni said that the presence of major international companies at Web Summit Qatar 2026 points to rapid growth in the digital and AI sectors across the Arab region and the Gulf. - QNA



## Qatar, Egypt sign agreement on mutual judicial assistance

Qatar and Egypt have signed an agreement on mutual judicial assistance in criminal matters, with the aim of providing judicial assistance and co-operation in criminal matters in accordance with national laws and public order.

HE the Attorney-General Dr Issa bin Saad al-Jafali al-Nuaimi, who is visiting Cairo, and Egypt's Minister of Justice Adnan Fangari signed the agreement.

They held a meeting on issues of common interest prior to the signing ceremony.

Qatar's ambassador to Egypt Sheikh Jassim bin Abdulrahman al-Thani attended the signing ceremony and meeting. - QNA

## Global Carbon Council, Malaysia's MFF ink pact

The Global Carbon Council (GCC), the first internationally accredited carbon standard in the Global South, and the Malaysia Forest Fund (MFF), the national agency mandated to mobilise innovative forest finance, have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to strengthen collaboration on carbon markets and scale Nature-based Solutions (NbS) across Malaysia.

The MoU was formalised by GCC founding chairman Dr Yousef Alhorr and Suhaini binti Haron, acting on behalf of the MFF chief executive.

The MoU between the GCC and MFF establishes a framework to explore pathways to ensure that Malaysia's NbS meet the highest international standards, providing local industries with credible pathways to meet their climate commitments.

This partnership also responds to the growing need for long-term investment in forest conservation and restoration.

Malaysia's extensive forest ecosystems offer substantial carbon sequestration potential and vital ecosystem services.

The Forest Carbon Offset represents an important tool for scaling long-term finance for forest conservation and restoration, focusing on robust requirements and strong institutional foundation.

Through this collaboration, the GCC and MFF will explore synergies that can enhance credibility and scalability of these projects, ensuring they align



with national climate strategies and international best practices.

The partnership will also explore opportunities of the GCC's Carbon Market Infrastructure in supporting the implementation of Malaysia's carbon markets.

"Our partnership with the MFF is aimed at realising carbon financing opportunities from Malaysia's vast natural heritage," said Dr Alhorr. "By exploring synergies between the Forest Carbon Offset programme and GCC's international standard, we are building the foundation for enabling premium, high-integrity credits."

"This partnership with the Global Carbon Council creates new opportunities for parties to collaborate and scale high-quality forest carbon projects that deliver real environmental and social impact while advancing scientifically robust carbon initiatives," said Suhaini.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

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NATIONALITY AFFAIRS  
within 15 days from the publication of this notice.

## AgriteQ 2026 to take place on February 12-16 at Katara

The Ministry of Municipality has announced the launch of the 13th International Agricultural Exhibition in Qatar (AgriteQ 2026), taking place on February 12-16 at Katara Cultural Village.

The event, under the patronage of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, is expected to attract wide participation from government entities, private sector organisations, and a distinguished group of local, regional, and international companies and experts specialising in agriculture and related fields.

The exhibition has steadily strengthened its position as a leading regional and international platform for agriculture, food production, sustainability, and agricultural innovation.

It plays a key role in supporting the objectives of Qatar's National Food Security Strategy and Qatar National Vision 2030, and is part of the ministry's ongoing efforts to develop the agricul-



Ministry officials with the sponsors of the exhibition.

tural sector and boost local production.

The event will host the AgriteQ Conference, a scientific and intellectual platform for exploring the latest developments and future opportunities in sustainable agriculture, food production chains, climate change adaptation, innovation in the food industry, and agricultural investment.

The exhibition will feature a wide range of activities to enhance the visitor experience, including the Halal Zone, Auction Theatre, Animal Tent, Live Cooking Zone, Children's Agri-

cultural Workshops, and Qatar Lens.

In addition, visitors can explore the Farmers' Market, Honey Market, Dates Market, Flower Market, and dedicated food and beverage areas.

The 13th edition follows the success of previous editions, particularly AgriteQ 2025, which welcomed more than 300 exhibitors from 29 countries, attracted more than 97,000 visitors, and hosted over 50 forums and workshops.

Yousef Khalid al-Khulaifi, the director of the Department of Agricultural Affairs and chairman of the organising

committee, said AgriteQ 2026 reflects the development of Qatar's agricultural sector and the country's vision to build an advanced system grounded in innovation and sustainability.

Dr Faiqa Abdullah Ashkanani, the director of public relations at the ministry and a member of the organising committee, said the ministry has implemented a comprehensive media plan to promote AgriteQ 2026 across traditional and digital media platforms at the local, regional, and international levels.

## 10th Field Disaster Management training camp commences

Under the patronage of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, and with the support of the Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD), the Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) launched the 10th Field Disaster Management training camp (DMC-10) yesterday.

Running until February 11 under the slogan *Effective Preparedness... Better Response*, the event brings together 300 trainers and trainees from the QRCS, QFFD, Qatar government bodies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and national societies and relief organisations in the Middle East and North Africa (Mena) region.

Held at the camp's site in the Sealine area (Mesaieed), the opening ceremony was attended by QRCS managing director and secretary-general Engineer Ibrahim bin Hashim al-Sada, QFFD deputy director-general for Risk and Compliance Sector Abdullah bin Ahmed al-Fehani, Public Security director-general Major-General Mohamed bin Jassim al-Sulaiti, Civil Defence director-general Major-General Hamad Othman al-Duhaimi, National Command Center (NCC) head Brigadier Ali Mohamed al-Mohannadi, QRCS board member Abdullah Hamed al-Mulla, and many leaders and representatives of government and social organisations in Qatar.

In his opening remarks, QRCS assistant secretary-general for Relief and In-

ternational Development Mohamed Bader al-Sada, who is also the head of DMC-10, said: "We are proud of the broad welcome to DMC-10, with currently more than 300 trainers, trainees, administrators, and organisers."

"The biggest evidence of this success is the fact that DMC's nine editions graduated hundreds of specialised and qualified personnel, who would later be actively engaged in the response to many humanitarian crises and emergencies with their National Societies and organisations," he said.

"As you can see, DMC plays a crucial direct and indirect role in saving lives, alleviating people's suffering, and fostering a culture of preparedness at all levels – individual, family, institutional, and community," Mohamed Bader al-Sada added.

"This proves the feasibility of the vision embraced by DMC since day 1 and motivates us to keep working towards it: To promote public awareness about the importance of disaster preparedness and mobilise resources towards a family and society where the culture of preparedness is a general behaviour, not mere information," he pointed out.

"The QFFD's support of the camp stems from its commitment to strengthening preparedness and effective crisis response, as well as to achieving tangible, on-the-ground impact" said al-Fehani. "The launch of the camp today represents a continuation of Qatar's humanitarian efforts and reinforces its role in supporting



countries affected by natural disasters and conflicts."

He added that the ongoing partnership with the QRCS served as a successful model of institutional co-operation and contributed to building knowledge for proactive humanitarian action.

The event's agenda features theoretical lectures, practical training, simulation scenarios, and real-world experience to apply the latest humanitarian practices in field assessment and co-ordination, emergency shelter, water and sanitation, food security, livelihoods, emergency planning, operations rooms, health in emergencies, media and communication in emergencies, fundamental humanitarian standards, humanitarian data analysis,

psychosocial support, safer access, restoring family links, and many other key topics and skills that enable relief personnel to effectively carry out field tasks and procedures.

The participants from Qatar represent many organisations, including the QRCS, National Service Academy (NSA), QFFD, Qatar Charity, Civil Defence Council, Qatari Foundation for Social Work, the Regulatory Authority for Charitable Activities (RACA), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Qatar Press Centre, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and Sidra Medicine.

Other participants come from 18 countries: Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Palestine, Somalia, Sudan, Jordan,

Iraq, Turkiye, Lebanon, Libya, Yemen, Egypt, Syria, Afghanistan, Mauritania, and Chad.

DMC-10 boasts a slew of partners and contributing organisations, including the Ministry of Interior (MoI), the Ministry of Defence (MoD), the Ministry of Municipality, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC), the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE), Lekhwiya, Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), Qatar Media Corporation (QMC), Qatar News Agency (QNA), Al Jazeera Media Network, Al Araby Television Network, Al Rayyan TV, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and ICRC. – **QNA**

# Web Summit Qatar 2026 delivers tangible economic impact: MCIT

By Shaima Sherif  
Staff Reporter

Web Summit Qatar 2026 is translating global conversations into real economic gains, with Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT)-backed startup programmes generating hundreds of millions of riyals and positioning Qatar as a regional launchpad for digital innovation, according to an MCIT official.

Speaking on the sidelines of the summit, Eman al-Kuwari, the director of Digital Innovation at the MCIT, said that the 3rd Web Summit Qatar has clearly demonstrated how strategic engagement with the

global tech ecosystem can translate into tangible economic impact.

"Now we're seeing the third edition, and we have seen the economic impact that it had on Qatar itself," she said, pointing to the direct benefits felt across the local startup and innovation ecosystem.

Al-Kuwari said that the MCIT's role at Web Summit Qatar goes far beyond participation.

The ministry, she said, is using the platform to connect startups with real market opportunities through a structured pipeline that supports companies from the idea stage to global scaling.

"We are participating here with three key programmes that start with incubation, acceleration and scaling," she said. "All of these

paths represent different stages of a startup's life that need to be supported."

Web Summit Qatar 2026 is no longer just a meeting ground for global technology leaders; it is delivering measurable economic outcomes for the country and strengthening Qatar's position in the global digital economy, according to the MCIT.

At the heart of this effort is the Tasmu Accelerator, which targets revenue-generating startups from around the world willing to solve real challenges in Qatar and establish a presence in the region.

According to al-Kuwari, the results speak for themselves.

"Through 130 sales leads, we have generated more than

QR430mn in actual revenue for these startups, in terms of real contracts and opportunities," she said.

In addition, companies supported through MCIT programmes have raised more than QR270mn in funding, underlining investor confidence in Qatar's innovation ecosystem.

The official noted that these outcomes are possible because Qatar's ecosystem is deeply interconnected.

"You see the licensing platforms, the banking services, the government engagement and the financing services, all of us are working together under one umbrella to achieve a single goal of diversifying our economy," al-Kuwari said.

This approach, she added, is central to the Digital Agenda 2030, which the United Nations has recognised as a global best practice for digital transformation.

Beyond startups, al-Kuwari highlighted that Qatar is approaching emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), with a strong focus on trust and responsibility.

"We are among the first countries in the region to have a national AI strategy," she said, adding that ethical guidelines now underpin every stage of AI development and deployment.

Through initiatives such as Go-vAI, the MCIT is bringing together government entities and industry leaders to ensure AI solutions are



Eman al-Kuwari

safe, secure and aligned with national priorities.

Al-Kuwari stressed that people remain at the centre of Qatar's digital transformation, humanising its impact.

"We see that people are at the centre of everything that we're doing," she said. "We're trying to achieve the National Vision 2030 by having a higher quality of life, and digital transformation plays an integral role in that."



Walaa Qassour



Dominic Roblic



The Lamma AI representative.

## Startups shine, leveraging global exposure

From Page 1

Meanwhile, Walaa Qassour, representing Churn Solution from Palestine, spoke about helping subscription-based businesses reduce cancellations and retain customers.

"We are here at Web Summit to have more exposure, to introduce new clients, and to make new partnerships in the Mena (Middle East and North Africa) region, actually in Qatar, and outside," she said.

Qassour added that the summit has already helped the company form new connections and collaborations, accelerating its growth.

Startups addressing niche technological needs also found a home at the summit.

Dominic Roblic, co-founder of VoiceFrom, a Swiss-Slovenian company specialising in simultaneous speech-to-speech interpretation, spoke about launching their new VoiceFrom Pro product, now supporting Arabic and regional dialects.

"We were pleasantly surprised by the amount of interest... from conference attendees, news organisations, and call centre software providers," he said, reflecting the summit's regional relevance.

Organisers, including the MCIT, have made Web Summit Qatar a key milestone in Qatar's innovation journey.

# Doha dazzles tech world at Web Summit Qatar 2026

From Page 1

Bakhtyurin described people as very helpful and open to co-operating with others, and praised the quiet, safe and hassle-free atmosphere of the country, where he can move freely and enjoy quality time.

For business, he said, the summit is a great opportunity.

As a tourist, he loved Doha – particularly the high quality of services, the friendly, welcoming atmosphere and the sense of safety and security everywhere he went.

Michael Jordan, the chief executive of US's Gem Soft, said that this is his third participation at Web Summit Qatar and he believes the event has become a must-attend gathering for industry stakeholders internationally.

He added that side events held alongside the summit help participants build networks and enhance their businesses.

Jordan noted that Doha has developed positively in recent years to become an excellent place to live and an attractive destination

for people from around the world.

Travellers in Doha, he added, have easy access to all GCC countries and can attend a meeting abroad and return the same day, giving Qatar a strong advantage as a hub for business, tourism and living.

Zana Ahmed, founder of Iraq's One Connect, said that Qatar is very attractive for start-ups like his company, with infrastructure and services that are excellent and promising for stronger business and work ecosystems.

The event, he said, has given his company great potential to reach government and private-sector clients and offer them tailor-made information technology (IT) solutions.

Ahmed observed that the Qatar government encourages such businesses and provides strong support within a very positive environment and high quality of life.

Anna Lena Grytz, general manager for international trade affairs at a German trade and investment agency, said that around 21 German IT start-ups

are taking part in Web Summit Qatar.

She described it a great opportunity for them to reach out locally and globally, supported by positive co-operation between the Qatari and German governments.

Grytz described Doha as welcoming and generous, with an excellent atmosphere for a warm lifestyle.

While the country has become an icon of modernity and sophistication, she noted that heritage and traditions are actively integrated into its fabric, citing Souq Waqif as an example.

People in Doha, Grytz added, enjoy life in a safe, convenient and easy-going way and can maintain their privacy even in public and tourist areas, with no sense of harassment or hazard, even late at night.

Karim Helbawi, from Uber Enterprises, stressed that Doha has a great network of roads and excellent transport systems.

He sees strong potential for smart transportation solutions to expand in the country, given its booming economy.

## Doha Festival City to welcome Primark to Qatar later this year

Reinforcing its role as the first destination to bring global brands to Qatar, Doha Festival City has announced the first-to-market opening of Primark later this year, marking a major milestone in the country's retail landscape.

Delivered in partnership with Alshaya Group, Primark's Qatar debut underscores Doha Festival City's long-standing role as Doha's destination for coveted global trends, achieved through attracting internationally recognised brands and serving as the gateway of choice for retailers entering the Qatari market.

The opening builds on Doha Festival City's proven ability to convert brand demand into sustained footfall, loyalty and long-term value.

Primark will open its first and largest store in Qatar at Doha Festival City, spanning three levels, firmly positioning it as a key anchor within the mall's fashion portfolio.

Founded in Ireland and operating hundreds of stores across Europe and the United States, Primark has recently expanded into the Middle East through its partnership with Alshaya Group, with Qatar marking a key next step in the brand's regional growth.

Known globally for accessible, trend-driven fashion across women's, men's, children's and home departments, Primark is expected to attract families, youth and value-seeking shoppers, supporting longer dwell time and cross-shopping across the destination while meeting everyday

wardrobe and family shopping needs.

Primark's arrival aligns with Doha Festival City's wider vision to scale experience-led retail, broaden accessible fashion and home offerings, and reinforce its leadership as Qatar's most established retail and lifestyle destination.

With shoppers visiting weekly and spending up to three hours per visit, Doha Festival City offers the scale and performance required for high-impact first-to-market launches of this significance.

Mohamed ElSharkawy, the associate director for Malls Leasing, said: "The introduction of Primark to Qatar through Doha Festival City reflects our long-term strategy to attract first-to-market global brands that add scale, relevance and sustained value to the retail landscape."

"Our partnership with Alshaya Group builds on a proven track record of delivering successful international entries, while reinforcing Doha Festival City's position as the preferred destination for global retailers seeking confident, high-impact market entry into Qatar," he said.

Primark's debut further demonstrates Doha Festival City's ability to deliver complex, large-format international launches, supported by strong infrastructure, accessibility and proven trading dynamics.

Beyond the immediate impact, the opening is expected to generate positive spillover across adjacent categories, strengthen the wider retail ecosystem and reinforce Doha Festival City's appeal to international brands evaluating expansion into Qatar.



Mohamed ElSharkawy



# Communications minister explores partnerships in digital transformation and innovation

**QNA**  
Doha

HE the Minister of Communications and Information Technology, Mohammed bin Ali bin Mohammed al-Mannai, held a series of meetings with officials attending the Qatar Web Summit 2026 to discuss ways to strengthen international co-operation, exchange expertise, and pursue strategic partnerships in digital transformation and innovation.

The talks centred on artificial intelligence (AI), cloud computing, digital infrastructure, and skills development, while also addressing global trends in emerging technologies and their applications in government. The ministry participated in the



summit through a joint pavilion with the Ministry of Sports and Youth, underscoring Qatar's commitment to supporting digital innovation and positioning itself as a regional hub for technology and entrepreneurship.

As part of the summit, the ministry signed six agreements and strategic partnerships with national and international entities. These included launching a healthcare sector roadmap in collaboration with



the Ministry of Public Health and an agreement with Oracle to expand the dedicated government cloud region and renew support contracts for 2025-28. Other agreements covered



innovation accelerators, support for small and medium sized enterprises, and the development of digital solutions across key sectors. MCIT's participation reflects Qatar's efforts to advance digital

entrepreneurship and accelerate the adoption of modern technologies, particularly AI and digital transformation, in line with the Qatar National Vision 2030 and the country's Digital Agenda 2030. **(QNA)**



## Msheireb Properties, Ooredoo, Honeywell forge partnership for smart city AI-powered platform

**QNA**  
Doha

Msheireb Properties has announced a key collaboration with Ooredoo Qatar and Honeywell to help automate and manage Msheireb Downtown Doha, one of the world's most advanced and intelligent smart cities globally.

Unveiled at the Web Summit Qatar event, this landmark agreement introduces a pioneering Artificial Intelligence-powered platform designed to help optimise urban operations and enhance the quality of life for all residents and visitors. Ooredoo has been appointed as the prime partner managing Operations, while Honeywell will customise its City Suite platform to serve as the technology backbone, integrating thousands of sensors from across the city into a single point of control.

The AI-enabled analytics platforms will be designed to integrate operational performance data from the city's services, while a digital twin of the city infrastructure will enable engineers to model planned updates and reduce system downtime. These elements will be unified into the new AI-powered command centre, enabling live monitoring, predictive maintenance, automated incident management and enhanced operational planning through sophisticated data analytics.

The agreement also includes five years of managed services, helping ensure that the Msheireb Downtown Doha Smart City platform continues to evolve. This long-term collaboration, aligned with Qatar National Vision 2030, supports the country's emergence as a global hub for digital transformation and sustainable urban innovation.

Commenting on the signing, Engineer Faisal al-Malki, Msheireb Properties Chief Operating Officer, said: "This agreement advances our Smart City ecosystem and enhances how we manage and operate Msheireb Downtown Doha. The platform introduces new digital capabilities that improve efficiency, strengthen service quality, and support sustainable urban living. Moreover, this partnership contributes to our district's evolution in intelligent urban living, enabling technologies that offer

tangible benefits to those who live, work, and visit here."

Hassan Ismail al-Emadi, Ooredoo Chief Business Officer, added: "This partnership represents a significant milestone in Qatar's digital transformation journey. By combining our strengths, we are creating a blueprint for the smart cities of tomorrow."

**"This agreement advances our Smart City ecosystem and enhances how we manage and operate Msheireb Downtown Doha"**

Nabil Chegroun, Honeywell Building Automation in the Middle East, Turkiye and Africa (META) Vice-President and General Manager, said: "Honeywell is proud to help lead this flagship smart city project. Our expertise in large-scale smart infrastructure will help deliver a more secure, energy efficient and digitally enhanced environment for those who live, work and visit Msheireb Downtown Doha."

Msheireb Downtown Doha is recognised as a unique smart and sustainable city that harmonises heritage values with cutting-edge technology. This collaboration will integrate more than 650,000 IoT sensors, 10,000 automated basement parking spaces, a Guinness World Record for the largest underground parking lot, 10,000 CCTV cameras and existing facility management systems covering building automation, utilities, security and emergency services.

The new city management platform will deliver predictive analytics to manage traffic, helping enable better event planning and resource allocation. System alarms will be analysed to suggest corrective actions before incidents occur, helping increase efficiency for critical services including heating, ventilation, air conditioning and waste.

By monitoring energy consumption and waste diversion, Msheireb Downtown Doha's sustainability index will be benchmarked against global standards to help maintain leadership in environmental performance. Virtual assistants and automated alerts will help keep residents informed of incidents or restoration updates, helping enhance the tenant experience.

## QF, Scale AI partner to accelerate innovation and nurture tech talent

Scale AI, a global leader in artificial intelligence (AI), is partnering with Qatar Foundation (QF) to expand Qatar's ability to innovate, lead, and nurture a new generation of talent in this transformative field of technology.

As Web Summit Qatar 2026 takes place, a new memorandum of understanding (MoU) paves the way for Scale to provide training, capacity-building, and upskilling programmes to QF staff, students, researchers, and stakeholders, and apply its expertise to QF's focus on AI, which is among its strategic priority areas as it supports Qatar's national AI efforts.

The MoU will also see QF and Scale examine how a human-centric regional hub for AI development and innovation, and the cultivation of Qatar-based talent in this field, can be created within QF's unique ecosystem of knowledge.

Scale AI provides high-quality data and full-stack AI technologies to the world's leading AI model builders, enterprises, and governments, and is a strategic partner of the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology in developing innovative AI projects.

Yousif al-Naama, CEO of QF, said: "The rise of Artificial Intelligence has seen our world reach a transformative point in history, and Qatar Foundation is committed to harnessing its ecosystem in order to leverage the possibilities



that AI creates for the good of society.

"As we generate AI-driven innovation that supports the social and economic development of our nation and region while also benefiting the world, equip our youth for the jobs of the future, and seek to place humanity, ethics, and cultural identity at the heart of the global AI conversation, partnerships are pivotal. We are therefore delighted to be partnering with a true pioneer in Scale AI, so that together we can maximise the potential of this era-defining field of technology to strengthen societies and improve lives."

Trevor Thompson, managing director – Global, Scale AI, said: "Today's MoU is a testament to the momentum Qatar has

achieved in its digital transformation journey.

"Since the start of Scale's partnership with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology in Qatar, we've seen incredible demand to learn and master AI capabilities for the benefit of Qatar and the realisation of Qatar's Third National Development Strategy and Qatar National Vision 2030.

"By partnering with Qatar Foundation, we are accelerating this progress and exploring new ways to deepen Qatar's role as a regional hub for innovation, applied AI development, and talent cultivation."

QF and Scale will explore pathways to provide QF students and alumni with access to AI-focused internships, mentorship, and

potential career opportunities; jointly develop white papers and research briefs on AI-related topics such as the cultural, ethical, and Arabic language aspects of AI; and identify collaboration opportunities in research and other areas.

The MoU also includes Scale holding exploratory workshops with QF entities on an annual basis to assess opportunities for the further integration of AI within QF's education, research and innovation, and community development programmes.

Meanwhile, QF and Scale will co-host innovation activities such as hackathons and workshops designed to nurture AI experimentation and talent, and seek to strengthen the AI talent pipeline between education and industry in Qatar.

## Qatar, Germany look to expand technology, digital economy ties

**QNA**  
Doha

HE Sheikh Jassim bin Mansour bin Jabor al-Thani, Director of the Government Communications Office (GCO) and Chairman of the Permanent Web Summit Organising Committee, met with members of the German delegation taking part in the third edition of the region's fastest-growing technology event, at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre, as part of efforts to expand international partnerships in technology and the digital economy.

The German delegation included Steffen Schutz, State Minister of Digital Affairs and Infrastructure, Free State of Thuringia; Jutta Bieringer, State Secretary and Authorised Representative of the State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern to the Federal Government; Nizar Marouf, Regional Director of German Mittelstand GCC Office; Felix Neugart, CEO of NRW.Global Business - Trade and Investment Agency of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia; Oliver Owczka, German ambassador to Qatar; Christop Ahlhaus, President of BVMW; and Gordon Pelz, Vice-President of BVMW.

Discussions focused on strengthening co-operation in technology, the digital economy, and entrepreneurship, and advancing partnerships between Qatar and Germany's innovation ecosystems to support startups and unlock new investment opportunities.

The strong German presence at this year's Web Summit Qatar follows an MoU signed



Steffen Schutz

last year between the GCO and the German Mittelstand GCC Office, aimed at expanding German companies' participation in the summit and integrating them into Qatar's startup and investment ecosystem.

This year's Web Summit Qatar features over 200 German companies, nearly double last year's participation, in addition to investors, entrepreneurs, and innovators, highlighting the increasing interest of German firms in Qatar's technology market and the summit's role as a global platform that connects ideas with opportunities and transforms partnerships into future-focused initiatives.

HE Sheikh Jassim bin Mansour bin Jabor al-Thani said: "The strong presence of German companies at Web Summit Qatar reflects the depth of Qatar-Germany relations and the effectiveness of institutional agreements in turning strategic partnerships into real and influential participation on the global stage."

He added: "The MoU with the German Mittelstand GCC Office creates a practical pathway to deepen German companies' engagement and unlock new co-operation in innovation and technology, reinforcing entrepreneurship ecosystems and long-term partnerships between the two countries."

Nizar Maarouf said: "Web Summit Qatar serves as a practical gateway for German companies to connect with regional partners and investors and explore growth opportunities in Qatar, especially in advanced technologies and digital innovation."

He added: "The MoU signed with the GCO is designed to turn growing German participation into actionable partnerships, allowing German SMEs to build long-term co-operation with Qatar's innovation ecosystem." He also confirmed plans for an expanded German presence at the next edition of Web Summit Qatar.

The meeting is part of Qatar's broader efforts to cement its standing as a hub for innovation and technology, and advance Web Summit Qatar as a global platform for dialogue, partnerships, and digital economy growth, aligned with the country's vision to expand partnerships and build a knowledge-based economy.

# Al Jazeera launches ‘Core Project’

By Joseph Varghese  
Staff Reporter

Al Jazeera Media Network has announced a new initiative named ‘Core Project’, a comprehensive rethinking process, reviewing the role, responsibility and purpose of news and information media in the digital age.

“The process, which we call the ‘Core Project’, is not just a technological initiative or a new platform. It is a re-evaluation of the fundamental ideas that underpin our journalism itself.

“We plan to combine technology with ethical and professional responsibility to give journalists the tools to provide context to report responsibly on breaking news, to separate facts from biases, and to maximise the power of objective analysis and understanding,” announced Sheikh Nasser bin Faisal bin Khalifa al-

Thani, director general, Al Jazeera Media Network at the ongoing Web Summit Qatar 2026.

Addressing participants on the topic ‘The Future of Journalism and Technology’, Sheikh Nasser said the new initiative aims to reduce repetitive, automated tasks, allowing journalists to focus on analysis, interpretation, and high-value editorial work.

“At the heart of this project are three core principles which we believe define the true role of journalism today: The ‘Now’; ‘The Meaning’ and ‘People’. The ‘Now’ refers to reporting events accurately as they happen, to be a witness to events, with objectivity, precision, and without spin,” he explained.

“‘The Meaning’ is about unravelling events, linking them to their background, identifying their causes and their consequences, reinforcing isolated facts with clear insight. And by ‘People’ we don’t

mean passive consumers or simple numbers, but conscious actors, understanding, making decisions and engaging responsibly with events and with life,” continued the director general.

According to the official, these three principles form a practical framework for balancing speed with depth and technology with responsibility.

“The world today no longer suffers from a lack of information, but rather from the difficulty of making sense of its overabundance. The challenge is no longer accessing information, or how fast it travels, but how well we interpret it, how clearly we place it in a proper context,” he highlighted.

“The challenge we face today is not a battle between journalism and technology,” he said. “It’s rather an opportunity to align them through shared responsibility. Resilient journalism – swift but not shallow, modern without abandon-

ing its values – can restore context to the news, create space for debate, and a human dimension to disagreements.

“The evolution of journalism cannot be separated from profound changes driven by digital platforms and artificial intelligence within the public sphere,” he pointed out.

Sheikh Nasser noted that ethics-based technology – designed around people, conscious of the impact of algorithms, balancing engagement with meaning – can become a true partner in deepening understanding, rather than widening division.

“It can expand connection, rather than entrenching isolation. When responsible journalism meets ethical technology, they can foster understanding, bridge divides, and empower a world capable of dialogue, resistant to hatred, and guided by knowledge, rather than provocation,” he underlined.



Sheikh Nasser bin Faisal bin Khalifa al-Thani. **PICTURE:** Shaji Kayamkulam

“It’s a world that listens before judging, understands before dividing, and sees diversity as strength. This is the path we’re pursuing, the world we seek to create. We call for innovation to be channelled to serve understanding, and for journalism and technology to stand as strong pillars in a more peaceful, safe, and connected world,” concluded Sheikh Nasser.

## MCIT’s TASMU Accelerator picks five projects to co-develop with Mowasalat



The co-operation agreement was signed by Eman al-Kuwari and Dr Hamed al-Shaibani at Web Summit Qatar 2026.

TASMU Accelerator, an initiative of the TASMU Smart Qatar programme under the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), announced the selection of five proof-of-concept projects presented by four startups from the third cohort of the Accelerator, to be co-developed with Mowasalat (Karwa).

The co-operation agreement was signed by Eman al-Kuwari, director of the Digital Innovation Department at MCIT; and Dr Hamed al-Shaibani, executive director of the Information and Communications Technology Department at Mowasalat (Karwa) at Web Summit Qatar 2026.

During the next phase, the practical viability of the solutions will be tested, their impact on operational efficiency measured, and digital transformation across Mowasalat’s core operations further advanced.

The selected projects include an advanced fuel optimisation solution piloted on four buses within the operational fleet, in addition to the development of digital platforms for document management and contractor collaboration across engineering departments.

The projects also include digital solutions for facilities management and fleet procurement operations, a comprehensive e-permit solution for premises access control, and machine learning integration within business applications and data infrastructure to support informed, data-driven decision-making.

Al-Kuwari said: “These proof-of-concept projects exemplify a core role of the TASMU

Accelerator in enabling startups to test their technology solutions within real-world operational environments, in direct partnership with sector entities.

“This collaboration with Mowasalat reflects the ministry’s commitment to connecting digital innovation with operational needs and translating innovative solutions into practical, scalable applications. These pilots contribute to accelerating the adoption of digital technologies, enhancing operational efficiency, and advancing digital transformation across vital sectors, in alignment with national priorities.”

Dr al-Shaibani said: “Through our partnership with TASMU, Mowasalat is enabling innovation in smart mobility and sustainable transport by supporting international startups with real-world operational expertise and a live transport ecosystem. This collaboration accelerates scalable solutions that enhance efficiency, streamline operations, and deliver tangible CO<sub>2</sub> reductions across the transport sector.”

As part of the collaboration, TASMU Accelerator organised a series of introductory meetings and pitch sessions, during which startups presented their proposed technology solutions to specialised operational teams at Mowasalat.

Following a structured evaluation process, five technology proposals were selected to advance to the pilot implementation phase, with the objective of validating their practical viability, measuring their impact on operational efficiency, and supporting digital transformation within the company’s core operations.

## TASMU Accelerator signs pact with DHL Express Qatar

TASMU Accelerator, an initiative of the TASMU Smart Qatar programme under the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), signed a partnership agreement with DHL Express Qatar at Web Summit Qatar 2026.

The agreement was signed by Eman al-Kuwari, director of the Digital Innovation Department at MCIT; and Henry Fares, managing director of DHL Express Qatar to serve as a sector expert for TASMU Accelerator.

The announcement was made during a joint press conference held as part of Web Summit Qatar 2026.

The partnership aims to support startups participating in TASMU Accelerator by enabling them to benefit from DHL’s Express Qatar operational expertise and connecting the technology solutions they develop with real market needs, particularly in the fields of logistics, supply chain, and related sectors.

Under the co-operation agreement, DHL Express Qatar will contribute to providing practical opportunities for testing and developing technology solutions by sharing its operational expertise and offering sector insights grounded in real-world applied experience.



The agreement was signed by Eman al-Kuwari (right) and Henry Fares at Web Summit Qatar 2026.

This will help startups enhance the readiness of their solutions, validate their applicability, and support their expansion and market entry opportunities.

This partnership is part of the integrated ecosystem approach adopted by the TASMU Accelerator, which focuses

on connecting digital innovation with real-world operational challenges and strengthening collaboration between government entities and private sector leaders, contributing to accelerating digital transformation and supporting the effective and sustainable growth of technology startups.

## TASMU Accelerator in partnership agreement with PwC Middle East

TASMU Accelerator, an initiative of the TASMU Smart Qatar Programme under the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), announced the signing of a partnership agreement with PwC Middle East to join as Cohort Champion for the fourth cohort of the TASMU Accelerator.

The agreement was signed during Web Summit Qatar 2026 by Eman al-Kuwari, director of the Digital Innovation Department at MCIT; and Yazen al-Safi, representing PwC Middle East.

Under the partnership agreement, PwC Middle East will present a cash prize of QR200,000 to be awarded to the best startup within the fourth cohort (2026), in addition to providing strategic support to startups within the fourth cohort that includes access to leading specialised mentors and industry experts, along with guidance on business development strategies and market readiness.

This partnership reflects a shared commitment to empowering high-potential startups and strengthening



The agreement was signed during Web Summit Qatar 2026 by Eman al-Kuwari and Yazen al-Safi.

Qatar’s position as a regional hub for digital innovation and entrepreneurship.

The agreement also represents an effective model of collaboration between government initiatives and private sector leaders, contributing

to enhancing the support ecosystem for technology startups, accelerating their growth pathways, and transforming innovative ideas into market-ready solutions, in alignment with the objectives of Qatar’s Digital Agenda 2030.

## Web Summit session highlights semiconductor supply chain risks

QNA  
Doha

A specialised session at the Web Summit Qatar 2026 yesterday examined vulnerabilities in advanced semiconductor supply chains and explored prospects for international co-operation, amid surging global demand for chips and the need to build resilient supply networks to support growth and innovation.

Discussions focused on strengthening partnerships, investment, and research and development to mitigate supply risks, while enabling regions such as the Middle East to establish themselves as emerging players in the global semiconductor ecosystem.

CEO of the Investment Promotion Agency Qatar, Sheikh Ali Al-Waleed al-Thani, said the country is moving toward a knowledge-



based economy with a strong emphasis on human capital development and investment in advanced technology sectors, particularly semiconductors, noting that the semiconductor sector presents a global challenge due to the com-

plexity of the value chain.

He noted that Qatar is prioritising chip design over manufacturing, given its reliance on skilled talent, and is investing heavily in education to attract and nurture expertise, adding that the country

aims to be a destination for talent, not just a transit point.

He highlighted three key factors for the success of new projects: competitive sustainable energy, access to capital from both public and private sectors,

and human capital development locally and regionally. He pointed out that Qatar’s national incentive programme, managed by the Investment Promotion Agency, currently supports 18 diverse projects with funding of around \$1bn.

Executive Vice-President and Chief Global Development, Partnerships and Venturing Officer at Imec Center, Max Mirgoli, described semiconductors as a strategic industry now as vital as basic commodities.

He noted that despite decades of existence, the sector remained largely outside public attention until the Covid-19 pandemic exposed its importance, when chip shortages disrupted car and appliance production.

Artificial intelligence, he added, has further underscored the centrality of semiconductors, with the industry valued at about \$700bn in

2024 and projected to reach \$1.6tn by 2030, growth in just a few years equal to that of the past four decades combined.

Senior Vice-President, Vertical Business Units and President of EMEA (Europe, Middle East, and Africa) at Analog Devices, Martin Cotter, said the semiconductor sector is experiencing an unprecedented acceleration, with data now considered “the new oil” of modern industries.

He emphasised that progress in semiconductors is no longer limited to hardware, but is directly tied to the ability of data centres to harness big data for solving real-world problems. He stressed the importance of advanced technologies, energy management, and data centre infrastructure, noting that maintaining efficiency and sustainability requires specialised expertise within a complex, multi-layered ecosystem.

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GULF TIMES

‘Fast-up, fast-down’: Volatile gold prices rattle global markets

A wave of investor demand for precious metals over the past year has clocked record after record, shocking seasoned traders and driving exceptional price volatility. That accelerated in January, as investors piled into the time-honoured havens amid concerns about currency debasement and the US Federal Reserve's independence, trade wars and geopolitical tensions.

Gold suffered its biggest slide in four decades last Friday and silver posted a record intraday decline in a stark reversal of the rally that lifted prices to all-time highs.

Gold fell more than 12% to slump below \$5,000 an ounce in its biggest intraday decline since the early 1980s, according to a Bloomberg report. Silver plunged as much as 36%, a record intraday decline, as the selloff swept through the broader metals markets.

Prices extended falls on Monday as increased CME Group's margin requirements added to the selling pressure following last week's selloff sparked by Kevin Warsh's nomination as the incoming Fed chair. But on Tuesday, the two metals rebounded, after the historic collapse from all-time highs lured dip-buyers back to precious metals.

Spot gold climbed as much as 6.2% to near \$4,950 an ounce in early trade, recovering somewhat from its worst rout in more than a decade. Friday's selloff was the biggest shock to the rally, outdoing the slump in October. The greenback's rally undercut sentiment among investors who had been piling into metals after the US President Donald Trump signalled a willingness to let the currency weaken.

Traders regard Warsh as the toughest inflation fighter among the finalists, raising expectations of monetary policy that would underpin the dollar and weaken greenback-priced bullion.

Gold suffered its biggest slide in four decades last Friday and silver posted a record intraday decline in a stark reversal of the rally that lifted prices to all-time highs

Gold's move "validates the cautionary tale of fast-up, fast-down," said Christopher Wong, a strategist at Oversea-Chinese Banking Corp. While reports of Warsh's nomination were a trigger, a correction was overdue, he said. "It's like one of those excuses markets are waiting for to unwind those parabolic moves"

Large buyers and institutional investors usually buy gold from big banks. Prices in the spot market are determined by real-time supply and demand dynamics.

China, India, the Middle East and the US are other major gold-trading centres.

Investors can also get exposure to gold via futures exchanges, where people buy or sell a particular commodity at a fixed price on a particular date in the future.

COMEX, part of the New York Mercantile Exchange, is the largest gold futures market in terms of trading volumes.

Rising interest from investment funds in recent years has been a major factor behind bullion's price moves, with sentiment driven by market trends, news and global events fuelling speculative buying or selling of gold.

Gold is a popular hedge against currency market volatility. It has traditionally moved in the opposite direction to the US dollar, since weakness in the US currency makes dollar-priced gold cheaper for holders of other currencies and vice versa.

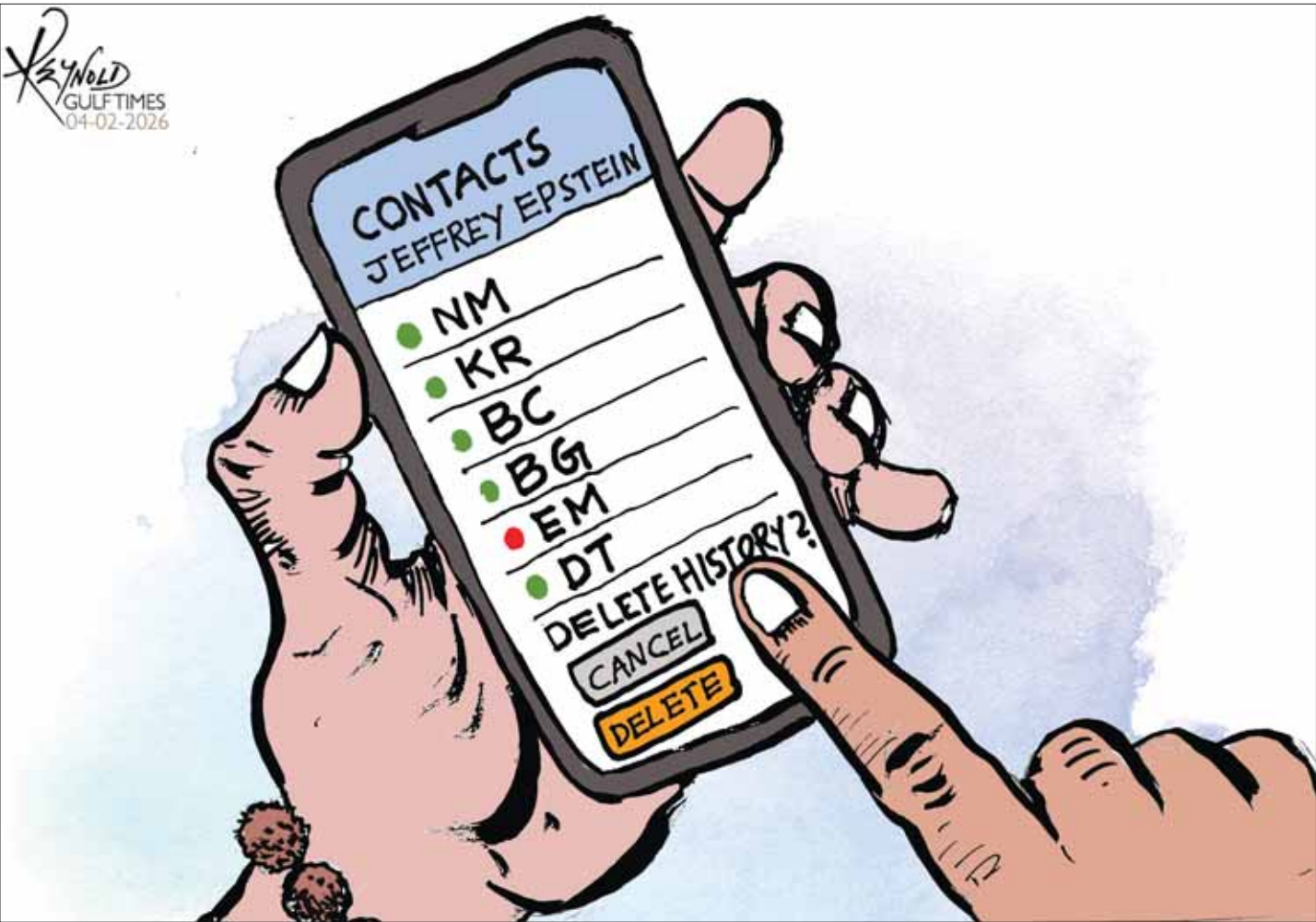
Gold demand surged to a record high in 2025, as investors and central banks flocked to the safe-haven asset to guard against Trump's "unpredictable policies."

The year was marked by Trump's tariff onslaught against major trading partners, including China, the European Union and India.

Gold purchases hit all-time highs in both volume and value last year, with demand exceeding 5,000 tonnes and value reaching \$555bn, a 45% increase year on year, the World Gold Council said. "Uncertainty" has been the key driver of gold's strong performance, said WGC analyst Krishan Gopaul. "On a geopolitical front, there were obviously concerns about the actions of the new Trump administration."

Adding to that, Trump's criticism of US monetary policy has fuelled concerns about the Federal Reserve's independence and contributed to a weakening dollar.

Those fears have led central banks to significantly increase their gold reserves.



QRDI seeks to enhance scientific research, strengthen Qatar's knowledge-based economy

QNA  
Doha

Secretary-General of the Qatar Research, Development and Innovation Council (QRDI) Engineer Omar Ali al-Ansari has said that the QRDI is focusing, during the ongoing Web Summit Qatar 2026, on empowering startups, creating high-quality investment opportunities, and expanding co-operation with major international institutions in vital sectors including artificial intelligence (AI), sustainability, and health.

In an interview with the Qatar News Agency (QNA), al-Ansari said that these initiatives reflect the QRDI's commitment to connecting Qatar's innovation ecosystem with the world and propelling it towards a more prosperous future.

He added that the partnership between the QRDI and the Summit aims to build a bridge connecting innovators in Qatar with global platforms, thus contributing to strengthening the national innovation ecosystem. He noted that the QRDI has been a strategic partner of Web Summit Qatar since 2024.

He said that the QRDI leverages this global platform to expand areas of co-operation and create high-quality opportunities. He pointed out that, with the development of this partnership, Web Summit has transformed into a platform for launching strategic projects and bringing together local and international experts in research and innovation, along with leading figures from the government and industry sectors and startup founders.

Strategic partner

QRDI is a strategic partner of Web Summit Qatar 2026 for the third consecutive time and also plays a key role in the Corporate Innovation Summit, the high-level event that preceded the Summit and brought together leading business executives, decision-makers, and innovators from around the world.

Al-Ansari said that the QRDI is no longer merely a supporter of research and innovation funding, but has become a vital link connecting the public and private sectors and linking universities with research centres, contributing to building an integrated system that supports shaping Qatar's knowledge-based future.

Al-Ansari noted that the QRDI has established a broad network of partnerships with several key national institutions, including Hamad International Airport, Hassad Food, Ooredoo Qatar, and Milaha, in addition to the Hamad Medical Corporation's Itqan Center and Qatar Media City.

These partnerships have also been strengthened through joint initiatives with the Ministry of Labour, Qatari Diar, and several other state institutions that support innovation and entrepreneurship. He noted that QRDI has also sought to expand its international presence, becoming a partner with several leading research institutions, technology companies, and innovation networks, with the aim of exchanging expertise and building strategic partnerships that serve future needs. In this context, he said that the QRDI has established prominent international partnerships, including with the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), the Qatar-Spain Innovation Program (QASIP), and Alchemist Doha, as well as collaborating with institutions in Sweden and Denmark, a partnership agreement with a Singaporean institution, and other initiatives that promote research and innovation exchange globally.

Al-Ansari affirmed that the QRDI, established in 2018, operates from a clear vision to bolster Qatar's efforts to become a global leader in scientific research and



Eng Omar Ali al-Ansari, Secretary-General of the Qatar Research, Development and Innovation Council

innovation, and to build a competitive knowledge-based economy grounded in creativity and technology.

He said that the QRDI represents a pivotal strategic step towards building an integrated national system that supports researchers and innovators, unifies national efforts, and positions Qatar on the global innovation map. Al-Ansari emphasised that the Council focuses its efforts on empowering innovative researchers and entrepreneurs through three main pillars: funding through dedicated programmes to support research and innovation and cultivate talent and expertise; co-ordinating the implementation of the national innovation agenda and ensuring the integration of efforts by all stakeholders, and maintaining continuous communication to strengthen ties within the innovation ecosystem both locally and globally, and to raise awareness of Qatar's progress in this field.

The QRDI launched several pioneering national initiatives, including the Qatar Open Innovation Program, which connects national challenges with innovative solutions from startups and researchers worldwide, and the Small and Medium Enterprises Innovation Grant (SBIG), which empowers companies to grow and lead the future through innovation.

These initiatives also include the Rising Innovators Award (RIA), which supports applied research of national priority and provides a global platform for young innovators to showcase their ideas, as well as Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP-Q), which fosters collaboration between academic institutions and industry to ensure effective knowledge transfer.

Qatar National Vision 2030

All these efforts reflect the Qatar Research, Development and Innovation Council's commitment to achieving Qatar National Vision 2030 and building an integrated research and innovation ecosystem that drives economic diversification and establishes the foundations for a robust and thriving knowledge economy.

In this context, the Corporate Innovation Summit complements the QRDI's efforts, bringing together leading figures and innovators to discuss the most pressing challenges facing the business world.

It offers a full-day networking experience, including advanced training sessions, to engage with pioneers shaping the future of business in the 21st century. The Web Summit is one of the world's leading events in technology and innovation. The Qatar edition is the flagship event for the Middle East and North Africa region, aiming to establish Qatar as a global hub for innovation and entrepreneurship, and to enhance its position as a platform that brings together

global investment, advanced technology, and collaboration between international and local institutions.

Regarding the key achievements, QRDI Secretary-General Omar Ali al-Ansari indicated that since 2018 the QRDI has played a pivotal role in transforming innovative research ideas and projects into practical and sustainable solutions aimed at improving the quality of life of individuals and protecting the environment. He pointed out that among the achievements that have been made is the development of innovation communities and the consolidation of the national orientation, as the QRDI has succeeded through this vital field in building an effective and interconnected network, which includes more than 760 registered members within its communities through the Innovation Lighthouse (InnoLight) platform.

In parallel with these efforts, the QRDI also committed to developing a comprehensive national strategy to ensure that innovation is consistent with national objectives by involving more than 90 organisations, entities and research centres in the strategy update process, in addition to conducting more than 30 external consultations with various governmental, industrial and academic sectors, to ensure inclusiveness and integration.

To reinforce this trend, he said that the QRDI organised a specialised workshop to anticipate the future of artificial intelligence, with the active participation of more than 40 organisations, reflecting the QRDI's keenness to build a national consensus on research and innovation priorities.

National capabilities

Alongside these efforts, the QRDI continued to work on developing research, development and innovation talents. In terms of building national capabilities, the QRDI paid great attention to developing young and professional talents. The QRDI received more than 560 applications within student support programmes, and more than 130 outstanding projects and students were honoured.

He added that specialised training programmes such as the Government Innovation Leadership Program, the Corporate Innovation Leadership Program, and training programmes for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) witnessed the participation of more than 400 individuals, reflecting the expansion of the scope of our programmes in this field.

He indicated that, as part of supporting student innovation, the QRDI attracted more than 1,500 students through the NSRIE 2025 exhibition, where they presented 798 innovative projects from 137 schools, while 200 students from 40 schools participated in the FameLab programme. He noted that last year outstanding student projects were selected to represent the State of Qatar in the ISEF and ITEX 2026 international competitions.

In addition to efforts to enhance the environment that supports research and innovation and protect research outputs, al-Ansari pointed out that the QRDI has taken several strategic steps in this field. The first Intellectual Property Management Clinic for SMEs in Qatar was established in co-operation with the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), which provided vital support to startups and innovators.

He pointed out that, in line with local capacity-building efforts, the "Mumaken" programme has successfully trained and certified more than 40 intellectual property officials and managers, thus enhancing national expertise in this strategic field.

Secretary-General of the QRDI Engineer Omar Ali al-Ansari concluded his remarks to QNA by discussing the plans and objectives that the QRDI is working to achieve locally and internationally.

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TRADE

EU chases rare earths deal with Washington

European officials hope to clinch a deal on rare earths during talks today with the US administration on the minerals essential to industries including defence. Washington is hosting the first ministerial meeting aimed at strengthening and diversifying critical mineral supply chains. The European Union's industry chief Stephane Sejourne will represent the bloc during the discussions hosted by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio. The EU wants a critical minerals partnership with the US to check China's influence. It also hopes such an agreement would help avoid a fight with Washington over resources from other parts of the world, such as Australia. - Reuters

SETBACK

Nasa's Artemis II moon mission slips to March

Nasa pushed its Artemis II mission to March after wrapping up a launch rehearsal that uncovered issues with the massive Space Launch System rocket's fuelling process, the latest delay for the mission to fly four astronauts around the moon and back. The US space agency had been planning to launch the four Artemis II astronauts sometime this month, pending the outcome of a 49-hour launch countdown rehearsal in Florida at Nasa's Kennedy Space Center. "With the conclusion of the wet dress rehearsal yesterday, we are moving off the February launch window and targeting March for the earliest possible launch of Artemis II," Nasa said. -AFP

CRIME

Teacher stabbed by pupil in southern France school

An art teacher was in a critical condition after she was stabbed several times by a 14-year-old pupil during class in a middle school in Sanary-sur-Mer, in southern France, yesterday, the local Toulon prosecutor said. The 60-year-old teacher was stabbed three to four times in the torso with a knife in her classroom yesterday afternoon, Raphael Balland told reporters. The pupil was arrested and was being detained on suspicion of attempted murder, he added. No religious nor political motive could be found for the attack, but there had been tensions between the pupil and the teacher, Balland said. The attacker had no criminal record. - AFP

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Pakistan plans Benghazi consulate

Pakistan is in talks to open a consulate in the eastern Libyan city of Benghazi, three sources with knowledge of the matter said. Libya descended into turmoil after a 2011 Nato-backed uprising toppled Muammar Gaddafi and has been divided into eastern and western authorities since a 2014 civil war. The UN-recognised government in Tripoli controls the west, while Libyan National Army leader Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar's forces based in Benghazi hold the east and south, including major oilfields. Islamabad would be joining a small group of countries with a diplomatic presence in Benghazi. Haftar discussed the move with officials during a Pakistan visit, sources said. - Reuters

Middle East needs long-term solution, UAE says ahead of US-Iran crisis talks

Reuters  
Dubai

The United Arab Emirates yesterday urged Iran and the US to use the resumption of nuclear talks this week to resolve a standoff that has led to mutual threats of air strikes, emphasising that the Middle East does not need another war. Iran and the US will discuss Iran's nuclear programme on Friday in Turkey, Iranian and US officials said on Monday. US President Donald Trump said that with big US warships heading to Iran, "bad things" would probably happen if a deal could not be reached. A source familiar with the situation said yesterday that Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner would take part in the talks, along with US special envoy Steve Witkoff and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi. The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Kushner's plans. Ministers from other countries in the region are also expected to attend. An Iranian diplomatic source said Tehran's view of the talks is neither optimistic nor pessimistic, adding that the Islamic Republic's defensive capabilities are non-negotiable and that it is ready for any scenario.

"It remains to be seen whether the US also intends to conduct serious, result-oriented negotiations or not," the source said. Iranian sources have said Trump is also seeking to limit Iran's ballistic missile programme, which Iranian officials say is an essential component of the country's defence. Earlier the UAE said the region cannot afford another conflict. "I think that the region has gone through various calamitous confrontations," the UAE president's adviser Anwar Gargash told a panel at the World Governments Summit in Dubai. "I don't think we need another one, but I would like to see direct Iranian-American negotiations leading to understandings so that we don't have these issues every other day." Iran should rebuild its relationship with Washington to reach a wider geo-strategic deal which could help Tehran repair its economy ravaged by US sanctions, Gargash said. In June, the US struck Iranian nuclear targets. Since then, Tehran has said its uranium enrichment work – which it says is for peaceful, not military purposes – has stopped. Recent satellite imagery of two of the targeted sites, Isfahan and Natanz, appears to show new roofing over two destroyed buildings but no other signs of rebuilding, according to the imagery provided by Planet

Labs. The meeting in Istanbul aims to revive diplomacy over the long-running dispute about Iran's nuclear programme and dispel fears of a new regional war. Trump has demanded nuclear concessions from Iran and sent a flotilla to its coast. He said last week Iran was "seriously talking", while Tehran's top security official Ali Larijani said arrangements for negotiations were under way. The priority of the Istanbul talks is to avoid conflict and de-escalate tension, a regional official said. Iranian sources said last week that Trump had demanded three conditions for resumption of talks: Zero enrichment of uranium in Iran, limits on Tehran's ballistic missile programme and ending its support for Iranian proxies. Iran has long said all three demands are unacceptable infringements of its sovereignty, but two Iranian officials said the government saw the ballistic missile programme, rather than uranium enrichment, as the bigger obstacle. One Iranian official said: "Diplomacy is ongoing. For talks to resume, Iran says there should not be preconditions and that it is ready to show flexibility on uranium enrichment, including handing over 400kg of highly enriched uranium (HEU), accepting zero enrichment under a consortium arrangement as a solution."



US President Donald Trump and his Colombian counterpart Gustavo Petro walk together at the White House, in Washington, DC, yesterday.

Trump, Colombia's Petro meet at White House

Reuters  
Washington/Bogota

US President Donald Trump and Colombian President Gustavo Petro began their first meeting yesterday, a White House encounter testing whether they can reach a lasting detente despite clashing ideologies and reputations for unpredictability. Trump, who has voiced a desire for American dominance over all of Latin America, has in recent months had an up-and-down relationship with Petro, a

former anti-imperialist guerrilla who was elected Colombia's president in 2022. In October, Trump called Petro an "illegal drug leader" though he provided no evidence, and in January, he mooted military action against the longtime ally, which he has accused of failing to control the narcotics trade. Petro, for his part, has been harshly critical of Trump. He has said the Trump administration's deadly strikes on alleged drug boats amount to war crimes and he described the US operation last month deposing Venezuelan leader Nicolas

Maduro as a "kidnapping." In January, the two leaders held a phone call that both described positively, a surprise thaw that resulted in Petro's invitation to Washington. Trump told reporters on Monday that Petro's tone had changed of late, implying that he had become more acquiescent after the Maduro raid. "We're gonna have a good meeting," Trump said. Still, if the two men have anything in common, it is that they behave unpredictably, speak elliptically and change opinions quickly.

Teen swims four hours to save family lost at sea off Australia

A 13-year-old boy recounted yesterday how he swam for four hours through choppy waters off western Australia to get help for his family in a feat hailed by rescuers as "superhuman". The boy, named in local media as Austin Appelbee, made it across 4kms of ocean to raise the alarm after his mother and two younger siblings were swept out to sea. He had gone out kayaking and paddle-boarding on the water Friday afternoon with his family. But the waves soon grew, flipping their boards and filling their kayak with water as they were dragged further out into the ocean. "I was really scared," the young teen told reporters. "I was just thinking in my head, like thinking I was going to make it through. But I was also thinking about all my friends at school," he said. "I just said: 'Alright, not today, not today, not today. I have to keep on going.'"

Japan battles deadly snowfall as 30 die



People remove snow near a house in Aomori, northeastern Japan, as heavy snow continues to hit the region. Soldiers and swarms of snow ploughs battled in Japan yesterday to clear record-breaking snowfalls that have buried some northern and western cities, as the death toll rose to 30 from winter storms. Japan regularly receives some of the highest snowfall in the world, making it a top destination for winter sports, but this year's bitter conditions could dent turnout in Sunday's general elections, the first in 36 years scheduled in midwinter.

China warns Panama after CK Hutchison contract ended

Reuters  
Beijing

China yesterday warned Panama there would be "heavy prices" to pay after a court ruling there annulled Hong Kong-based CK Hutchison's contract to operate two ports at the Panama Canal. China's Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office called the ruling by Panama's Supreme Court "absurd," "shameful and pathetic," and vowed to defend the interests of Chinese firms. Panamanian authorities did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Last week's court ruling annulled a key contract that Panama Ports Company, a CK Hutchison subsidiary, has held since the 1990s to operate container terminals at the canal's Pacific and Atlantic entrances.

The legal decision, which cited constitutional violations and concerns over public interest, was seen as a win for Washington amid intensifying US-China rivalry over the control of global trade routes. The ruling threatens to disrupt the Hong Kong conglomerate's proposed \$23bn sale of 43 ports in 23 countries, including the two at the Panama Canal, to a consortium led by BlackRock and Mediterranean Shipping Company. "The ruling ignored the facts, breached trust, and seriously damaged the legitimate rights and interests of enterprises in Hong Kong, China," the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office said on its social media account. "China has sufficient means and tools, and sufficient strength and ability to defend a fair and just international economic and trade order," the office said.

Tearful Gazans finally reunite after limited Rafah reopening

AFP  
Rafah, Palestinian Territories

Gazans long-separated from their loved ones shed tears of joy after the limited reopening of the Rafah crossing with Egypt allowed a handful to finally return to the war-shattered territory. Jubilant crowds filmed on their phones as they flocked around a bus carrying returnees to Nasser Hospital in the southern city of Khan Yunis late in the night on Monday. AFP footage showed a man holding a young child up to the window to greet those arriving,

while women wept as they were at last able to embrace. But for some of those re-entering Gaza, the return home was bittersweet. "We were exhausted from this humiliating journey," said Rotana al-Riqib, a Palestinian in her thirties who had returned from Egypt through Rafah. "The Israelis took us to the crossing – me, my mother and another woman from Khan Yunis – and interrogated us," she added. "They don't let us bring in anything. They confiscated everything we had, even my children's belongings. They only left us some clothes." The crossing, which is Gaza's

only gateway to the outside world that does not lead to Israel, had been largely closed since Israeli forces seized control of it in May 2024 during the war with Hamas. Around two dozen people, instead of the expected 200, passed through the key border crossing in both directions on its first day open, sources on both sides of the border said. "They don't want a large number of people to return to Gaza," Riqib said. "Rather, they want a large number to leave," she added, referring to the Israeli authorities. Egypt has repeatedly warned of plans to displace Palestinians from Gaza. According to media reports, it

has demanded that the number of those exiting Gaza per day is equal to those returning. Ali Shaath, the head of a Palestinian technocratic committee established to oversee the day-to-day governance of Gaza, said Rafah's reopening offered a "window of hope" for the territory devastated by two years of war. Around 150 people had been due to leave the territory on Monday, and 50 to enter it, according to Egyptian officials. But only 12 Palestinians – nine women and three children – were allowed to return to Gaza from Egypt, according to the territory's interior ministry and a Palestinian official at the border.

The ministry, which operates under Hamas authority, said eight people had departed Gaza. A source on the Egyptian side of the border, however, said 12 people – five injured and seven companions – were admitted into Egypt from Gaza. "Things were very difficult, and inspections were taking place everywhere," said Samira Said, who travelled back to Gaza through Rafah. Rafah's reopening, long-demanded by the United Nations and aid groups, is a key part of US President Donald Trump's truce plan for Gaza, where humanitarian conditions remain dire. For the scores of sick and injured in the territory, its reopening offers a lifeline for the pos-

sibility of receiving care in Egypt. The director of Gaza City's Al-Shifa Hospital, Mohammed Abu Salmiya, said on Monday there were 20,000 patients in the territory in urgent need of treatment, including 4,500 children. Gaza City resident Umm Mohamed Abu Shaqfa, 37, said her 11-year-old daughter needed treatment for a blood disorder which was not available in the Palestinian territory. "We are still waiting to travel through the Rafah crossing for treatment in Egypt, opening the crossing is a glimmer of hope," she said. "Every day, I go to the ministry of health office and the World Health Organisation to check if my daughter's name is on the list."

PM visits Art Basel Qatar



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani paid a visit to Art Basel Qatar yesterday. Held at M7, Qatar's epicentre for innovation & entrepreneurship in design, fashion & tech, the exhibition focuses on design, fashion, and technology. During the visit, HE the Prime Minister toured the exhibition pavilions, viewing a number of contemporary sculptures, paintings, and other rich artworks by participating artists. These pieces reflect the development of Qatar's cultural landscape and its position as a regional and international art and cultural hub. (QNA)



'Loudest Grain' wins Media City Qatar's 'Next in Arts' artwork at Art Basel Qatar



HE Sheikh Abdulla bin Ali al-Thani, Chairman of Media City Qatar, Yasamin Shaikhi and Hamad Omar A al-Mannai, CEO of Media City Qatar with the art work.

By Joseph Varghese  
Staff Reporter

The 'Loudest Grain' by Yasamin Shaikhi, is the winning artwork of Media City Qatar's 'Next in Arts' programme. Shaikhi, an interdisciplinary designer and researcher, holds a BFA in Interior Design and an MFA in Design from Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar (VCUarts Qatar) and works across material research, design, and critical inquiry. Media City Qatar unveiled the art piece at a private presentation during the show week of Art Basel Qatar, in the presence of HE Sheikh Abdulla bin Ali al-Thani, Chairman of Media City Qatar, and several other distinguished guests. The reveal brought together national leadership alongside international cultural leaders, collectors, and industry figures, reinforcing Media City Qatar's role in connecting emerging creative practice from the country with leading global cultural platforms.

The Loudest Grain was selected as the inaugural work of 'Next in Arts', Media City Qatar's three-year programme exploring the intersection of art and media. Developed in collaboration with Art Basel Qatar, the programme is designed as a sustained platform to support emerging creative voices through experimentation, visibility, and international engagement. The first edition, themed 'Where Art Meets Media', features a work selected by a joint jury representing Media City Qatar, Art Basel Qatar, VCUarts Qatar, and Qatar Museums. Sheikh Abdulla said that it was only a few months ago that Art Basel Qatar was announced. "I am happy to see global partners and global audience here with us. It is great to see the unbelievable amount of work put in to make it happen here," he noted. Speaking to Gulf Times, Shaikhi said the 'Loudest Grain' begins with a single grain of rice, an everyday material associated with sustenance, repetition, and survival, and uses it as both a literal substance and a conceptual framework.

She explained: "The Loudest Grain grew from an interest in how small, repeated elements accumulate meaning over time, both materially and conceptually. Through Media City Qatar's 'Next in Arts' platform, I was able to develop this work through sustained experimentation and research, allowing the process to shape the final form." "It took me about 10 days to complete the whole process of moulding the art piece. I graduated from VCUQatar in 2025 and currently I am working at VCUQatar and also have my own design consultancy firm," she added. Hamad Omar A al-Mannai, CEO of Media City Qatar, noted: "Media City Qatar is committed to building the foundations that allow creative talent to mature, be seen, and engage confidently with the world. Through initiatives such as 'Next in Arts', we are creating enduring connections between emerging voices in Qatar and leading international platforms, ensuring that creative practice is supported not as a moment, but as a long-term investment." "Next in Arts', developed with Media City Qatar, creates that space, where emerging work can be shaped through dialogue, research, and visibility. The Loudest Grain reflects a considered engagement with process and material, and demonstrates how such platforms enable new voices to enter a wider international conversation," stated Vincenzo de Bellis, chief artistic officer and global director of Art Basel Fairs. Developed through a sequential material process, The Loudest Grain is cast from a biodegradable biomaterial derived from wasted rice, transformed into translucent bioplastic sheets and assembled into layered disks within a metal framework. The interplay of material, structure, and light creates a luminous, holographic effect that reflects how images, data, and narratives accumulate over time. The Loudest Grain will be on view from February 5 to 7 as part of Media City Qatar's installation at M7, coinciding with Art Basel Qatar.

Inaugural Art Basel Qatar opens in Doha

Art Basel opened its first-ever fair in the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia (Menasa), marking a significant new chapter in its global evolution and for the international art market. Art Basel Qatar, presented in partnership with Qatar Sports Investments (QSI) and QC+, takes place across Msheireb Downtown Doha and runs through February 7. The inaugural edition of Art Basel Qatar brings together 87 international exhibitors, presenting the work of 84 artists – more than half of whom hail from across the Menasa region. Taking place across M7 and the Doha Design District in Msheireb Downtown Doha, the fair is structured around solo artist presentations rather than a traditional booth model, offering a more open and focused way to experience the work on view. Under the artistic leadership of Vincenzo de Bellis, Art Basel's Chief Artistic Officer and Global Director of Fairs, and Wael Shawky, Artistic Director of the inaugural edition, the fair is shaped by the theme Becoming, reflecting a format designed to encourage deeper engagement and to grow in dialogue with its context over time. On the eve of the fair's first VIP Preview Day, Art Basel and Visit Qatar, the fair's Lead Partner, celebrated by unveiling SONG, a new site-responsive work by Jenny Holzer and the tenth work in the fair's Special Projects programme, at a welcome event at Doha's Museum of Islamic Art (MIA). The work activated the museum through two simultaneous projections across the main facade and inner courtyard, accompanied by a single, choreographed performance of over 700 drones in the night sky. Using poems by Mahmoud Darwish, the celebrated Palestinian poet whose lyrical voice has profoundly shaped modern Arabic literature, and Nujoom Alghanem, the acclaimed Emirati poet and filmmaker known for her intimate and incisive writing, Holzer brings Arabic and English text into public space as illumination, rhythm, and interruption. Following its debut, the work remains on view to the public nightly as a projection on the museum's main facade throughout the fair. Representing a defining moment in Art Basel's 55-year history, the new fair responds to



"Today marks a special moment – one that connects talent and industry, by welcoming the establishment of Art Basel in the Middle East. This is the beginning of a bold, exciting, and truly unique undertaking – one that merges with and amplifies the cultural and artistic ecosystem we have been building, piece by piece, for the past fifty years" - HE Sheikhha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, Chairperson of Qatar Museums

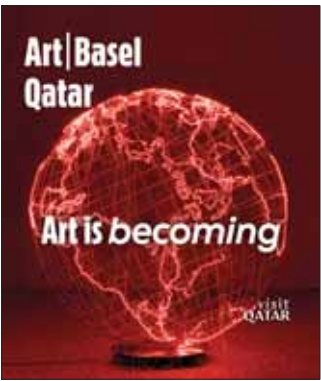


Qatar's long-standing investment in culture by establishing a platform that connects the region's burgeoning artistic production with Art Basel's global network, nurturing long-term growth and exchange across the art market. Art Basel Qatar takes place from February 5-7, with preview days on February 3 and 4. In a statement, HE Sheikhha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, Chairperson of Qatar Museums, said: "Today marks a special moment – one that connects talent and industry, by welcoming the

establishment of Art Basel in the Middle East. This is the beginning of a bold, exciting, and truly unique undertaking – one that merges with and amplifies the cultural and artistic ecosystem we have been building, piece by piece, for the past fifty years. "We are here not just to present yet another art fair, but to curate a platform that uplifts the creativity of an entire region, remaining deeply human-centred and humane, and inviting the world to be curious about who we really are, and engage in meaningful conversations."

Visit Qatar takes part as Lead Partner at Art Basel Qatar

Visit Qatar will participate as Lead Partner in the inaugural edition of Art Basel Qatar, taking place from February 5 to 7 at M7 and Doha Design District in Msheireb Downtown Doha. As Art Basel's fifth global fair, the event will showcase leading galleries and artistic talent from Qatar, the wider Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia (Menasa) region, and beyond in partnership with Qatar Sports Investments and QC+. Through this partnership, Visit Qatar will deliver a hospitality-led presence designed to engage collectors, cultural stakeholders, media, and invited guests, reinforcing Qatar's position within the global cultural landscape. Central to this presence is the Art Basel Café presented by Visit Qatar, developed under the theme Doorway to Qatar. Inspired by traditional Qatari doors, a symbol of welcome and opportunity, the café reinterprets these forms as contemporary gateways to discovering, belonging in, and



investing in Qatar. The space functions as a dedicated guest environment within the fair, translating national identity into a modern, design-led setting. Visit Qatar is collaborating with Qatari chef Salman al-Jaidah and internationally recognised chef Izu Ani to reflect the culinary dialogue between Qatar and the international community through a unified creative lens. Visit Qatar is also working with Qatari artists Bothayna al-Zaman, and Youssef



Ahmad whose contributions support the creative and cultural expression of Visit Qatar's presence at Art Basel Qatar. As part of Visit Qatar's activation, an integrated content screen will showcase curated destination storytelling, including the Only in Doha series, a short-form film collaboration with Art Basel that spotlights Qatari artists Maha Jassim al-Thani, Abdulrahman al-Muftah, and Yasmine Mansoor. Visit Qatar's participation supports



the delivery of the world's premier modern and contemporary art platform hosted in Doha, while providing direct engagement opportunities with leading voices and audiences within the arts ecosystem. The hosting of internationally recognised events forms part of Visit Qatar's approach to diversifying the visitor offering and strengthening Qatar's position as a year-round destination for culture, creativity, and premium experiences.