



American Airlines pilots weigh vote of no confidence in CEO Isom



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GULF TIMES BUSINESS



DIGITAL FUTURE | Page 2

Web Summit 2026 reinforces Qatar's role as global innovation hub, says QNB official



Vodafone Qatar, QDB sign MoU to support startups, SMEs at Web Summit 2026

Vodafone Qatar and Qatar Development Bank (QDB) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate across key strategic areas aimed at supporting startups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), with a focus on enterprise solutions, market development, and innovation.

The MoU was signed by Mohamed Mohsin Alyafei, Enterprise Business Unit director at Vodafone Qatar, and Dr Hamad Salem Mejegheer, executive director of SME Development at QDB, on the sidelines of Web Summit Qatar 2026.

Through the collaboration, Vodafone Qatar and QDB will explore opportunities to support key startup and SME segments through innovation-focused projects and digital transformation initiatives. The partnership will include collaboration across several strategic areas, including joint market initiatives through co-hosted events, workshops, and market education sessions.

The MoU also establishes a commercial framework for bundled enterprise offerings, combining connectivity and digital solutions to address the evolving needs of businesses. This will enable startups and SMEs to set up, grow and scale with confidence while focusing on their core operations, supported by Vodafone Qatar's integrated ICT and connectivity solutions. Both organisations will also engage in knowledge-sharing initiatives focused on innova-



Mohamed Mohsin Alyafei, Enterprise Business Unit director at Vodafone Qatar, and Dr Hamad Salem Mejegheer, executive director of SME Development at QDB, on the sidelines of Web Summit Qatar 2026.

tion, capability building, and the exchange of technical expertise and best practices, while jointly exploring future innovation-led projects.

The partnership reflects both organisations' shared commitment to fostering innovation, accelerating digital transformation, and enabling sustainable business growth in line with Qatar's national development priorities.

Alyafei said, "At Vodafone Qatar, we are committed to supporting businesses at every stage of their journey, from scaling early ideas to building long-term resilience. Our partnership with QDB marks an important milestone in our efforts to leverage the lat-

est technology to support Qatar's growing startup ecosystem. Startups and SMEs play a vital role in Qatar's growing economy, and we will continue to combine digital solutions with local expertise to support Qatar's transformation into a digital economy, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030."

Mejegheer said, "This partnership with Vodafone Qatar reinforces QDB's role in leading the startup ecosystem and accelerating digital transformation for business, in line with the Third National Development Strategy 2024-2030. We appreciate Vodafone Qatar's commitment to supporting SMEs and advancing digital solutions across the market."

Al-Kaabi meets Libyan oil and gas minister



HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi met on Wednesday in Doha with Minister of Oil and Gas in the Government of National Unity of the State of Libya, Khalifa Rajab Abdul Sadiq, reports QNA. The meeting, held on the sidelines of the 21st International Conference on Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG 2026), dealt with bilateral relations and energy co-operation between Qatar and Libya.

QNB, Dibsy sign strategic partnership agreement at Web Summit Qatar

QNB Group and Dibsy, a Qatar-based payments technology company, announced the signing of a strategic partnership agreement at an official ceremony during Web Summit Qatar 2026.

The agreement was signed by Adel Ali al-Malki, senior executive vice-president of Group Retail Banking at QNB, together with Loyal Farah, CEO of Dibsy.

Under the agreement, QNB and Dibsy will explore opportunities to collaborate on digital payment capabilities, merchant solutions, and technology integration, all aimed at enhancing the customer experience and enabling new use cases for businesses.

The partnership supports ongoing efforts to advance digital transformation in Qatar's financial sector, in line with the country's broader objectives under Qatar National Vision 2030 to build a diversified, innovation-driven economy.

"This partnership reflects QNB's commitment to supporting innovation and accelerating the develop-



Adel Ali al-Malki, senior executive vice-president of Group Retail Banking at QNB, and Loyal Farah, CEO of Dibsy, during the signing ceremony.

ment of next-generation digital payment experiences for businesses across Qatar," said al-Malki. "We are proud to work alongside QNB to contribute to Qatar's next phase of digital commerce and fintech advancement," said Farah. The signing took place in the presence of Web Summit's international audience of technology leaders, investors, startups, and media, highlighting Qatar's growing role as a regional hub for financial innovation and emerging technologies. Further updates are expected as joint initiatives progress.

Dukhan Bank signs exploratory MoU with PayLater to assess deferred payment solutions

Dukhan Bank has signed an exploratory Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with PayLater, a Qatar-based financial technology company offering deferred payment solutions, on the sidelines of Web Summit Qatar 2026.

The counterparty operates as a deferred payment service provider. Any potential collaboration remains subject to regulatory approvals, Dukhan Bank's internal policies, and applicable governance requirements.

The MoU establishes a formal, non-commercial framework through which both parties will assess potential areas of collaboration related to deferred payment solutions. The exploratory discussions will focus on understanding how such solutions could, subject to regulatory approvals and internal governance processes, complement Dukhan Bank's Shariah-compliant offerings, enhance digital engagement, and support the evolving needs of individuals and small businesses. No commercial arrangements have been agreed at this stage, and any future engagement would be subject to further evaluation and the execution of separate written agreements.

Talal Ahmed al-Khaja, chief marketing and communications officer at Dukhan Bank, said: "Part-



The MoU establishes a formal, non-commercial framework through which both parties will assess potential areas of collaboration related to deferred payment solutions

icipating in Web Summit Qatar provides an important platform for Dukhan Bank to engage with emerging financial models and global innovation dialogues. This exploratory MoU reflects our approach to understanding evolving customer behaviours and market trends, while ensuring that any future solutions remain purposeful, Shariah-compliant, and aligned with the bank's governance and brand principles."

Bassam al-Abrahim, co-founder and chief operating officer of

PayLater, said: "We are thrilled to partner with Dukhan Bank, a financial institution that shares our commitment to customer-centric innovation. This collaboration marks a significant milestone in our strategy and will enable us to bring convenient, Shariah-compliant payment solutions to millions of consumers in Qatar." Any potential collaboration remains exploratory in nature, with no commitments or commercial arrangements in place at this stage.

Snoonu CEO sees robotics driving Qatar's unicorn future to lead regional innovation

By Peter Alagos
Business Editor

Snoonu founder and CEO Hamad al-Hajri believes robotics and drones will transform the delivery business in the Arab world, positioning Qatar's first homegrown tech unicorn at the forefront of regional innovation.

"We believe this will be revolutionary for our region for multiple reasons. By 2035, we can imagine this delivery business will be done by robotics and drones," al-Hajri told *Gulf Times* in an exclusive interview yesterday on the sidelines of Web Summit Qatar 2026. During the summit, the Qatar Research, Development and Innovation (QRDI) Council expressed its support for Snoonu's new robotics project, as part of efforts to strengthen national capabilities in artificial intelligence (AI) and advanced robotics.

According to QRDI secretary-general Omar Ali al-Ansari, the council's partnership with Snoonu "represents a successful model of collaboration between ambitious national companies and government-backed innovation programmes," adding that "the council takes pride in supporting some of the most innovative companies in Qatar and the wider region."

At the Web Summit, Snoonu unveiled new services designed to expand both consumer offerings and logistics capa-



Snoonu founder and CEO Hamad al-Hajri.

PICTURE: Riyaz Abdulrahmin

bilities. These include Snoonu Robotics, Snoonu Charge, and Snoonu Cloud – a pioneering platform-as-a-service super-app enabling countries to build their own digital ecosystems. Al-Hajri also explained that Snoonu's success rests on a "golden triangle" of logistics: consumers, logistics partners, and business partners. He said consumers benefit from rapid delivery across multiple verticals. At the same time, logistics partners are empowered by AI-driven algorithms and smarter location systems, and business partners gain enhanced digital platforms to grow their operations.

"Our vision is to serve millions of cus-

tomers by making their lives faster and easier, while also simplifying business through Snoonu and enabling logistics partners to earn additional income by providing services on our platform," he said.

Al-Hajri also pointed out that Snoonu's unicorn milestone has become a catalyst for Qatar's startup ecosystem, inspiring founders, angel investors, and venture capital firms to enter the market.

"Now, I can see many founders who want to build their own startups, many angel investors, all the way to VCs. Even the region's first growth VCs will launch in Qatar," said al-Hajri, citing UAE-based investment firm Shorouq. Al-Hajri emphasised Doha's growing appeal as a hub for innovation, noting that "technology's borderless nature" allows companies to operate globally from Qatar. He also credited government initiatives for accelerating the ecosystem, including Qatar Investment Authority's (QIA) \$3bn fund-of-funds, the QRDI Council's innovation grants, and Invest Qatar's incentive framework for foreign direct investment.

Asked about his outlook for 2026, al-Hajri said he expects to see multiple Series A and B startups emerge in Qatar, alongside international relocations to Doha. He argued that Snoonu's trajectory underscores both the company's ambition and Qatar's growing role as a regional innovation hub.



Silicon Valley-based Brain Co plans to open flagship office in Doha

By Santhosh V Perumal
Business Reporter

Brain Co, a Silicon Valley-based leader in AI technology solutions for enterprises and governments, is planning to open a flagship office in Doha, building on its successful implementation of a significant technology engagement with Qatar's Ministry of Municipality.

The announcement was made at Web Summit Qatar 2026, reinforcing Brain Co's commitment to supporting Qatar's National Development Strategy, national digital transformation initiatives, the country's ecosystem goals and its broader regional expansion across Middle East and North Africa.

The flagship office initiative will see Brain Co combine

its technical expertise and institutional partnerships to support Qatar's vision as a global hub for technology, AI, and innovation. The company will pursue discussions with relevant governmental and enterprise organisations in Qatar to expand its operational presence and advance strategic collaboration opportunities.

The flagship office initiative will see Brain Co combine its technical expertise and institutional partnerships to support Qatar's vision as a global hub for technology, AI, and innovation

"Our partners in Qatar have demonstrated the visionary leadership and institutional infrastructure to drive real world impact with AI. We're excited to

build on our success together and push the boundaries of what's possible with advanced AI," said Dan Ashton, chief executive officer of Brain Co. Together with its Qatari partners, Brain Co is setting a new standard for specialised AI applications that enhance institutional efficiency and service delivery across the region.

"Qatar is not just talking about the future; it is building it. We chose Doha because this is where bold decisions are being made," said Omid Raghimi, president of Qatar Business for Brain Co.

Brain Co's work with Qatar's Ministry of Municipality demonstrated the company's ability to deliver mission-critical AI systems in complex institutional environments, transforming core processes that previously took months into workflows completed in hours.

Al-Sayed meets US trade representative



HE the Minister of State for Foreign Trade Affairs Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed al-Sayed met yesterday with US Trade Representative ambassador Jamieson Greer, during a visit to Washington, reports QNA. The meeting discussed international trade developments, along with trade and investment co-operation relations between the State of Qatar and the US and ways to support and develop them. It also discussed a number of topics of common interest. The meeting also emphasised continuing co-operation to strengthen the strategic partnership between the two countries and expand the horizons of trade and investment co-operation.

Web Summit reinforces Qatar's role as a global innovation hub: QNB official

QNA
Doha



Executive Vice-President of Business Development Strategy at QNB Group Najla Ibrahim al-Mutawa affirmed that Qatar's hosting of Web Summit Qatar 2026, the third edition of this major global event, reinforces the country's role as a convener of global ideas, capital, and talent, positioning it as an enabler for innovation and digital transformation.

In a special interview with Qatar News Agency (QNA), al-Mutawa noted: "Qatar is in a very unique position at the intersection of technology, finance, and the ability to scale." She added: "This convergence strengthens Qatar's position as a credible hub for innovation and digital transformation, not just regionally but globally."

She stressed: "The summit helps turn dialogue into practical collaboration.

Executive Vice-President of Business Development Strategy at QNB Group Najla Ibrahim al-Mutawa has affirmed that Qatar's hosting of Web Summit Qatar 2026 has positioned the country as an enabler for innovation and digital transformation.

By connecting policymakers, investors, entrepreneurs and institutions, it lowers barriers for innovators to scale across markets. Importantly, it promotes inclusive digital growth, sharing frameworks and solutions that can be adapted by emerging and

vulnerable economies, supporting the development of resilient, knowledge-based systems."

Highlighting the multiple benefits of the summit, she mentioned: "The summit accelerates decision-making by bringing capital, technology providers and end-users into one space," adding: "For startups, it opens access to funding, partnerships and market entry opportunities. For established entities, it encourages investment in efficiency, digital infrastructure and innovation, helping move ideas from pilot stage to scalable implementation. Over the past four days, we have been privileged to walk around the conference centre, listening to and learning from entrepreneurs and innovators."

Al-Mutawa explained: "The alignment is clear. The summit advances economic diversification through innovation, supports human development by focusing on skills, entrepreneurship and knowledge transfer, and increasingly integrates sustainability into technology and business models. These themes directly reflect the balanced development pillars of Qatar National Vision 2030."

Regarding how QNB Group supports shaping the future of financial innovation in Qatar and beyond, al-Mutawa said: "QNB group is shaping the future of financial innovation in Qatar and beyond. As a Diamond Sponsor of Web Summit Qatar, the group is showcasing its commitment to driving digital transformation and fostering a dynamic fintech ecosystem that supports Qatar National Vision 2030."

"Through initiatives such as the QNB Transformation Office and strategic partnerships with leading institutions, QNB is reimagining how banking empowers people and businesses," she said.

"By modernising financial services while financing the real economy, QNB plays a central role in enabling human development, economic diversification and long-term resilience," she said.

QDB-backed Utopia Studio announces full-stack AI package to accelerate startup development and commercialisation

The Utopia Studio, a Qatar Development Bank (QDB) supported AI (artificial intelligence)-native venture studio operating as part of Utopia Capital Management's venture platform, has signed a pact with Sytronix, Hosted.ai, and Sia Partners, to accelerate AI venture building across the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Africa and other emerging markets. This strategic technology infrastructure memorandum of understanding (MoU), announced at Web Summit Qatar, aims to provide founders with a full-stack package of lower-cost, locally deployed compute infrastructure and AI tooling to accelerate their startups' development and commercialisation. The partnership addresses a critical structural barrier: AI ventures in emerging markets spend 40-50% of revenue on compute infrastructure while paying 3-5x premiums compared to developed markets. Supporting pre-seed and seed-stage founders and fellows of Doha-based The Utopia Studio, the partnership brings together complementary capabilities across hardware (UK-based Sytronix), software (US-based Hosted.ai), and ecosystem development (France-headquartered Sia Partners). Founders will now benefit from priority access to sovereign, locally deployed compute infrastructure, elastic GPU services, and agentic AI tooling at materially lower costs than hyperscale cloud alternatives. This enables ventures being co-built with The Utopia Studio to train, deploy and scale AI systems earlier and faster in their lifecycle, without capital,



The strategic technology infrastructure MoU, announced at Web Summit Qatar, aims to provide founders with a full stack package of lower-cost, locally deployed compute infrastructure and AI tooling to accelerate their startups' development and commercialisation

data or IP leakage to foreign hyperscalers. Under the agreement, The Utopia Studio will orchestrate the partnership and venture pipeline, identifying, validating, and co-building ventures and providing access to UTOPIA OS – a modular, adaptive AI tech-stack tailored to each venture – compressing the path from concept to Series A to under 24 months.

Sytronix will design, build and deploy sovereign high-performance computing infrastructure. Hosted.ai will deliver elastic GPU-as-a-service and sovereign

cloud computing. Sia Partners will provide strategic advisory and agentic AI acceleration to help development and go-to-market execution.

"AI ventures in emerging markets spend half their revenue on compute at 3-5x premiums. This full-stack infrastructure partnership – from owned hardware to elastic cloud – changes the economics fundamentally. We can now enable full-stack vertical AI companies and agent-led ventures by giving founders control of their largest cost centre. The cost of intelligence determines the cost of innovation," said Karan Pinto, Studio Director at The Utopia Studio.

James Walsh, founder and chief executive officer of Sytronix, said this strategic partnership is a huge step forward for Sytronix and in line with its vision of being at the cutting edge of technology. "We're excited to work with our incredible partners to give Qatar a leading foothold in the Compute, AI and Quantum space," he added.

Announced in 2025, The Utopia Studio is Qatar's first AI-focused venture studio. The Studio is already working with its first group of entrepreneurs and over the next five years it aims to develop 140 venture concepts and support over 50 Pre-Seed to Series-A ventures, across the Global South.

The MoU aligns with Qatar National Vision 2030 to build human capital and diversify the economy, supporting two of the studio's core focus areas: infrastructure intelligence and sovereign systems.

Ibtechar reinforces strategic leadership in AI, innovation

Ibtechar, a leading innovation and capacity-building consultancy, reinforced its strategic leadership at Web Summit Qatar 2026 for the second consecutive year, demonstrating how AI (artificial intelligence)-driven innovation labs and ecosystem collaboration deliver real-world impact.

Through hands-on activations and high-level engagement with global innovators and policymakers, Ibtechar highlighted its role as a trusted partner supporting organisations to embed AI, accelerate innovation, and align their digital transformation with national priorities.

"AI is not just a technology; it is a catalyst for organisational and societal transformation. At Web Summit Qatar 2026, we demonstrated how structured, AI-powered innovation labs enable organisations to scale ideas responsibly and achieve measurable impact, advancing the nation's transition toward a knowledge-based, future-ready economy," said Khalid AbouJassoum, co-founder and chairman of Ibtechar.

Ibtechar's booth welcomed many attendees to a dynamic, multi-activation experience that brought AI, innovation, and automation to life. Visitors engaged with the interactive question wall, sharing their biggest AI challenges and sparking meaningful conversations. Visitors also connected with Ibtechar's diverse team



Ibtechar booth at Web Summit 2026 has welcomed many attendees to a dynamic, multi-activation experience that brought AI, innovation, and automation to life

and leadership, engaging in meaningful conversations about innovation, AI, digital skills and capacity building.

"Web Summit Qatar 2026 provided a strategic platform to engage with global innovators, founders, and policymakers, and to demonstrate how AI-enabled innovation can address pressing organisational challenges while delivering measurable outcomes, aligned with national priorities," said Nayef al-Ibrahim, co-founder and chief executive officer of Ibtechar.

Through the interactive booth activations, delivered in collaboration with its partners, attendees experienced how Ibtechar develops AI-ready talent through its academy arm, while implementing high-impact innovation solutions through the consultancy arm. Web Summit Qatar 2026 also served as a platform to showcase Ibtechar's strategic partnerships with like-minded global players. AI Crafters and CurveUp delivered hands-on activations at Ibtechar's booth, showcasing practical AI applications across organisational and entrepreneurial contexts.

AI Crafters featured an AI maturity assessment and automation lab, guiding participants through real-world AI readiness and use-case development, while CurveUp offered one-to-one sessions enabling attendees to build AI-structured roadmaps to turn ideas to reality and challenges to solutions.

Having designed and managed over 70% of Qatar's innovation spaces, Ibtechar continues to strengthen the nation's innovation infrastructure through capacity-building and innovation-driven initiatives for both public and private institutions. The newly launched Ibtechar Majlis further reinforces the organisation's commitment to advancing Qatar's transition toward a diversified, knowledge-based economy by providing a platform for dialogue, knowledge exchange and co-creation of impactful solutions, inspired by the traditional spirit of the Qatari Majlis in the field of innovation.

Chamber partakes in Sohar Investment Forum



Qatar Chamber took part in the Sohar Investment Forum 2026 in Oman, organised by the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry – North Al Batinah Branch, with the participation of more than 30 countries. Board member Shaheen bin Mohamed al-Mohannadi represented the chamber at the event. The forum features more than 50 investment opportunities valued at over OMR300mn, focusing primarily on the industrial and logistics sectors, alongside other economic sectors. Al-Mohannadi praised the level of co-operation between Qatar and Oman in the field of mutual investments, particularly at the private sector level. He noted that many Qatari companies are active in the Omani market through various projects, while there are numerous Omani companies with investments across different sectors in Qatar. He highlighted the strong relations between Qatar Chamber and its Omani counterpart, stressing that both bodies are exerting significant efforts to enhance co-operation between the Qatari and Omani private sectors.

Invest Qatar, Doha Bank partner to offer tailored financial services to foreign investors

QNA
Doha

Invest Qatar, the Investment Promotion Agency of Qatar, and Doha Bank have announced a strategic partnership aimed at further enhancing the ease of doing business for foreign investors entering the Qatari market.

Signed on the sidelines of Web Summit Qatar 2026, the partnership is designed to strengthen Qatar's position as a leading global investment destination by providing investors with streamlined access to business establishment services and customised financial solutions.

This partnership will provide a comprehensive suite of services to foreign investors via the Invest Qatar Gateway, a free digital platform designed to support international companies looking to establish or expand their operations in Qatar. These services include onboarding packages for incoming staff, dedicated relationship management teams, and access to Doha Bank's specialised financial programmes tailored to priority sectors in Qatar.

As part of the collaboration, Doha Bank will also facilitate the opening of corporate bank accounts within a maximum of three working days, subject to the completion of all compliance and due diligence requirements.

The agreement establishes a framework for broader co-operation between Invest Qatar and Doha Bank, including business connection facilitation, knowledge-sharing initiatives and mutual referrals of companies exploring opportunities in Qatar.

The agreement was signed by Sheikh Ali bin Alwaleed al-Thani, CEO of Invest Qatar, and Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Fahad bin Faisal al-Thani, Group CEO of Doha Bank.

Sheikh Ali bin Alwaleed al-Thani



The agreement was signed by Sheikh Ali bin Alwaleed al-Thani, CEO of Invest Qatar, and Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Fahad bin Faisal al-Thani, Group CEO of Doha Bank, on the sidelines of Web Summit Qatar 2026.

ni, CEO, Invest Qatar, said: "We are pleased to strengthen our ecosystem of strategic partners by joining forces with leading financial institutions such as Doha Bank. This collaboration enhances the premium services we offer to investors, streamlines their market entry journey and reinforces our commitment to delivering best-in-class support. Together, we aim to unlock new opportunities for international companies and further position Qatar as a global hub for business and innovation."

Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Fahad bin Faisal al-Thani, Group CEO, Doha Bank, said: "This partnership with Invest Qatar reflects Doha Bank's commitment to supporting Qatar's investment and economic diversification goals. By offering tailored financial solutions and accelerated banking services, we aim to empower foreign investors with the confidence, efficiency and flexibility they need to succeed in Qatar. We are proud to contribute our expertise to

creating a seamless and investor-friendly experience."

These new services will be delivered through the Invest Qatar Gateway, as part of specialised banking packages offered exclusively to platform members, which include more than 14,000 users, and nearly 1,000 registered companies.

As Qatar's first dedicated digital platform for investors, the Invest Qatar Gateway provides foreign investors and companies with access to business opportunities, sector-specific insights, partner connections, tenders, and direct, real-time support from the Invest Qatar team.

This latest partnership with Doha Bank builds on a series of ongoing efforts to expand the Gateway's offerings and services. Through the Access Qatar programme, Invest Qatar will continue to introduce new services and initiatives, aimed at empowering investors and strengthening Qatar's welcoming and competitive business environment.

Energy company officials emphasise LNG market growing rapidly

QNA
Doha

Officials in the field of liquefied natural gas (LNG) production and trading emphasised the rapid development of the LNG market in recent years, and its trading volume in the spot energy market.

In a spotlight session held yesterday under the title "The Continued Evolution of LNG", as part of the 21st International Conference and Exhibition on Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG2026), participants predicted an acceleration in the development of the LNG market over the next few years. Global Head of LNG Consulting at Standard and Poor's Madeline Jowdy noted that there are a number of entities trading LNG, and as they continue to expand. She highlighted that there is still the same level of liquidity in the market as is recorded in oil markets or refined product markets.

She noted that about ten years ago, around the same time the United States began exporting LNG, about 12% of LNG was traded on the spot market, then the trading ratio developed three years ago to about 30%, before continuing its upward trend in 2025 to about

45 to 50%. Senior Vice-President of LNG at JERA Global Markets, Jonathan Westby, highlighted the development of the LNG market in a short period. He noted that a decade or two ago, LNG was a somewhat specialised market, before LNG emerged in the past few years to gain great importance in balancing global energy needs, and thus became a truly global system.

He stressed that LNG has gained strategic importance for countries, governments and companies to ensure the stability of supplies, and that its market has transformed from an emerging market to a more liquid and important one, to the point that it has become at the forefront of the global energy system. In this regard, he said that it is a good time to join this industry.

In the same context, Executive Vice-President of Shell LNG Marketing and Trading, Tom Summers, indicated that the LNG production and marketing sector has witnessed significant development over the past two decades, after it used to require huge capital investment to market it, considering that it is important to point out the confidence that has been established in the sector over many years of investment.

He underscored that the development of investment in the LNG

sector gives buyers confidence and security in prices, which has also contributed to the entry of more companies into the market. However, he noted his belief that the interdependence and integration in the global energy system has changed significantly over time, especially after the two recent market shocks (the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian-Ukrainian crisis) clearly demonstrated the potential of LNG and its resilience in overcoming such crises.

Vice-president of LNG Trading in TotalEnergies Gas and Power Limited pointed out that TotalEnergies has an investment portfolio in energy thanks to its long-term partnership with QatarEnergy, considering that price fluctuations and events affecting the energy market contribute to improving performance, while the only way to manage and monitor these unexpected events is to be flexible and adaptable.

Global head of LNG at Vitol, Pablo Galante Escobar, said that national oil companies have also become active in trading, and they have specialists who work to improve trading volume, not only by increasing their own trading volume, but also by trading on behalf of third parties.

LNG2026: Experts call for 'predictability-based' financing models

QNA
Doha

Experts and senior executives from major global energy companies have called for the adoption of financing models based on "predictability" to counter cost inflation and supply-chain risks, stressing that the liquefied natural gas (LNG) sector is at a pivotal stage that requires moving away from complex structures and returning to fundamentals to ensure the continued flow of investment.

Participants speaking during a panel discussion held yesterday as part of the third day of the 21st International Conference & Exhibition on Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG2026) in Doha, titled "Fueling the Future: Navigating the Evolving Landscape of LNG Project Financing", agreed that the financial community is no longer

seeking excitement in projects, but rather favours those that provide certainty regarding timelines and delivery schedules.

Panelists representing Woodside Energy, Bechtel Energy, JERA, and the Japan Bank for International Co-operation (JBIC) explained that predictability in performance and start-up dates has become the most valuable currency in today's markets, particularly following the wave of massive investments witnessed last year.

They noted that the industry is facing mounting challenges, including persistent inflationary pressures, intense competition for skilled labour, and supply-chain disruptions that have yet to fully recover. They warned that these factors have made it increasingly difficult to rely on traditional fixed-price engineering contracts that place the full burden of risk on contractors, pointing out

that such practices in US Gulf Coast projects valued at between \$15bn and \$20bn have led to bankruptcies and project distress. Instead, they emphasised the need to "return to basics" through precise scope definition prior to final investment decisions and by replicating proven models to reduce surprises and ensure cost viability.

The concept of "strategic partnerships" emerged as a central pillar of the sector's future outlook. Industry leaders stressed that success amid geopolitical uncertainty and price volatility requires strong, flexible alliances that go beyond merely signing sales and purchase agreements.

They clarified that risk management does not mean simply shifting or "reshuffling" risks among parties, but rather engaging in mature dialogue to identify which party is best equipped to manage each type of risk.

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DESCRIPTION

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2010	555632	180652

2 NISSAN URVAN CHILLER VAN

Model	Plate No	Kilometer Run
2020	105290	290034

3 NISSAN SUNNY

Model	Plate No	Kilometer Run
2018	769454	212928

4 DUSTER

Model	Plate No	Kilometer Run
2015	689014	195069

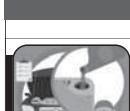
5 NISSAN NAVARA

Model	Plate No	Kilometer Run
2015	226317	229842

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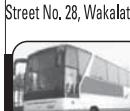
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A new engine question for Boeing's delayed 777X

By Alex Macheras

A new durability concern on the GE9X engine has landed on Boeing's already delayed 777X programme, and the timing matters as much as the technical detail. The issue centres on a seal within the engine, identified during inspection work and now under analysis by GE Aerospace and Boeing. Early indications suggest it could require a redesign and a retrofit carried out during scheduled maintenance overhauls, rather than an immediate fleet-wide grounding type response. Even so, it introduces a familiar risk category for the 777X. The programme's critical path is already dominated by certification and readiness, and any additional engineering loop, however "contained" it is framed, carries consequences for confidence, delivery pacing and entry-into-service reliability.

Boeing's public line remains that deliveries are expected to begin in 2027. Kelly Oterberg has reiterated that timeline in recent commentary, with the company aiming to move the aircraft from flight testing into certification milestones that have slipped repeatedly over the past six years. The programme is now roughly six years behind its original schedule and has accumulated more than \$15bn in charges, a figure that reflects the cost of delay, rework, certification drag and the opportunity cost of a flagship product spending years in limbo.

The seal finding is not just "another technical snag". It sits within a programme where the engine is central to the 777X value proposition. The GE9X is the sole powerplant option on the 777-9, and it underpins the aircraft's claims around efficiency, range and operating



economics. Reliability therefore becomes a commercial attribute, not a maintenance line item. Airlines buying an aircraft of this size are not shopping for incremental improvements. They are buying predictability, dispatch reliability and the ability to run long-haul networks on tight rotations with minimal disruption. That is why the Middle East angle matters. Hot-and-dusty operating environments impose a very specific burden on engine hardware, seals and thermal margins. Dust and sand ingestion, high ambient temperatures, and high utilisation patterns can accelerate wear and reduce the time-on-wing airlines expect to achieve before shop visits. The seal issue is being viewed through that lens because the largest 777X customer is

Emirates, and Emirates has built its long-haul model on high availability of widebody aircraft with strong maintenance planning discipline. If a new engine enters service with shortened intervals between overhauls or unexpected durability limits, the cost is measured in aircraft downtime, spare engine requirements and schedule resilience.

GE has been explicit in recent years that it has tested for Middle East conditions, including replicating regional dust characteristics in controlled environments as part of GE9X durability work. Those tests exist because airlines in the Gulf and broader region have long demanded that new-generation engines are designed and proven for harsh conditions, not just compliant with certification requirements. A seal durability concern emerging during programme maturation will therefore be read not only as an engineering task, but as a signal that the last mile to robust entry-into-service reliability remains unfinished.

The operational implication depends on what the seal does, where it sits in the engine, and what failure mode is being guarded against. Seals can sound minor, yet they sit at the intersection of performance and durability, controlling leakage, pressure differentials and thermal behaviour. If a seal degrades faster than expected, it can push engines off their expected performance curve and shorten on-wing time. For airlines, that translates into earlier removals, more shop visits, more disruption risk, and higher costs per cycle. For a new programme, it can translate into conservative operating limits at entry into service, stricter inspection intervals, or early modification campaigns, all of which complicate induction plans.

Boeing and GE appear to be leaning towards a solution that is integrated into planned overhaul cycles. That is an important distinction, because it implies the issue may be manageable without halting flight testing or resetting the certification timeline in a dramatic way. It still introduces uncertainty because airlines need to plan their first two years of operation with precision.

They need to know whether the early engines will require modifications, what spares provisioning looks like, how many extra engines must be held to protect the schedule, and how quickly the system can absorb teething problems that are common with any new aircraft programme.

This is where the 777X programme's history becomes relevant. The aircraft has already faced multiple stops and starts in flight testing, along with prior engine-related issues that required engineering work and pauses to address durability and temperature concerns identified during inspections. The programme's testing cadence has also been uneven. Flight records indicate that only two of the five test aircraft had flown in early 2026, a detail that reinforces how fragile the flight test rhythm can be when a programme is juggling certification objectives alongside technical work and resource prioritisation.

Against that backdrop, confidence becomes a scarce commodity. Airlines buying the 777X are buying into a long-term fleet plan, yet their near-term reality has been delivery delays and changing expectations. Boeing has moved first delivery targets multiple times, and in late 2024 confirmed a further delay to 2027. Every additional technical headline, even one that can be framed as "manageable", chips away

at the sense that the aircraft is converging smoothly toward entry into service.

For Gulf and Middle East carriers, the seal story will be interpreted through an additional lens: operational intensity. Networks across the region are built on high utilisation and tight fleet planning, with long-haul routes and minimal slack. A widebody programme that enters service with uncertain engine durability is not simply a technical inconvenience.

It becomes a network risk. Airlines can absorb early issues by holding spares and building buffers, yet doing so reduces the economics the aircraft was purchased to deliver.

The more strategic question is what this means for the delivery ramp once the aircraft is certified. Boeing can deliver the first aircraft in 2027 and still face a second challenge: scaling deliveries while ensuring early reliability is strong enough that airlines induct aircraft quickly and confidently.

None of this is a verdict that the 777X is in trouble again in a binary sense. It is a reminder that late-stage programme maturation is where small components can become big headlines. In a programme that is already defined by delay, the industry is conditioned to treat "potential durability issue" as serious, even if the mitigation path appears straightforward. The 777X's promise remains clear. The path to delivering it has been anything but. The seal finding adds one more test of whether Boeing and GE can deliver an engine that performs as advertised in the environments that matter most, with the durability that airlines will demand on day one.

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American Air CEO is under pressure as pilots weigh vote of no confidence

Bloomberg
New York

American Airlines Group Chief Executive Officer Robert Isom is under pressure from pilots blaming him for failing to close the gap with more profitable peers Delta Air Lines Inc and United Airlines Holdings Inc. The Allied Pilots Association union is considering holding a vote of no confidence in Isom and his executive team, according to a letter to members, with the move possible as soon as Friday, APA spokesman Dennis Tajer said.

"The company under this management team appears to lack the tools, creativity, leadership and willpower to return American to prominence among its peers," union President Nick Silva wrote to members late Monday.

The APA represents about 16,000 pilots, and the possible vote follows what it described as botched preparations for last month's winter storm and American's disappointing financial results. The internal opposition comes as American navigates a slate of operational and strategic challenges, from cutting about \$35bn in debt to fighting an escalating turf war with United in Chicago.

The hurdles, which also include trying to win back corporate flyers alienated by an unpopular – and since reversed – marketing strategy, have relegated the largest US domestic carrier to middle-tier status just as demand, particularly in the lucrative premium part of the cabin, rebounds from a volatile 2025.

The stock has slipped 8.6% so far this year, lagging the performances of both United and Delta. That continues a downward trajectory after last year's 12% decline, leaving investors wondering if management – and Isom, in particular –



Robert Isom, chief executive officer of American Airlines Group.

can engineer a turnaround. A representative for American declined to comment and referred to Isom's comments during a Jan. 27 earnings conference call. Isom has been in the job since March 2022 after serving as airline president for about six years. The CEO has said his turnaround effort will bear fruit this year, with a strategy built around maximising the power of American's network and fleet, building partnerships, deepening customer loyalty and advancing revenue management. American is also focusing on improving its product, like fitting new cabins on its Boeing Co 777 aircraft and bringing jets such as the Airbus SE A321XLR to market. The company is cutting debt and ramping up premium offerings, including Lavazza coffee or Bollinger champagne, or free onboard Wi-Fi for AAdvantage

customers. "Our balance sheet is the strongest it's been in years," Isom said on the earnings call. While a no-confidence vote would be a largely symbolic gesture, it would add to a statement by the flight attendants union on January 27 calling out Isom and the American board for what it



An American Airlines Group aircraft after take off at the Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport.

described as leadership failures. American has lagged Delta and United in profiting from the boom in premium and long-haul travel at a time when demand for economy-class flying is stagnant at best.

The strategic stakes are particularly high in Chicago, where American is locked in a battle with United at O'Hare International Airport, one of the world's busiest aviation hubs. Just as American kicked off its quarterly earnings report, United swooped in to announce plans to operate as many as 750 daily departures from O'Hare this summer – the largest schedule ever flown by any airline there. The foray followed American's decision to add overlapping routes from Chicago and Los Angeles.

But American executives sought to cast doubt on the durability of United's advantage and even took a shot at the rival, which is negotiating with flight attendants about pay. "We fully expect that Chicago will return to the profitability levels that had been at prior to the pandemic," Isom told analysts on the fourth-quarter earnings call. "Quite frankly, I wouldn't be out there bragging about profitability in a hub when 80% of your team members make a lot less than the market rate."

Rolls-Royce seeks to win back Boeing orders after engine upgrade

Bloomberg
Washington

Rolls-Royce Holdings Plc said it can win back business and secure new deals with an upgraded Trent 1000 engines powering Boeing Co's 787 model, after years of losing ground on the US planemaker's bestselling widebody aircraft. Actively pursuing sales campaigns with the Trent 1000 XE will be a main focus for this year, said Rob Watson, who oversees Rolls-Royce's civil aero engine business. The new engine, which promises greater durability, has been in production since the second half of last year, though Watson said it's too soon to say if the model is also exceeding its performance metrics.

"We're actively in sales mode," Watson said in an interview at the Singapore Airshow, with new engine supply deals a big focus for this year. "I think we can win back customers and we can win new customers." Rolls-Royce has long been an also-ran on Boeing's popular 787 as the overwhelming majority of customers opted for the rival engine by GE Aerospace.

That gave the UK manufacturer only a subordinate role on a wildly successful program, with more than 1,200 units in service. Possible sales campaigns for the Dreamliner include Malaysia Airlines Bhd. British Airways took the unusual step a few years ago to switch to GE for its new 787s, in a public snub by the country's flagship carrier of the biggest UK manufacturer.

The upgrades benefiting the Trent 1000 engine are part

Boeing eyes booming Southeast Asian skies

AFP
Singapore

Southeast Asia offered the biggest growth potential for global air travel, Boeing said yesterday as it forecast demand for almost 5,000 new aircraft in the region over the next 20 years.

The region, which has trailed other parts of the world in recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic's impact on aviation, is now catching up fast as travel rebounds and new opportunities emerge, said the firm's vice-president of commercial marketing Darren Hulst.

"This is a growth market and Southeast Asia actually leads the world in terms of regional growth potential," he told a briefing during the



Visitors walk past the Boeing booth at the Singapore Airshow in Singapore yesterday. Southeast Asia offered the biggest growth potential for global air travel, Boeing said yesterday as it forecast demand for almost 5,000 new aircraft in the region over the next 20 years.

Singapore Airshow. "A growing middle class and strong tourism demand are driving this rise in air travel across the region's domestic and international routes," he told journalists.

To support the expected

Southeast Asia is a vast region where air connections play a vital role, particularly in archipelagic nations such as Indonesia.

Regionally "air travel continues to be the most efficient way to connect people and places", Hulst said.

Boeing on Tuesday signed a deal with Air Cambodia for 10 "narrowbody" 737 Max 8 passenger liners, the deal first to be announced at this year's Singapore Airshow.

The two-engined plane usually carries 178 passengers and has a range of around 6,500 kilometres (4,000 miles).

Now in its tenth year, the Singapore Airshow is the region's premier aviation exhibition event and features both civilian and defence companies.

US air travel to lag global growth in 2026 and beyond, says IATA chief

Bloomberg
Singapore

Travel demand in the US is unlikely to catch up to international growth in the near future, the head of the leading global aviation association said at the Singapore Airshow.

"Expected growth in the US market is lower than the global average," International Air Transport Association Director General Willie Walsh said in a Bloomberg TV interview on Tuesday.

Demand will grow by 4.9% around the world while remaining "broadly flat" in the US, and the organisation expects that trend to last beyond 2026, he said. Consolidation, focus on domestic travel even as it stagnates, a shortage in aircraft and problems



Willie Walsh, director general of the International Air Transport Association.

in the supply chain affecting major US airlines contributed to stagnation in the American market, Walsh said.

Global airlines stand to earn a record \$41bn this year, with Europe contributing the most as US carriers grapple with fallout from tariffs, tighter immigration enforcement and heightened geo-

political tensions. Walsh also said he has faith in aviation regulators to operate without intervention, after President Donald Trump threatened to decertify planes made in Canada over certification of Gulfstream jets.

"It creates noise in the background, but I have full confidence in both the professionals at the FAA and in safety regulators in other parts of the world, and I don't believe politics will interfere in that," he said.

Trump last week said he'd apply a 50% tariff to planes made in Canada and strip them of globally recognised safety permits. He complained Ottawa hasn't yet approved certain parts made by Gulfstream, a unit of General Dynamics Corp, that have already been certified by the Federal Aviation Administration.