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SPORT | Page 1

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Our Say



Faisal Abdulhameed al-Mudahka,
Editor-in-Chief of *Gulf Times*

Qatar, India share saga of deeply rooted ties

With His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani just winding up his second state visit to India in a decade, it is most appropriate indeed to look back at the historic ties that bind the two nations and their peoples. Qatar and India share a rare, historic and legendary saga of deeply entrenched relations, extending over centuries. Embraced by the waves of the Arabian Sea, the two nations have seen the relationship strengthened through trade and cultural interaction, as India has been a major trading destination for the people of Qatar and other GCC countries. In the olden days, Qatari merchants used to head to the Indian coast to sell pearls and import many products, which created mutual cultural influences that have flourished ever since. In the modern era and since the 1970s, Qatar and India have shared strong diplomatic relations and remarkable bilateral co-operation, resulting in a strategic partnership between the two countries that included all aspects, including politics, economy, and culture.

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faimudahka@gulf-times.com

Qatar-India ties set for expansion

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi have expressed the desire for further expanding and deepening of the multifaceted relationship between the two countries.

During an official session of talks at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi yesterday, the second and final day of His Highness the Amir's state visit to India, the leaders recalled the historic trade linkages, deep-rooted people-to-people ties and robust bilateral relations and expressed happiness on the signing of the "Agreement on the Establishment of Bilateral Strategic Partnership" between the two sides.



India PM lauds Qatar's progress

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday hailed the progress achieved by Qatar under His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's leadership, voicing hopes to boost and diversify trade ties between both countries. Modi posted on X: "I had a very productive meeting with His Highness the Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, earlier today. Under his leadership, Qatar has scaled new heights of progress. He is also committed to a strong India-Qatar friendship. This visit is even more special because we have elevated our ties to a Strategic Partnership. "Trade featured prominently in our talks. We want to increase and diversify India-Qatar trade linkages. Our nations can also work closely in sectors like energy, technology, healthcare, food processing, pharma and green hydrogen." (QNA)

The two sides reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen the bilateral relations through regular and structured co-operation in all areas, including political, trade, investment, security,



Amir: Qatar, India share historic relations

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani affirmed that Qatar and India share historic relations built on partnership, co-operation, and mutual respect, noting the two countries' commitment to working together to strengthen these relations and achieve growth and prosperity for their nations. In a post on his official account on X platform, the Amir said that he held talks yesterday with the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in which

they discussed ways to expand bilateral co-operation between the two countries in fields of trade, economy, and investment. His Highness added that Qatar and India share long-standing historical relations built on partnership, co-operation, and mutual respect, pointing out that the leaders of two countries are committed to joint efforts that contribute to solidifying these relations and fulfilling the aspirations of the two friendly nations for growth and prosperity. (QNA)

energy, culture, education, technology, innovation, sustainability and people-to-people ties.

In this regard, the two sides expressed happiness at the signing of the revised Double Taxation

Avoidance Agreement and also agreed to expedite negotiations on the India-Qatar Bilateral Investment Treaty.

At the outset of the session, the Indian prime minister welcomed



His Highness the Amir and the accompanying delegation, expressing gratitude for the visit and wishing a pleasant stay in India. He also looked forward to the state visit contributing to further strengthening the bilateral relations and expanding them towards broader horizons in all areas of strategic bilateral co-operation.

His Highness the Amir thanked the prime minister, the Government of India, and its friendly people

for the warm welcome and generous hospitality. He emphasised the depth of historical relations between the two countries and reiterated that India is one of Qatar's most important economic partners.

His Highness also expressed happiness at visiting India for the second time to continue consultations and support and enhance relations, as well as increase trade exchanges and achieve mutual interests. **Pages 4,12**

Sheikha Moza, Queen of Sweden, Saudi prince at Mentor Arabia Gala Dinner to empower youth



Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser is flanked by Queen Silvia of Sweden and Prince Turki bin Talal bin Abdulaziz al-Saud at the Mentor Arabia Gala Dinner for youth empowerment yesterday. **PICTURE: AR Al-Baker. Page 9**

Qatar welcomes Saudi hosting Russia-US talks

Qatar has welcomed Saudi Arabia hosting talks yesterday in Riyadh between Russia and the United States, in a move that reflects its leading role in enhancing international security and stability. In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs praised the diligent diplomatic efforts of Saudi Arabia in bridging viewpoints between international parties, affirming that this initiative is an extension of its responsible role in supporting peaceful solutions and establishing dialogue as a fundamental approach to resolving disputes and enhancing international understanding. The ministry also reiterated Qatar's firm belief that dialogue is the optimal choice for resolving international crises and conflicts, and its support for all regional and international efforts aimed at achieving peace and enhancing co-operation among countries to ensure global security and stability. (QNA)

Amir to pay official visit to Iran today

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani will head to Tehran today on an official visit to Iran, during which he will meet with President Dr Masoud Pezeshkian. The visit will focus on discussing bilateral relations in various fields, besides exchanging views on regional and international issues of mutual interest. His Highness the Amir will be accompanied by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani and an official delegation. (QNA)

Amir congratulates Jordan's king on successful surgery

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent cables of congratulations to King Abdullah II Ibn al-Hussein of Jordan on the success of the surgery he underwent yesterday, wishing the king continued health and wellness. (QNA)

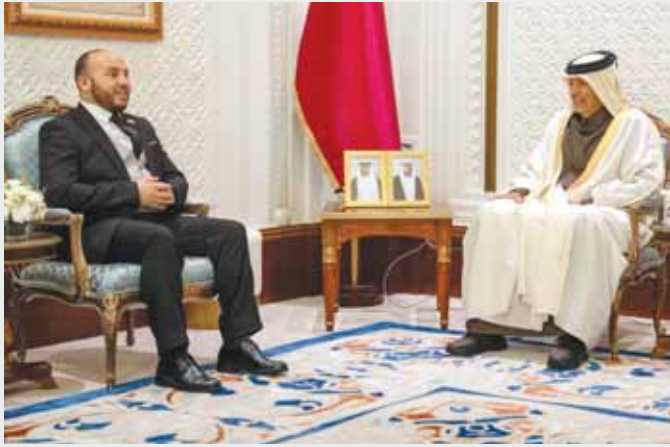
Today's **GULF TIMES** includes a 48-page supplement on **Education**



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Speaker meets Algerian parliamentary delegation



HE the Speaker of the Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem met yesterday with an Algerian parliamentary delegation led by head of the Algeria-Qatar Parliamentary Friendship Group in the Algeria's Peoples National Assembly Yahi Ali, who is currently visiting Qatar. During the meeting, they discussed the Qatari-Algerian parliamentary relations and the role of the parliamentary friendship groups in both councils in developing and strengthening these relations. Separately, the parliamentary friendship groups of Qatar and Algeria held a meeting to discuss ways to enhance parliamentary co-operation and exchange views on several issues of common interest. **(QNA)**

Interior minister meets Spain's envoy to Qatar



HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani met yesterday with Spanish ambassador to Qatar Javier Carbajosa Sanchez. During the meeting, the two sides discussed several topics of mutual interest, in addition to co-operation relations between the two countries in security fields and ways to support and develop them. **(QNA)**

Official

Amir sends cables of congratulations to Gambian president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani and HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent yesterday cables of congratulations to President of The Gambia Adama Barrow on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. **(QNA)**

MSDF takes part in 44th ministerial session of Arab Women's Committee

QNA
Doha

Qatar virtually participated in the 44th ministerial session of the Arab Women's Committee chaired by the State of Palestine. The session was an important platform to boost Arab co-operation in espousing women's issues and empowering them in a range of fields.

HE the Minister of Social Development and Family (MSDF), Buthaina bint Ali al-Jabr al-Nuaimi, represented Qatar at the meeting. Her participation was part of Qatar's unwavering commitment to backing the Arab women's issues and effectively promoting their rights



both at the economic and social levels. Addressing the session, she emphasised the importance of co-operation among Arab nations to overcome the challenges faced by women in the region, especially in the conflict-stricken zones, noting the grave situation in the Gaza Strip.

HE al-Nuaimi highlighted that the session was an opportunity to accelerate the implementation of the Arab Women's Development Agenda 2023-2028, which aims to strengthen women's rights in multiple fields, underlining that Qatar would continue to back regional and global efforts aimed at fostering gender equality.

She highlighted that Qatar is set to chair the Arab Women's Committee in 2026, constituting a quintessential continuation of the achievements realised to further advance initiatives that aim to chart the Arab women's future, underscoring Qatar's commitment to jointly working to achieve further progress and prosperity for communities in the region.

Transport minister meets Moroccan counterpart



HE the Minister of Transport Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Thani met with Minister of Transport and Logistics of Morocco Abdessamad Kayouh, on the sidelines of his participation in the UN Road Safety Fund High-Level Pledging Forum, held in Marrakech. The two sides discussed co-operation relations between the two countries in the transportation field as well as all transport activities and related logistics services, commercial ports, and civil aviation. They also discussed ways to push these relations towards broader horizons, in addition to global developments related to enhancing road safety. **(QNA)**

Labour ministry signs co-operation agreement with Al Rayyan College

QNA
Doha

The Ministry of Labour has signed a Co-operation Document with Al Rayyan International University College (ARIU), part of Al Faisal Holding Group, to develop a specialised training programme for Qatari nationals and children of Qatari women, including secondary school graduates and university students, seeking employment in the private sector.

The programme aims to enhance their professional skills and competitiveness to meet labour market demands. The Co-operation Document was signed by Undersecretary for National Manpower Affairs in the Private Sector Shaikha Abdulrahman al-Badi, and HE the Chairman of Al Faisal Holding Group Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim al-Thani.

This initiative is part of the ministry's broader strategy to equip the national workforce with essential competencies and strengthen public-private sector partnerships, in line with the Private Sector Job Nationalisation Law and the National Workforce Strategy for a High-Productivity, Competent Workforce (2024-2030).

The programme, the first of its kind in tourism, hospitality, and event management, is designed according to international standards. It integrates academic learning with hands-on training, leading to job placements for 40 Qatari secondary school graduates, including children of Qatari women. It also includes tailored training for university students,



equipping them with practical skills, workplace experience, and professional development opportunities to boost their employability.

Shaikha Abdulrahman al-Badi highlighted that this collaboration underscores the ministry's commitment to fostering partnerships with educational institutions and private sector entities to develop a highly skilled national workforce and align employment with nationalisation goals in key economic sectors.

For his part, HE Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim al-Thani stated, "We

are proud to partner with the Ministry of Labour on this initiative, which aligns with our vision to support and train young Qataris through advanced academic and practical training. Investing in national workforce development is crucial for realising the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030." The Ministry of Labour remains dedicated to empowering Qatari job seekers by providing innovative training solutions, strengthening their role in the workforce, and supporting the country's sustainable development goals.

'Al Baraha' event backs local projects

QNA
Doha

The Ministry of Social Development and Family (MSDF), represented by the Family Empowerment Department, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture (MoC), participated in 'Al Baraha' event through the national productive projects "Home Grown".

The event commenced in multiple locations on February 13 and will continue until February 22,

taking place in venues such as the Heritage Communication Park in Al Khor City and Qatar Energy's Baraha in Dukhan City. The event featured national productive projects specialising in handicrafts, printing, various forms of painting, textiles, hospitality, perfumes, coffee, and different types of food, including traditional Qatari dishes, ice creams, sweets, and souvenirs. Regarding the event, MSDF's Director of the Family Empowerment Department Fatima al-Nuaimi stated that the

ministry's efforts continue in line with the pillars of Qatar National Vision 2030 to support the productive projects "Home Grown".

She highlighted that these efforts include marketing the products of these national productive projects at strategic locations, festivals, events, and exhibitions organised by the State. Al-Nuaimi pointed out the ministry's contribution to developing the commercial skills of the owners of productive projects by providing various training opportunities and support services.

HERE I AM



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CELEBRATING TWO DECADES IN QATAR

Beema holds its Annual General Meeting for the year 2024 and approves all agenda items

His Excellency Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabor Al Thani
Chairman



Sheikh Abdulaziz Bin Abdullah Bin Faisal Al Thani Board Member and CEO Nasser Rashid Al Misnad



Some of the attendees at the General Assembly



AGM on 18 February 2025 endorses all agenda items

Strong financial performance in FY 2024, with Shareholders' Net Profit increasing by 20%

Approved dividend distribution of 0.20 Dirhams per share, amounting to a total of QAR 40 million



Damaan Islamic Insurance Company Q.P.S.C. ("Beema" or the "Company"), one of Qatar's leading Islamic insurance providers, held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Tuesday, 18 February 2025, at its Head Office in Lusail. The meeting was chaired by Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Abdullah bin Faisal Al Thani, a board member, in the presence of the Chairman of the Board, Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabor Al Thani, and other board members.

The AGM addressed and approved all agenda items, including the Board of Directors' Report on the Company's activities and financial position for the year ended 31 December 2024, as well as its business strategy. The meeting reviewed the Auditor's Report, approved the balance sheet and profit and loss statement, and endorsed the Sharia Supervisory Board Report for the year. Shareholders also approved the Company's Governance Report for 2024, along with major transactions and related-party transactions entered into during the financial year.

Based on strong financial results for FY 2024, the AGM approved the Board of Directors' recommendation to distribute an annual dividend of 0.20 Dirhams per share, representing 20% of Beema's issued and paid-up share capital, amounting to a total of QAR 40 million.

The AGM also approved the discharge of the Board of Directors for the financial year 2024 and endorsed their remuneration (Subject to the approval of the Qatar Central Bank). Additionally, shareholders appointed the external auditor for FY 2025 and approved their fees.

Financial and Strategic Highlights

The AGM followed the announcement of Beema's financial results for FY 2024, reflecting strong growth in key metrics:

- **Gross Written Contributions (GWC):** Increased 27% year-on-year to QAR 510.5 million (FY 2023: QAR 401.3 million)
- **Shareholders' Net Profit:** Grew by 20% to QAR 84.6 million (FY 2023: QAR 70.3 million)
- **Earnings Per Share (EPS):** Increased 20% to QAR 0.42 (FY 2023: QAR 0.35)
- **Shareholders' Equity:** Rose 10% to QAR 557.6 million (FY 2023: QAR 505.0 million)
- **Solvency Ratio:** Strengthened further to 365.3% (FY 2023: 351.4%)
- **Net Investment Income:** Increased 18% to QAR 37.3 million (FY 2023: QAR 31.6 million)

Commenting on the Company's achievements and strategic direction, His Excellency Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabor Al Thani, Chairman of Beema's Board of Directors, stated:

"Beema continues to build on its strong foundation, delivering another year of robust financial performance in 2024. Our consistent growth reflects our disciplined underwriting approach, effective risk management, and strategic investments in digital transformation. As we move forward, Beema remains committed to innovation, strengthening customer engagement, and aligning our

long-term strategy with Qatar's Vision 2030. We will continue to focus on delivering sustainable value for our shareholders, policyholders, and the wider community."

Beema remains a pioneering force in Qatar's Islamic insurance sector, leveraging its strong financial position, strategic partnerships, and digital advancements to drive continued growth.

Beema is listed on the Qatar Stock Exchange Main Market under the ticker BEMA. The Company maintains an A3 Long-Term Insurance Financial Strength Rating from Moody's and an A- (Excellent) Financial Strength Rating from AM Best, both with stable outlooks.

For additional information, including the complete financial statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2024, please visit www.beema.com.qa. For any inquiries, please contact Beema's Investor Relations Department at investorrelations@beema.com.qa

Important information

This press release has been prepared by Damaan Islamic Insurance Company "Beema" (Q.P.S.C.) (the "Company") for informational purposes only. This press release does not constitute an offer or invitation or solicitation of any offer to subscribe for or purchase any shares or other securities or recommendation to invest in any shares or other securities. This press release is not intended to be relied upon as the basis for an investment decision, and is not, and should not be assumed to be, complete. It is provided for information purposes only. Any investment is subject to various risks, none of which are outlined herein. All such risks should be carefully considered by prospective investors before they make any investment decision.

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Statements contained in this press release that are not historical facts are based on current expectations, estimates, projections, opinions and beliefs of the Company. Such statements involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors, and reliance should not be placed thereon. In addition, this press release contains "forward-looking statements." Actual events or results or the actual performance of the Company may differ materially from those reflected or contemplated in such forward-looking statements.

This press release has not been approved by the securities regulatory authority of Qatar or any other state or jurisdiction.



ANNOUNCEMENT FOR SHAREHOLDERS OF DAMAAN ISLAMIC INSURANCE COMPANY BEEMA

Damaan Islamic Insurance Company (BEEMA) is pleased to announce to its honorable shareholders that dividend for the financial year ending on December 31, 2024, which were decided to be distributed by the company's ordinary general assembly held on 18/2/2025, have been transferred to Qatar Central Depository (EDAA) pursuant to the Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Qatar Financial Markets Authority No. (7) of 2023 dated 15/11/2023. As per the decision, (EDAA) will distribute dividends according to the latest provided list of shareholders.



The delegation led by His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani at a key meeting with the delegation led by India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Qatar affirms stance against displacement of Palestinians

By **Tawfik Lamari**
Staff Reporter

HE the Official Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) Dr Majed al-Ansari confirmed yesterday the continuation of Qatari aid to Gaza.

As aid in the form of 20mn litres of fuel, out of a total of 30mn litres, arrived in Gaza, the official stressed that "there is a great need for aid in Gaza" and that "aid should not be used to (apply) pressure in negotiations".

Dr al-Ansari said in the weekly briefing of the ministry that a mechanism has been put in place to handle enquiries and complaints regarding the entry of aid into Gaza.

While they are awaiting updates from the field about the entry of the aid, the official renewed his call to all parties to abide by the terms of the agreement.

The MoFA spokesman stressed that Qatar is committed to supporting efforts to start negotiations on the Gaza agreement and expressed hopes that it will lead to the second phase.

He said that there is a positive atmosphere for the negotiations to advance, and that the mediation is ongoing for the second phase to begin.

The provisions of the first phase need to be implemented before the second phase of the ceasefire agreement begins, and the matter of the delegations to the talks remains to be decided by the parties involved.

Dr al-Ansari said that while "there are no specific dates", recent statements from the Israeli side have been positive, which gives hope that conditions would be in place for the second phase.



HE Dr Majed al-Ansari

To a query as to whether Israel has given a commitment to take part in the second phase of the negotiations, the official said that "we will not comment on behalf of the Israeli government regarding its involvement in the negotiations, but the atmosphere is positive".

He emphasised Qatar's commitment to efforts to launch negotiations on the second phase and to work with all parties.

Dr al-Ansari stressed that Qatar and all brothers in the region reject any displacement or resettlement of the Palestinian people without them obtaining their rights.

He added that Qatar is involved in the Arab Working Group on Gaza and that contacts are ongoing.

Concerning the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, Dr al-Ansari expressed Qatar's strong welcome of Saudi Arabia's role in hosting the US-Russian dialogue towards ending the suffering and war in Ukraine.

Calling for support for Riyadh's efforts, he said: "We hope to announce through negotiations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia the end of the Ukraine war."

Amir's visit 'an important step to boost Qatar-India relations': Indian media

Indian media outlets have highlighted the state visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to India.

Indian media have confirmed that His Highness the Amir's visit marks a significant milestone in strengthening relations between Qatar and India.

The visit underscores both nations' commitment to enhancing ties in economic, commercial, cultural, and other fields, with the aim of benefiting their peoples and fostering regional stability and development.

They noted that the two countries enjoy deep-rooted historical ties of friendship, trust and mutual respect, and pointed to the development of these relations over the years, especially in the fields of trade, investment, energy, technology and culture.

"ETV Bharat" stated that the visit of His Highness the Amir to India is a pivotal moment in the path of deepening bilateral relations.

In a report titled *Why Qatar's Amir Visit to India Assumes Multi-Faceted Significance*, the TV channel confirmed that His Highness the Amir's visit will solidify efforts to co-operate in establishing stability and regional development.

The report said: "The agenda during His Highness the Amir's visit is expected to encompass deliberations on economic collaboration, defence co-operation, and energy security".

"Given Qatar's influential role in West Asia and India's growing global presence," the report said, "-this visit is anticipated to pave the way for collaborative efforts in regional stability and development".

It further said that the visit comes amid New Delhi's "Look West Policy" that advocates the expansion and extension of India's relations with West Asian countries, pointing to the success of Qatar and India in establishing a robust bilateral relations encompassing economic, political, defence and cultural dimensions.

The report highlighted Qatar as a reliable global energy source, citing its position as the largest supplier of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to India.

Qatar also exports ethylene, propylene, ammonia, urea, and polyethylene to India, with a significant trade surplus in favour of Qatar.

The ETV report reviewed the fields of co-operation and the volume of bilateral trade, noting that Indian companies are seeking to increase investments in various sectors in Qatar, including infrastructure, communications, information technology, and energy.

Indian television channel NDTV highlighted the deep-rooted historical ties between

Doha and New Delhi, built on friendship, trust, and mutual respect.

Over the years, the relationship between the two nations has continued to evolve, particularly in trade, investment, energy, technology, and culture.

In a report covering the state visit of His Highness the Amir, NDTV noted that the visit comes shortly after Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's trip to Washington, where he reviewed developments in the Middle East.

Titled *Prime Minister Modi Welcomes Qatar's Amir at the Airport: What's on the Agenda*, the report emphasised that this is His Highness the Amir's second official visit to India, following a previous trip in 2015.

It also highlighted Qatar's significant efforts to support and ensure the well-being of the Indian community in the country.

Meanwhile, the *Hindustan Times* published a report titled *PM Modi makes an exception, goes to Delhi airport to receive Qatar's Amir*.

The article detailed how Modi personally welcomed His Highness the Amir at the airport as a mark of respect and special recognition.

According to the report, His Highness the Amir will hold discussions with Indian President Droupadi Murmu, Modi, and senior officials on strengthening bilateral relations across various sectors.

Additionally, business leaders, policymakers, and industry stakeholders will explore investment opportunities and technological partnerships between Qatar and India.

The *Economic Times*, in its analysis titled *From energy to diplomacy: Exploring the multifaceted India-Qatar relationship*, described His Highness the Amir's visit as a testament to the enduring partnership between the two nations.

The report underscored the strategic depth of co-operation across multiple critical domains, reflecting shared efforts toward regional stability.

Analyst Rajeev Agarwal remarked that His Highness the Amir's visit comes at a crucial time for New Delhi, not only in securing its energy security but also in reinforcing ties with Qatar, a key player in West Asia.

He highlighted the significant momentum in bilateral relations over the past year.

Agarwal further noted that Qatar has emerged as a geopolitical hub in West Asia, playing a pivotal role in various international issues, including the Afghan file and ongoing efforts to end the war in Gaza.

He praised Qatar's expertise in mediation and conflict resolution, emphasising its critical role in fostering peace through dialogue worldwide. - **QNA**

Cultural ties between Qatar, India are deeply rooted in history

Qatar and India share cultural relations extending centuries.

These relations have been strengthened through trade and cultural interaction between the peoples, as India has been a major trading destination for Qatar and GCC countries for centuries.

Qatari merchants used to head to the Indian coast to sell pearls and import products, which allowed for mutual cultural influences that have continued until today.

Since the 1970s, Qatar and India have shared strong diplomatic relations and bilateral co-operation, resulting in a strategic partnership that encompassed all aspects, including politics, economy, and culture.

Cultural exchange was constantly present.

The Indian community in Qatar has contributed to strengthening cultural relations through numerous events, including the "Qatar: Our Second Home" festival, organised in co-operation with the Theatre Affairs Centre of the Ministry of Culture in 2017, and which featured performances in various Indian languages while reflecting the culture and civilisation of Qatar and India.

Cultural ties between the countries were further strengthened with Qatar Museums (QM)'s selection of the 2019 Year of Culture Qatar-India as part of its Year of Culture initiative, with joint events, cultural exchange, and co-operation in literature, arts, and heritage.

As part of the Year of Culture, a number of artistic events were organised, including the "Contemporary Qatar" exhibition, which highlighted the rapid social and urban transformation being witnessed in Qatar from the perspective of a group of emerging Qatari artists.

Doha also hosted many Indian exhibitions, music, and art events, the most important of which were the "Gems and Jewels from Royal Indian Courts" exhibition at the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA), and the "Where Cultures Meet: A Photographic Encounter Between Qatar and India" exhibition, held at Katara - the Cultural Village, which was the result of the work of Qatari photographers who travelled to India to take pictures, and that of two Indian photographers who resided in Qatar and conveyed the cultural diversity through pictures.

In 2019, the Qatari Forum for Authors, in co-operation with the Indian community in Doha, held a symposium on *Cultural Exchange between Qatar and India: Diversified Literary Proximity Despite Long Distance*, which was attended by Indian author Abdul Kabeer Vellapurattu, who was the editor-in-chief of the Islamic Publishing House (IPH) as well as the first place winner in the Sheikh Hamad Award for Translation and International Understanding in the Achievement Category in the Malayalam Language, and writer Sheikh Muhammad, the director of the Dialogue Centre in India, who won second place in the award in the Achievement Category in the Malayalam Language, along with K C Abdul Latheef, the head of the Indian Cultural Centre in Qatar.

In August 2022, the Qatari Authors Forum hosted writer Suhail Abdul Hakeem to discuss his translated book, *Echoes of Silence Anthology from the poems of the Indian poet Veerankutty*, issued by the Publication and Translation Services department at the Ministry of Culture.

During the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, as part of the accompanying events, the Indian embassy and the Indian Cultural Centre organised traditional dance performances for the global audience.

Cultural institutions in Qatar are considered an effective partner in enhancing cultural co-operation between the two countries.

Katara recently hosted the Qatar International Arts Festival (QIAF) with the participation of a large number of Indian artists.

Katara also witnesses the continuous presentation of many artistic and musical performances that express popular folklore in India, in addition to the immersion of Indian visual artists in various cultural events in Qatar.

Within the framework of the joint and continuous co-operation between various institutions in Qatar and India, there was collaboration between Katara and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in the Katara Space Science Programme.

Under the auspices of the Indian embassy in Qatar, the Indian Cultural Centre in Qatar acts as a hub for cultural activities, organising events celebrating Indian heritage through performances, exhibitions, and festivals held in Qatar, in addition to offering regular Hindi language classes.

Qatar hosts the Indian community, the largest in the country.

There are around 45,000 students across 19 Indian schools in Qatar, while many Indian students continue their higher education in Qatar, contributing to the important intellectual exchange between the two countries.

Indian culture is known for its great diversity in the fields of philosophy, literature, and arts, especially Indian cinema, which is one of the largest and most famous film industries in the world, producing hundreds of films annually in multiple languages.

India also boasts about 40 sites listed on the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) World Heritage List, 32 of which are related to cultural tourism.

End of the Liquidation Announcement

The Liquidator – Samer Hussein Jaghoub
Deloitte & Touche – Qatar Branch
Declares

finalizing the procedures
of the Liquidation of

Blue Gate Trading and Contracting Company W.L.L
Commercial Registry No. (80997)

In accordance with the provisions of the law, and accordingly, he disclaims his responsibility from the Company, and its commercial registration was cancelled from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

QLM takes part in 4th Annual Education City Career Fair

QLM Life & Medical Insurance Company participated in the activities of the 4th Annual Education City Career Fair held by the Qatar Foundation recently.



At the fair, QLM introduced its business activities and present both job and training opportunities for students and graduates.

QLM also introduced its specialised graduate pathway, which has been developed specifically for fresh Qatari graduates.

QLM chief administrative officer Turki Abdulaziz al-Subaie said that the Education City Career Fair was a win-win situation for both the students and the employers.

"The event was a great collaborative effort as all of the Education City students had a chance to meet with top employers from various sectors and career fields over the course of the event," he said.

Additionally, QLM presented different internship opportunities across its organisation targeting a broad range of disciplines, such as risk management, legal studies and information technology.

Announcement

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Student entrepreneurship programme by QU, Shell Qatar launched



Qatar University (QU) and Shell Qatar have partnered to launch the Shell Intilaaqah-Qatar Programme, designed to ignite the entrepreneurial spirit in Qatari youth, equipping them with the necessary skills, mindset, and confidence to establish and manage successful businesses.

The programme will provide students with a comprehensive range of business and soft skills and will connect them with supportive networks within the market.

At the opening ceremony, Rob Maxwell, senior vice-president, and managing director of Qatar Shell, said: "Partnering with QU on the Shell Intilaaqah programme presents an exciting opportunity to nurture local talent and bolster Qatar's social and economic growth."

Shell Intilaaqah in Qatar adopts a broad definition of en-

trepreneurship that goes beyond the creation of startups. It encompasses various value-creating activities in different domains, including existing organisations (intrapreneurship), communities, and environments (social entrepreneurship), as well as personal growth and development.

The programme's focus on cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset – the foundation for all entrepreneurial endeavours – complements the current offerings of entrepreneurship training programmes in Qatar. It is also aligned with the Qatar National Vision 2030, enhancing citizens' abilities to contribute to the nation's social and economic goals.

Participants will receive tailored advisory services and coaching from business experts to help them overcome challenges faced in the local business environment.

Dr Omar al-Ansari, president of QU, stated: "At QU, we firmly believe that empowering the next generation of entrepreneurs is the key to driving innovation and sustainable economic growth for Qatar. Our collaboration with Shell Qatar on this significant initiative is a testament to our commitment to fostering entrepreneurial talent within our university."

The first round of the programme will commence this month and run for eight weeks. At the pilot stage, the programme is open to QU students. The programme is expected to host two intakes of students each year, admitting approximately 150 participants in the first year. The Center for Entrepreneurship and Organisational Excellence at the College of Business and Economics is acting as the local implementing partner for the programme.



NCSA launches National Incident Management Framework

QNA
Doha

Under the patronage of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, the National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) yesterday launched the National Incident Management Framework, with the attendance of a number of Their Excellencies and senior officials in the country.

The National Incident Management Framework aims to enhance the country's readiness to minimise the direct consequences in the event of a cyber incident with national impact. It also provides an organised approach and guidelines to manage cyber incidents and reduce their impact through co-ordination between decision-makers and various involved entities.

In his speech, HE the President of the National Cyber Security Agency, Engineer Abdulrahman bin Ali al-Farahid al-Malki, said that the National Framework aims to meet the evolving needs and challenges of Qatar by establishing a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to managing cyber incidents with national impact. He emphasised that this framework is an important initiative to strengthen the country's ability and its institutions to handle and respond effectively to cyber incidents.

He pointed out that the NCSA designed the framework in line with the best global practices in cybersecurity governance, ensuring the co-operation of state's en-



leadership and control, cyber incident detection and monitoring, investigation, national strategic response, recovery and system restoration, regulations, standards, compliance, and partnerships, and national incident review.

Al-Sulaiti underlined that the framework includes five operational phases. The first phase involves reporting and classification; the second phase is the incident response; the third phase includes response and investigation; the fourth phase includes handling and recovery; and the fifth and final phase is closure and review.

The agency organised three important discussion sessions during the event about cyber incidents and the role of law enforcement, the importance of Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRT), and the Incident and Crisis Management Frameworks.

The National Incident Management Framework aims to provide a comprehensive approach to managing cyber incidents at the national level, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of partners in the event of a cyber incident with national impact, enhancing partners' understanding of NCSA's approach to handling cyber incidents, and facilitating co-operation between law enforcement authorities and the agency for criminal investigations into cybercrimes.

Furthermore, the framework ensures a co-ordinated, appropriate, and effective response when a cyber incident occurs, facilitates the immediate restoration of services and operations after a cyber incident, and identifies and implements necessary improvements based on lessons learned. (QNA)

Msheireb Museums, Sidra Medicine kick start 2025 Science Café Series



Experts at the Science Cafe discussion.

Msheireb Museums and Sidra Medicine organised the first session of 2025 Science Café Series, titled 'Nurturing Health: Our Microbiome and AI-Driven Insights for Wellness', bringing together experts and a large audience at Msheireb Downtown Doha's Bin Jelmood House on Monday.

Science Café, jointly launched in 2024, is designed to promote public understanding of healthcare innovation, research and wellness updates through accessible, and interactive dialogues.

In a press statement, Msheireb Museums general manager Abdullah al-Naama said: "The Science Café series allows us the opportunity to provide current perspectives on Qatar's evolving healthcare landscape, while also inspiring the public through meaningful discussions."

Sidra Medicine's chief research officer, Prof Khalid Fakhro, said: "The new series of Science Café

2025 promises to be more interactive and engaging. It is thanks to our partners, Msheireb Museums, that our concept became a reality in 2024 and grew from a small community initiative, to one that has educated, informed and engaged hundreds of families and students in Qatar about science and culture."

The Nurturing Health session featured two presentations delivered by experts from Sidra Medicine.

Dr Souhaila al-Khodor discussed "Gut Instincts: Decoding the Hidden World Within" and provided an introduction to the human microbiome, explaining its functions and the factors that influence its composition, such as lifestyle, diet, and environment.

"Revolutionising Women's Wellness: AI and Precision Nutrition" by Dr Annalisa Terranegra addressed the use of precision nutrition in improving health and managing diseases.

The session covered the lat-

est applications in the field, including wearable technology, AI-driven apps, and DNA and microbiome tests that help personalise nutritional plans and dietary interventions.

The panel session, featuring both speakers, also included Sirine Abou al-Hassan, Chief Clinical Dietitian from Aman Hospital.

Dr Sahar Da'as, research manager at Sidra Medicine and founder and lead of the Science Café series, said: "The response from the public, students and families has been very positive and also indicative of the need to bring science to the community. This year, we are focusing on topics related to AI in healthcare, community health, wellness and specialist topics"

The 2025 Science Café Series will feature topics such as AI in precision medicine; community health; the wellness and comprehensive care industry and rare genetic conditions.

QC launches 'Giving Lives On' Ramadan campaign to aid millions worldwide

Qatar Charity (QC) has launched its Ramadan campaign for 1446 AH-2025 AD, called 'Giving Lives on'; it was announced yesterday. The campaign aims to benefit 4.5mn people in need across 40 countries, including Qatar, with the support from benefactors in Qatar. The QC campaign will deliver aid and development projects, with a strong focus on Gaza where over 2mn people face a food crisis. The campaign will also address other basic needs and support early recovery.

QC's chief marketing officer Ahmad Yousef Fakhro thanked donors and urged them to support the 'Giving Lives On' campaign to aid millions in need, including internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, vulnerable families abroad, and those with low-income in Qatar.

Fakhro explained that the campaign's name, 'Giving Lives On', reflects Qatar's deeply rooted generosity and encourages people to emulate their ancestors' kindness, especially during Ramadan, to help those in need globally. Fakhro noted that QC offers easy donation methods, including online (qcharity.org/en) and via mobile app (qch.qa/appen), and can assist with Zakat calculations for individuals and companies.

Donors can easily calculate and give their Zakat through the "Home Collector" service on the app (qch.qa/appen), or by calling 44290000. They can also donate at QC's branches and mall collection points in shopping malls.



QC officials at a press conference to announce the Ramadan campaign.

During Ramadan, QC's seasonal projects and humanitarian aid aim to support over 2.1mn people both within Qatar and internationally, with an estimated cost of QR166mn.

QC's chief global programmes officer Nawaf Abdulla AlHammedi, explained that the Ramadan projects outside Qatar, include 'Feed the Fasting' (hot meals and food packages), 'Zakat al-Fitr' and 'Eid Clothing'.

These projects will be implemented in 39 countries across Asia, Africa, and Europe, with priority given to crisis-affected countries like Palestine, Syria, Sudan, and Yemen. He mentioned that Gaza will receive significant attention, with plans for the largest Iftar project on Ramadan's first day and the dispatch of relief convoys.

Al-Hammadi stated that the campaign will mobilise support to implement various projects (shelter, water, mosques, orphan sponsorship, etc.) with an estimated cost of QR282mn, benefitting 2.4mn people.

QC's chief local programmes officer Faisal Rashid AlFehaid, mentioned locally implemented Ramadan projects that include 'Mobile Iftar for Farm Workers' in seven places and 'Iftar Tables' (Ramadan tents) at 46 locations. He also noted 'Ramadan Supply' for families with limited income, widows, and divorced women, as well as shopping coupons, in addition to Zakat al-Fitr and Eid gifts. AlFehaid added that aid will be provided through the 'Alaqraboon App' for debtors, prisoners, and humanitarian cases.

Ramadan offers at Alwadi Hotel Doha

Alwadi Hotel Doha has announced a range of Ramadan experiences, from family Iftar gatherings to Suhoor nights, as well as personalised catering for private celebrations.

Guests can indulge in Iftar buffet in the beautifully decorated Wahat Alwadi ballroom. On the menu are Arabic and international favourites, including fresh seafood, a sushi counter, a shawarma station, and handcrafted desserts, to the accompaniment of live traditional entertainment. There is a dedicated play area for children. Priced at QR220 per person and QR110 for children aged 6-12. Special group rates available.

O'Glacée Pool Terrace offers an outdoor Suhoor experience, with a selection of cold and hot mezzes, a sushi counter, and live cooking stations serving Ramadan specialties, to the sounds of live traditional melodies of Oud player. Priced at QR190 per person, QR 95 for children aged 6-12. Special group rates available.

For a refined and intimate Suhoor experience, guests can enjoy Suhoor Alwadi, a curated Arabic tray served at AtTEAtude Café, featuring an assortment of traditional Ramadan delights.

The exclusive Ramadan stay offer is available for an exclusive 15% discount on the Best Available Rate and an Iftar buffet experience for two at Wahat Alwadi. Guests can also order handcrafted cakes and desserts from AtTEAtude Café to take home, a statement added.



QIB and Al Meera introduce new co-brand credit card

Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB), in partnership with Al Meera Consumer Goods Company, has launched a new QIB Al Meera co-branded credit card, reinforcing its commitment to innovation and customer-centric banking. The new co-branded credit card provides cardholders with exclusive rewards and adds convenience to their everyday shopping. The QIB Al Meera credit card allows customers to earn Meera Rewards points on all purchases, which can be redeemed across Al Meera branches. Cardholders can earn Meera Rewards points on every transaction, earning one Meera Rewards point for every QR5 spent locally, one Meera Rewards point for every QR4 spent internationally, and one Meera Rewards point for every QR2 spent at Al Meera, whether in-store or online. As part of the exclusive launch offer valid until May 31, new cardholders who spend QR20,000 in the first three months will earn 20,000 Meera Rewards welcome points instead of 10,000 points. Additional benefits include free delivery on online purchases above QR100, an extended three-year validity period

for Meera Rewards points and priority checkout counters for QIB Al Meera cardholders. As a Visa Platinum credit card, the QIB Al Meera credit card enhances the shopping experience with premium lifestyle privileges. Cardholders will enjoy complimentary access to 25 airport lounges worldwide, offers on travel, dining and hotel offers, as well as complimentary 'Buy 1 Get 1' My Book offers through QIB Mobile app. D Anand, QIB General Manager - Personal Banking Group, said: "We are pleased to introduce the new QIB Al Meera co-branded credit card. This credit card is designed to offer greater flexibility and benefits, allowing customers to earn rewards effortlessly while managing their expenses with ease. By partnering with Al Meera, we are creating a seamless shopping and banking experience that aligns with our customers' expectations and lifestyle." Saeed Mohammed al-Nabet, executive director of Human Resources and Administrative Affairs at Al Meera, added: "The QIB Al Meera credit card is



The new co-branded credit card provides cardholders with exclusive rewards and adds convenience to their everyday shopping.

a significant step in our commitment to offering customers added convenience and value. We are confident that this collaboration will transform the shopping experience for our customers." Eligible customers can get their cards

instantly via the QIB Mobile app. Once approved, cardholders can choose to receive their new credit card from the C-Ring Service Center or have it delivered by Q-Post. The digital version of the credit card will be instantly available on the QIB

Mobile app through which cardholders can immediately use it for online transactions and add it to their digital wallet to use at physical outlets. For more information, visit www.qib.com.qa/en-AlMeeraCard



GU-Q literary arts fest ends with message of inclusion

Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q) has concluded its inaugural Black Literary Arts Festival. The celebration of Black voices and storytelling in commemoration of US Black History Month, offered a window into global currents of diversity and inclusion. The festival brought together an impressive lineup of authors, scholars, and artists whose work has shaped contemporary literature and global discourse.

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, Nikole Hannah-Jones, creator of The 1619 Project, and Olympic medalist and celebrated author Ibtihaj Muhammad were among the distinguished speakers who engaged audiences in thought-provoking discussions on history, identity, and the transformative power of storytelling.

The festival featured book signings, masterclasses, children's storytime, a performance night, and engaging panels exploring the impact of Black literary contributions across cultures. "This festival celebrates the Black writers who have held up a mirror and demanded that society 'look,'" said GU-Q dean, Safwan Masri. "In line with this year's Black History Month theme, African Americans and Labour, we are reminded that writing is work—intellectual, emotional, political, cultural. For Black authors, it has also often been an act of survival. When institutions



barred them, when publishers ignored them, when history tried to erase them — they wrote anyway, and they write still."

In the opening panel moderated by Al Jazeera presenter, Folly Bah Thibault, Ibtihaj Muhammad and Su'ad Abdul Khabeer reflected on the impact of their writing on the global community, and offered insight into the power of representation, and best practices for those who are interested in telling their own stories.

"Take advantage of the resources you have, and don't be afraid to reach out. I know that there is a lot of public figures, celebrities, and artists who are looking for an opportunity to mentor," advised Muhammad. Although there was nothing similar to her book and poetry collection when it was published, Abdul Khabeer recounted the experience of having her work validated by readers.

The festival also featured a masterclass on writing a memoir led by Michaela Angela Davis, creator of The Hair Tales, an American documentary television series, and the biography of Mariah Carey, and another on cross-ethnic coalition building in Arab and Black American Literatures by Dr Theri Pickens, author of New Body Politics: Narrating Arab and Black Identity in the Contemporary United States.

Novelists Dr Chika Unigwe, Tope Folarin, and Dr Stephan Buoro offered insight on storytelling, while Jazz historian Dr Maurice Jackson, performing arts professor Dr Anita Gonzalez, and journalist Rachel Swarns discussed the racial history of Washington, DC, and Georgetown University, covering themes such as historical memory, cultural identity, and the intersections of race and literature.

QIFF a launchpad for local startups

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

The Qatar International Food Festival (QIFF) is proving to be a launchpad for local culinary startups such as All About Doughnuts and Majboos in the Cup, offering exposure, feedback, and a taste of success in a competitive food scene.

The two online stores, among other startups participating in the 14th edition of QIFF, taking place at Hotel Park until February 22, are capitalising on the festival's popularity to gain traction and customer response.

All About Doughnuts, a Doha-based online bakery launched in 2021, is making waves with its handcrafted treats. Founded by Filipino expatriate Michelle Alcazar and Qatari national Aisha al-Ahli, the business started from humble beginnings.

"It all began with giving out doughnuts to my friends and family," Alcazar told Gulf Times. "Eventually, I started receiving orders through word of mouth."

What sets All About Doughnuts apart, she pointed out, is its commitment to using natural ingredients without preservatives, and offering vegan options. Operating solely through Instagram, she said: "QIFF is an excellent platform to showcase and promote our products. Everyone in Qatar comes here, so it's a great opportunity for us to listen to our clients and their feedback."

Alcazar highlighted the diverse customer base as a major benefit, saying: "Customers come from different countries and cultures, offering a range of perspectives. Almost all the feedback has been positive, with people praising the doughnut's soft texture, warm serving temperature, and unique, not-too-sweet fillings!"



(From left) Chefs Hassan Wehbi and Mohamed Bazaza at their QIFF booth yesterday. PICTURES: Joey Aguilar

She said the festival's popularity, fuelled by vloggers and word-of-mouth marketing, has been instrumental in All About Doughnuts' growth. "We're very happy because a lot of people learn about us from vloggers, and the word is spreading that our doughnuts are delicious," Alcazar said. While they currently have no plans to open a physical store, she said they are focused on consistent quality and taste of their handmade products.

Another QIFF participant this year is Majboos in the Cup, a unique concept that infuses Qatari tradition with a modern twist. Co-owner Mohamed Bazaza said the idea began just a month prior to QIFF.

"Me and my friend Hassan Wehbi, we're both chefs, wanted to create something for the Qataris that celebrates their culture and tradition, while adding a fusion from other cuisines," he said.

The result, Bazaza said, was a traditional Majboos, a flavourful rice dish, in a convenient cup: "We kept the authentic rice recipe intact, and we came up with a wonderful recipe that has become a hit!"

For Majboos in the Cup, he noted that QIFF is their debut platform, stressing that: "To be



Michelle Alcazar showcases some of their doughnuts at QIFF 2025.

here, you have to offer something good, because the festival attracts a significant crowd of hungry customers ready to spend. "If you are not good, you're not going to sell and you can't do anything, it's a two-way... or else, there are more than 250 restaurants (and eateries) to choose from," Bazaza said.

As a first time participant at QIFF, he lauded the organising of the event, which continues to draw crowds daily with an array of culinary and entertainment offerings. He said the response has been overwhelmingly positive: "Customers are amazed. We're getting fantastic feedback. Those who order initially come back for more, thanking us for what we're doing. Everyone likes what we're doing"

Hilton Salwa Beach Resort announces Ramadan experience

Hilton Salwa Beach Resort & Villas has announced its "The Magic of Togetherness" experience during Ramadan.

"From indulgent Iftar and Suhoor feasts to rejuvenating spa treatments and welcoming accommodations spanning rooms & suites, Arabian townhouses and beach villas with private pools, the resort offers something for everyone," a statement said.

The Ramadan Staycation Package offers exclusive rates starting at QR999 per night, including Iftar, Suhoor, and waterpark access, valid from February 28-March 29, 2025. Villa bookings made until February 23 will enjoy an additional 20% early bird discount with rates starting from QR2,399 per night.

The award-winning Middle Eastern restaurant Levantine, nestled in the heart of the resort's Arabian Village, hosts Iftar and Suhoor meals. Family-style set menu on weekdays comes at QR155



per person or buffet on weekends at QR220, both inclusive of traditional Ramadan beverages. Suhoor is served daily with a curated set menu for QR130 per person.

For non-fasting guests, a variety of dining options remain open, including Souk Kitchen which offers an International Buffet for breakfast and dinner, Dante Cucina Italiana which of-

fers a la carte Italian delights and Telal & MIQA at Desert Falls Water & Adventure Park.

The Desert Falls Water & Adventure Park remains open throughout Ramadan. Day visitors can enjoy a discounted rate of QR150 for both adults and juniors on Waterpark admissions, valid from March 1 - 27. The eforea Spa presents a special 40% discount

on all treatments (excluding facials), throughout the month.

"Ramadan is a time of reflection, togetherness, and generosity, and at Hilton Salwa Beach Resort & Villas, we aim to create an atmosphere where guests can experience the magic of the season," said Rishab Sahney, commercial director of Hilton Salwa Beach Resort & Villas.

Visit Qatar concludes participation in Saudi Travel Market 2025

QNA
Riyadh

Visit Qatar has successfully concluded its participation as a Diamond Sponsor in the Saudi Travel Market 2025, which is one of the key events in the travel and tourism sector in the region. Visit Qatar indicated in a statement yesterday that the exhibition brought together over 250 exhibitors from 30 countries, providing a strategic platform for it to showcase its diverse tourism offerings and strengthen partnerships in the Saudi market. In this context, Senior Manager for the Middle East and Africa (MENA) at Visit Qatar Saleh al-Nisf expressed his pride to participate as a Diamond Sponsor in the Saudi Travel Market 2025, which was an ideal opportunity to strengthen the relationship with the tourism sector in Saudi Arabia, and highlight the unique experiences that Qatar offers to Saudi travellers. Al-Nisf added that during the event, key market players were engaged, and Qatari hospitality,

diverse tourism experiences, and global attractions were showcased, strengthening Qatar's position as a preferred tourist destination. He added that Visit Qatar is committed to enhancing co-operation with partners in the Saudi market to attract more visitors from Saudi Arabia in the near future. Visit Qatar led a high-level delegation, which included Qatar Airways, Qatar Calendar, a group of Qatari hotels, and destination management companies, where they showcased Qatari global hospitality, distinctive cultural experiences, and specially designed tourism packages to meet the aspirations of all travellers.

Qatar continues to achieve remarkable achievements in the tourism sector, as it received over 5mn international visitors in 2024, with Saudi visitors accounting for 27% of them (1.3mn visitors), reflecting an exceptional growth of 1,093% over the past three years. This growth confirms the promising opportunities to enhance tourism co-operation between Qatar and Saudi Arabia.



Sheikha Moza attends social entrepreneurship event

Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation (QF), attended yesterday a special event for the Social Entrepreneurship Programme, organised by QF's Pre-University Education (PUE) in collaboration with Mentor Arabia.

The event highlighted the importance of ethical leadership and the role of social entrepreneurship in driving positive change.

The event was also attended by Queen Silvia of Sweden, president of Mentor International, and Prince Turki bin Talal bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, chairman of Mentor Arabia.

During the event, seven finalists presented five entrepreneurial projects, showcasing their innovative ideas and social impact, with a strong emphasis on their potential to drive sustainable development. A distinguished panel of experts and social entrepreneurship specialists assessed the projects based on key criteria, including creativity, sustainability, feasibility, and overall societal impact.

This valuable experience provided participants with constructive feedback and strategic guidance, enabling them to refine their initiatives, develop their ideas, and transform them into impactful and sustainable long-term projects.

Sheikha Noof Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani, executive director, Strategic Initiatives in Pre-University Education, QF emphasised that upholding core values is essential in a rapidly changing world, as they form the foundation for building resilient societies.

"The Community Entrepre-



Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser attends the Social Entrepreneurship Programme showcase for the Mentor Arabia and Akhlaquna Initiatives. PICTURES: Aisha al-Musallam

neurship Programme aims to empower young people by equipping them with the skills and support needed to develop impactful social initiatives that align with the vision of the 'Akhlaquna' initiative." She added, "Education at QF goes beyond academic achievement; it is about shaping character, fostering social responsibility, and instilling ethical values."

Sheikha Noof highlighted that the programme has successfully developed leadership skills and transformed ideas into practical solutions. She pointed out that the partnership between Akhlaquna and Mentor Arabia reinforces ethical values through specialised training in social entrepreneurship.

Fatima Salem Naqadan, a

24-year-old student at Qatar University, was honoured for her project 'Carrot Cash', a parent-controlled digital wallet designed to reignite children's motivation

by encouraging them to complete tasks and develop themselves. The project was recognised for its excellence and innovation in social entrepreneurship. In cel-

bration of their efforts and significant contributions, all participants were invited to the stage, highlighting their collective role in driving innovation and foster-

ing a positive societal impact.

Naqadan, said: "Winning this project gives me great motivation to continue developing it and enhancing its impact. It is not just a personal achievement but a step towards creating tangible change that benefits individuals and society."

Anthony Abi Zeid, programme director at Mentor Arabia Foundation, said: "The programme aims to build a thriving and empowered youth community by equipping participants with the necessary skills, resources, and support to successfully launch, grow, and sustain social entrepreneurship projects. Our goal is not only to provide knowledge but to create a real and lasting impact on society."

He noted that 22 participants were selected for this edition of the programme, allowing them to benefit from more intensive and tailored training.

He added: "We are committed to ensuring that each participant receives the guidance and support needed to achieve their goals in the field of social entrepreneurship."



QatarDebate-organised European Universities Championship concludes

European Universities Arabic Debating Championship (EUADC 2025), organised by QatarDebate Center in collaboration with Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University (FSMVU), its strategic partner, concluded in Istanbul with widespread participation from university teams across Europe, both Arabic-speaking and non-Arabic-speaking.

The closing ceremony and final debate took place at Emin Sarac Cultural Center, attended by Deputy Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Ibn Haldun University, Necmeddin Bilal Erdogan, alongside several Turkish officials, representatives from QatarDebate, and a distinguished group of academics and debate experts from around the world.

The championship results

saw Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University (Turkiye) crowned champions of the 2nd European Universities Arabic Debate Championship – Open Category after defeating the University of Liverpool (UK) in the final round. The two teams debated the motion: "The abolition of Nato after the fall of Soviet Union."

In the Arabic as a second language category, the title was claimed by the Higher School of Economics (Russia).

Executive Director of QatarDebate, Dr Hayat Abdullah Marafi, expressed her pride in the championship's success, emphasising that Istanbul host of the International Universities Arabic Debate Championship in 2022 has once again proven itself as a hub for intellectual discourse and debate,



serving as a cultural capital that bridges East and West.

She also announced the signing of a memorandum of understand-

ing (MoU) with Ibn Haldun University to establish multidisciplinary graduate programmes aimed at enhancing scientific research,



educational activities, and training programmes.

This agreement also includes the exchange of expertise in specialised research fields and academic publishing. Dr Marafi highlighted that this follows the success of the first master's programme launched in partnership with Zaytuna University in Tunisia and noted that the official announcement of a new programme will take place during the 2nd International Conference on Debate and Dialogue, set to be held in Doha on May 19-20.

The closing ceremony also honoured the top-ranking teams and the five best Arabic speakers,

with awards presented as follows: Adnan Kank – Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University (1st place), Nouf Salman al-Bannai – Trinity College Dublin (2nd place), Dawood Badawi Abdu – Charles University (3rd place), Ibrahim O Nawji – Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University (4th place), Os al-Abraj – Charles University (5th place). Additionally, the top three speakers in the Arabic as a second language category were honoured: Antoine Klyouf (1st place), Igor Babanchikov – Higher School of Economics, Russia (2nd place), Abdulrahman Hajic – University of Sarajevo (3rd place). (QNA)

QYH launches first edition of recycling initiative

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

The Qatar Youth Hostels (QYH) has launched the first edition of the Tadweer (Arabic for recycling) initiative, which will continue until Feb 20.

Abdullah Saeed, head of Public Relations and Communications, said: "We are happy to open the Tadweer initiative whose founder is Al Anoud al-Muqbali, in the company's house square in Msheireb City. The initiative is distinguished by the presence of success partners who contributed to implementing the initiative on the ground, such as Istidama Company, the official sponsor, Earthna, the



QYH group photo at the event.

community sponsor, Msheireb Museums, the host entity, Action Me-

dia Company, the media sponsor? Al Anoud al-Muqbali, the found-

er of the initiative said: "Initially, I established the idea through my

participation in the Tourism Ideas Incubator Programme organised by

QYH in 2023. I searched for an idea that could be implemented on the ground and which is sustainable at the same time. Accordingly, I came up with the idea of an interactive awareness initiative that works to exploit fabrics that are harmful to the environment and reuse them for useful purposes. Accordingly, the initiative won second place and then moved to the planning and implementation stage in co-operation with QYH."

The initiative was opened on Feb 16 in the presence of the Assistant Undersecretary for Public Service Affairs at the Ministry of Municipality, the Head of the QYH and Bodies Department at the Ministry of Sports and Youth, and the Director of Msheireb Museums.

Sierra Leone embassy inaugurated in Doha



The embassy of Sierra Leone was inaugurated in Doha yesterday. The inauguration ceremony was attended by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation of Sierra Leone Alhaji Timothy Musa Kabba and HE Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi. (QNA)



Qatar supports Sudan's unity, rejects interference

Qatar reaffirmed its firm and steadfast stance in supporting the unity, independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the sisterly Republic of Sudan, rejecting any form of interference in its internal affairs.

Qatar reiterated its commitment to enhancing co-operation with the UN and various humanitarian agencies and organisations to enable them to address all the challenges and difficulties they face in implementing their humanitarian programmes and activities in Sudan. Qatar also called on the international community to intensify its efforts and provide additional urgent support and adequate funding for Sudan's Humanitarian Needs Response Plan and Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP).

This came in Qatar's statement delivered by HE Permanent Representative of Qatar to Geneva Dr Hind Abdulrahman al-Muftah, at the joint launch of the 2025 Sudan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan and Regional Refugee Response Plan.

Her Excellency pointed out that since the beginning of the crisis, and based on its humanitarian and fraternal duty, Qatar has been keen to continue providing all forms of support and humanitarian aid to alleviate the suffering of the Sudanese people, and has participated in co-hosting the High-level Pledging Event to Support the Humanitarian Response in Sudan and the Region in 2023, as well as launching an air bridge to deliver humanitarian aid to Sudanese brothers and evacuate some Qatari residency holders.

Her Excellency noted that Qatar's total contributions to Sudan since the outbreak of the war exceeded \$75mn, including providing humanitarian and developmental assistance, supplying food aid to those in need, supporting the Sudanese Red Crescent's capacity-building efforts, protecting and restoring family ties, providing necessary assistance to the Republic of South Su-

dan, for those who fled the conflict in Sudan, and supporting employment and livelihoods projects, particularly by enhancing agriculture and food security for vulnerable and conflict-affected populations. Qatari humanitarian charitable organisations, such as Qatar Charity, Qatar Red Crescent, and Silatech, have contributed to providing many forms of relief and development aid in various sectors, she added.

HE al-Muftah expressed Qatar's deep concern about the ongoing war in Sudan since April 2023, which has led to unprecedented catastrophic deterioration in the humanitarian, economic, social, and security conditions across the country, as well as severe damage to infrastructure, the collapse of essential services, especially in education and healthcare, an increasing number of those in need of relief aid, and rising numbers of displaced persons and refugees, the majority of whom are women and children.

The Permanent Representative of Qatar to Geneva emphasised that this situation requires the conflict parties to prioritise Sudan's national interests, work towards an immediate ceasefire, facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to those in need, protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, and engage in serious dialogue to avoid further risks, leading to a comprehensive dialogue that will bring about sustainable peace and preserve Sudan's unity while fulfilling the aspirations of its people for security, stability, and development.

Her Excellency thanked the organisers of the meeting and praised the efforts of the UN to assist the brotherly Sudanese people, alleviate their suffering, and to meet their growing needs. She pointed out that Sudan is currently classified as one of the largest humanitarian crises, with an estimated 30mn people in need of humanitarian assistance. (QNA)

Qatar discusses enhanced co-operation with Syria's civil defence organisation



Qatar International Search and Rescue Group held virtual meetings with the Civil Defence Organisation (White Helmets) of the sisterly Syrian Arab Republic. The meetings addressed ways to enhance co-operation, and exchanged expertise and co-ordination regarding the activation of the joint co-operation agreement between the two sides. During the meetings, the Qatari side was headed by Commander of the Qatar International Search and Rescue Group Major Khalid Abdullah al-Humaidi, while the Syrian side was headed by Head of the Civil Defence Organisation (White Helmets) Raed al-Saleh. (QNA)

Qatar's humanitarian support for millions of Syrians praised

QNA
Damascus

Syrian and Turkish officials and humanitarian experts have praised the support provided by Qatar to the Syrian people over the years, which has been reflected in numerous relief initiatives and assistance for a large number of displaced and refugee Syrians in various areas of Syria.

In exclusive statements to the QNA, they emphasised that the Qatari relief projects have benefited millions of Syrians over the past years and helped alleviate their suffering during the years of war. They pointed out that Qatar's consistent stance of standing with suffering people and supporting causes of justice and fairness has become a fundamental approach.

Deputy Minister of Social Affairs and Labour in Syria Ibrahim al-Ibrahim said Qatar's humanitarian relief efforts in Syria stood out in terms of quantity, quality, and performance, as they were pioneering initiatives targeting a large number of displaced and refugees, noting that these efforts were not limited to immediate support, but extended to sustainable projects in service, education, and healthcare sectors, making them a leading model in sustainable humanitarian work.

Al-Ibrahim added that Qatari charitable institutions have emerged as a key player in the humanitarian scene in Syria, launching massive projects that cover various aspects of life, from emergency relief to long-term programmes that help improve livelihoods. These projects were characterised by sustainability and a profound impact on the lives of beneficiaries, making Qatari support a model to be followed in relief and development fields, he noted.

Director of the Syrian Civil Defence (White Helmets) Raed al-Saleh highlighted the strong partnership between his organisation and Qatari entities, saying that Qatar's support through the Qatar Fund for Development after the 2023 earthquake was vital and played a key role in saving lives and supporting the organisation's operations and emergency response to the disaster.

It is impossible to forget that the first hand extended to help the Syrian Civil Defence during those difficult days came from Qatar, symbolising a message of hope in humanitarian solidarity and for saving lives, he said, pointing out that currently, this support continues with capacity building and specialised training for the teams.

Director of Qatar Charity (QC)'s office in Turkey Karam Ali spoke about QC's significant efforts, describing Qatar's support to the



Syrian people as a "lifeline" that has helped millions of Syrians over the years. In a statement, he said that over the past years, Qatar Charity has been one of the largest actors in humanitarian response in Syria, with total humanitarian and relief spending exceeding QR1bn, providing more than 41mn services in various sectors.

He added that among QC's key achievements is the establishment of the City of Hope for displaced persons in northwest Syria, which provides 1,400 housing units with integrated services for more than 46,000 beneficiaries. QC also supported the education sector by providing classrooms and school supplies, printing more than 545,000 schoolbooks, and enabling thousands of students to continue their education, in addition to the implementation of health and medical projects, including operating and supporting health centres and hospitals and providing ambulances, and other projects that served the suffering Syrian people.

In his statement to QNA, Secretary-General of Turkiye's Humanitarian Relief Foundation (HH) Dr Durmus Aydin spoke about the high-level co-ordination and deep partnership with Qatari supporting entities, noting their rapid response to the Syrian humanitarian crisis. He said that HH was the gateway for Qatari aid to the Syrian people, initially providing urgent aid to refugees in Turkey, and then expanding to cover the interior of Syria through open crossings with opposition areas.

He pointed out that in Turkiye, a large orphan city was established with funding from Qatari charitable societies in the Turkish town of Reyhanli, which includes schools, a health centre, dining halls, and sports fields, adding that it included a sewing workshop for Syrian women and a bakery that provides free bread to poor families and orphan centres were also created.

Additionally, a bakery was established in Kilis province to provide bread to displaced persons in the Azaz camps, as well as an emergency kitchen that serves 50,000 meals, he said. Al-Amal

charity hospital was also established in Reyhanli to provide medical services to Syrian refugees and wounded people coming from Syria.

In Syria, camps for displaced persons were built, including more than 5,000 caravans with facilities that include schools, mosques, and medical centres, Aydin said, adding that the first brick residential city was built near Bab Al-Hawa in 2015, in addition to the City of Hope in Sawran, which includes 1,400 homes, schools, a kindergarten, a mosque, a vocational school, water wells, markets, and sports fields, in partnership with Qatar Charity. He also noted the establishment of Al-Sham Hospital in Azaz camps, the first hospital within the camps, as well as a neonatal and paediatric intensive care unit in Khirbat al-Jawz area in Idlib, along with mobile clinics to provide healthcare.

Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, Qatar has been strongly present on the scene, rushing to provide urgent humanitarian aid to displaced and refugee Syrians in various locations. Qatari support was not limited to providing food, medicine, and shelter, but also included developmental projects aimed at improving living conditions for refugees, offering education and training opportunities, and empowering them to rely on themselves. In the crowded refugee camps, Qatar's imprint was clearly visible, with the establishment of model camps that provided displaced Syrians with a safe and dignified environment, equipped with health, educational, and service facilities. Qatar did not stop there but also focused on providing psychological and social support to refugees, helping them overcome the psychological trauma they had experienced.

In one of the latest completed projects in Syria, Qatar Charity inaugurated the City of Hope housing project in northern Syria. Today, despite the changing geopolitical landscape, relief convoys and humanitarian assistance continue to flow by land and air into Syria, easing the burden of the economic situation that the majority of Syrians are enduring.

Closure at Mesameer Interchange

The Public Works Authority (Ashghal) has announced a partial closure at the Mesameer Interchange from today until Saturday. The number of lanes will be reduced to traffic coming from E-Ring Road heading north, in addition to the exit loop of traffic from Industrial Area Road and heading north. The closure that will be implemented in co-ordination with the General Directorate of Traffic has been announced to carry out essential maintenance work. Ashghal will install road signs advising motorists of the temporary closure and has requested all to follow and abide by the speed limit to ensure safety.



Temporary road closure at Al Asiri intersection

The Public Works Authority (Ashghal) has announced a temporary full road closure at Al Asiri intersection (Exit 6) on Salwa Road, heading towards Bu Samra from 2am until 10am on Feb 21. The closure will be implemented in co-ordination with the General Directorate of Traffic to implement maintenance works on directional signs. Ashghal will install road signs advising motorists of the temporary closure and has requested all to follow and abide by the speed limit to ensure safety.



Sheikha Moza attends Mentor Arabia Gala Dinner



Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser addressing the the Mentor Arabia Gala Dinner.



Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser meets with Queen Silvia of Sweden. **PICTURES:** AR Al-Baker

Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Education Above All (EAA) Foundation, attended the Mentor Arabia Gala Dinner yesterday in collaboration with EAA.

The event brought together world leaders, dignitaries, and philanthropists in support of youth empowerment towards sustainable communities.

The event was also attended by Queen Silvia of Sweden, President of Mentor International, and hosted by Prince Turki bin Talal bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, Chairman of Mentor Arabia.

The evening provided a platform to champion the role of youth in building sustainable societies, while raising essential funds to support initiatives that equip young people with the education, skills, and opportunities they need to succeed.

Held at the Katara Hall at Raffles Doha, the gala dinner was a spectacular evening of purpose and philanthropy. Attendees were treated to inspiring speeches from world leaders, captivating cultural performances

celebrating creativity and resilience, and an exclusive charity auction featuring extraordinary items led by the renowned international auctioneer Simon de Pury. Guests had the opportunity to engage with influential decision-makers, business leaders, and changemakers who share a common vision of investing in young people for a better future.

Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser said: "I commend and thank Mentor Arabia for empowering Arab youth, who are the true wealth of our nations, and who will be the ones to shape the future of the Arab world. Today, above all, young people need hope for their future – a future where every one of them can be fulfilled and play an active role in galvanising the development of their countries. If we approach this challenge from an economic angle, we can see that failure to invest in young people and provide them with job opportunities constitutes a huge waste of any nation's most important resource."

Her Highness said on the partnership be-

tween EAA and Mentor Arabia in Lebanon and Qatar: "We look forward to a productive collaboration between Mentor Arabia and EAA Foundation that will support young people and qualify them to push the wheel of sustainable development forward."

"The two foundations are commencing a programme in Lebanon and Qatar, aiming to empower and employ youth. The programme will develop skills and employment pathways for more than 8,000 young people across the next four years. It will make a tremendous difference in their lives, linking educational outcomes to the labour market and helping them transition from higher education to meaningful jobs in various sectors."

Queen Silvia of Sweden stated: "Youth are the cornerstone of sustainable communities and the architects of a brighter future. By empowering them with the tools, knowledge, and support they need, we ensure not just their personal growth but also the resilience and prosperity of entire societies. Sustainable communities thrive

when young people are equipped to make informed decisions, take responsibility, and contribute meaningfully."

Prince Turki bin Talal bin Abdulaziz al-Saud said: "We are proud of the strategic partnerships we have recently established with key stakeholders in Qatar, such as Education Above All and the Akhlaquna Programme at Qatar Foundation. We firmly believe that through these strong collaborations, we can reach the largest possible number of children and youth, making a meaningful and positive impact on their lives."

Proceeds from the Mentor Arabia Gala Dinner 2025 will directly support the Youth Empowerment and Employment for Development (YEED) Project, a collaborative initiative between EAA Foundation and Mentor Arabia. This project is dedicated to providing thousands of young people in Qatar and Lebanon with essential skills, mentorship programs, and sustainable employment opportunities. By equipping youth with the tools that they need to suc-

ceed, YEED aims to foster long-term socio-economic growth and empower the next generation.

During the dinner, eight young entrepreneurs were announced as winners of the fourth edition of the "Mentor Arabia Youth Social Entrepreneurs Award". It honours young entrepreneurs for their exceptional achievements in the field of sustainable human and social development. They will in turn provide mentoring sessions to their peers in Qatar and the Arab world and inspire them to give back to their communities.

The success of the Mentor Arabia Gala Dinner 2025 was made possible through the support of key partners and sponsors, including Visionary Partners: Katara Hospitality, Qatar Airways, Doha Bank, and LuLu Group; Elite Partners: Place Vendôme and Chopard; and Honored Partners: Vodafone Qatar, Al Abdulghani Motors, Marriott Worldwide Business Councils Qatar, Snoonu, Floward, Elaan, Al Majed Jewellery, Leshia Bank and Alraiya Group.

Second International Conference on Religious Freedom and Peacemaking kicks off in Doha



HE Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad during her speech.

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Under the patronage of His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Second International Conference on Religious Freedom and Peacemaking, organised by the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue, in co-operation with the Multifaith Neighbors Network (MFNN), kicked off yesterday in Doha over three days, under the slogan "From Religious Freedom to Religious Responsibility: Building Peace in a Conflicting World", with the attendance of an elite group of religious scholars, academics, decision-makers, and religious leaders from around the world.

In her speech during the opening ceremony, HE Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad, Minister of State for International Co-operation, stressed the extremely delicate and complex circumstances in which this conference is being held for the entire world, due to the expansion of conflicts and the growing challenges that threaten its stability and the safety of civilians.

Al-Misnad considered the conference the best evidence that the problems of the world today and the military and intellectual conflicts have become border-less, and that the danger of their challenges has become a source of suffering and instability for the entire world, noting in a related context that today's conflicts have come to include countries that were recently considered relatively far from problems, to the point that talk now has become about cross-border challenges and threats, which makes everyone, each in his position and place, responsible for that confrontation and addressing the causes of those conflicts.

Al-Misnad also pointed out that the wide international and regional participation in the conference, which provided an ideal opportunity for the distinguished elite of prominent religious leaders and senior thinkers and academics participating in it from all over the world. It indicates the distinguished position that Qatar enjoys among them, which always confirms its firm position calling for peace and achieving reconciliation between the parties to conflicts around the world, and its interest in achieving communication and dialogue and providing its means and mechanisms in all its forms and levels for everyone without exception "as long as they are willing to find solutions to stop the conflict and look forward to that".

She expressed her hope that the efforts of the conference participants would yield useful results that would help everyone continue to unite and co-operate permanently in order to build true peace in this "unfortunately" conflicting world. Stressing the need to study the best way to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations that will be issued from the conference's dialogue sessions to achieve the desired goal and purpose that everyone aspires to.

The conference also comes within the framework of the message of the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue and Qatar's vision in promoting dialogue and understanding, at a time when humanity is facing unprecedented challenges, which requires a firm commitment to promoting dialogue, coexistence and mutual respect.

The focus is on why peace building is so imperative in a conflicted world

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Under the patronage of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID), in collaboration with the Multifaith Neighbors Network (MFNN), held yesterday the opening session of the International conference "From Religious Freedom to Religious Responsibility: Peacemaking in a Destabilised World" in Doha.

In his opening address Prof Ibrahim bin Saleh al-Naimi, the Chairman of DICID, said: "The name of the Islamic religion stems from peace, and it is a religion of love, brotherhood, and mercy. In our consultations to choose the topic of this conference, we were keen to include two words in its title (building peace and a conflicting world) because in reality, in our world today, they have become the utmost aspirations of the faithful, and the harshest things that disturb their sleep and sadden them, but at the same time, they will not extinguish the ray of hope in their hearts so that they may work with co-operation and determination to return this world to its senses and warn it of the consequences of its insistence and stubbornness; if these conflicts that surround it from every side continue like a bracelet surrounds the wrist."

Prof al-Naimi added: "From this standpoint comes the importance of this conference; to confirm through it that religious values and teachings are the only guarantee to confront the conflicts witnessed by many countries, especially (in the Middle East), and cause crises



Prof Ibrahim bin Saleh al-Naimi

at all levels. The day that a person adheres to the values and principles of his religion, it will certainly be the first line of defence against the evil tendencies of his soul to conflict with others, and the motivator and caller for love, peace and coexistence with others."

He highlighted that "the quest to open horizons for dialogue to build true peace between individuals and societies has been - and still is - one of - indeed the most important - pillars on which our mission at the DICID is based. Through many years and numerous projects of co-operation with religious leaders, global dialogue centres, scholars, thinkers and opinion leaders, we have strived to build bridges of convergence and joint work between all parties for dialogue and discussion about the challenges that prevent coexistence and peaceful coexistence between followers of religions and cultures."

Prof al-Naimi went on to say: "No-one disagrees

on the importance of the role of religious institutions and religious leaders in launching and leading peace-building efforts, especially in times of conflict and war; they are the most worthy of being mediators for calm by creating an appropriate environment for dialogue, facilitating negotiations, and promoting reconciliation.

Hence the importance of such meetings between us, and our gathering from different countries with different religions, ethnicities and diverse cultures to search together not only for the reasons for the continuation of these conflicts and ways to confront them, but also to try together to find future solutions that prevent them from happening in the first place or at least reduce them. This will not be possible for us except by building trust among us, to be transmitted honestly and faithfully to our countries and to the societies that we represent and whose religious and intellectual leadership we represent.

Prof al-Naimi recalled that "Qatar has established its name as a reliable international mediator and an influential player in mediation to resolve conflicts and build peace, and has succeeded in doing so in many of them, such as signing the Doha Agreement on Lebanon in 2008, the reconciliation file between Djibouti and Eritrea in 2011, the Darfur Peace Document in 2011, the Washington-Taliban Agreement in 2020, and Doha hosting peace negotiations between the conflicting parties in Chad in 2022. Recently, we have witnessed the vital Qatari role in joint efforts with Egypt, the United States, and the Hamas movement to reach a humanitarian truce agreement in Gaza and exchange prisoners between Hamas and the Israeli occupation."



A section of the audience at the conference. **PICTURES:** Shaji Kayamkulam



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GULF TIMES

‘Will he or won’t he’ tariffs conundrum keeps investors on the edge

Just as investors suspect that President Donald Trump’s tariffs will once again be used as a bargaining chip and may not be as severe or immediate as feared, the growing threat and uncertainty are depressing market sentiments.

The Wall Street has been guessing “will he or won’t he” on tariffs since Trump took office last month promising sweeping levies on geopolitical allies and rivals alike.

While the initial reaction in the stock market was caution, the mood is shifting as the administration’s policies become increasingly muddled with delays and exclusions mixing with bellicose rhetoric.

So far, investors have been ignoring the noise and buying stocks. While the risk of a global trade war remains dangerously real after Trump announced 25% levies on steel and aluminium imports that will take effect in March and reciprocal tariffs on numerous trading partners that are expected to hit in April, equity indexes continue to rally, with the S&P 500 Index finishing last week within points of an all-time high.

From bonds to credit and equities, a standard pattern is emerging in a world beset with uncertainty. Jarring day-to-day swings set an emotional tone for investors — only to dissipate as the sessions wear on.

While the risk of a global trade war remains dangerously real amid Trump’s tariffs mystery, equity indexes continue to rally, with the S&P 500 Index finishing last week within points of an all-time high

several trading partners duty-free exemptions, including Canada, Mexico and Brazil. Mexico is a major supplier of aluminium scrap and aluminium alloy.

Former President Joe Biden later negotiated duty-free quota arrangements with Britain, the European Union and Japan. It is not immediately clear from Trump’s announcement what will happen to those exemptions and quota arrangements.

The tariff conundrum is undermining the popular trade of betting on the dollar.

Bloomberg’s gauge of the greenback slid to a two-month low on Friday after Trump ordered his administration to consider reciprocal tariffs to rebalance trade relations, efforts that may take weeks or months to complete.

That’s adding to the conviction the levies are more of a tactic to gain a better deal than an end in themselves, and reducing the prospect of quicker US inflation that has boosted the dollar.

Corporate America, which is in the midst of the fourth-quarter reporting season, is also striking a cautionary tone on trade tensions.

Ford Motor Co said last week that Trump’s 25% tariffs on Mexico and Canada, which have been pushed back to March 4, will blow a hole in the US auto industry. On Friday, Trump said he would unveil a separate set of tariffs on automobiles “around April 2.”

That said, it isn’t as if Wall Street is completely ignoring tariff risk. Rather, it’s led to more selectivity in stock picking.

The overall result is a steady — if improbable — fall in pan-market turbulence, even as some measures of policy risk imply a backdrop as unsettled as any in nearly three decades.

The dynamic has played out repeatedly over the previous two presidential administrations, when everything from Covid to Federal Reserve rate hikes and Trump’s trade bluster failed to dent Wall Street’s risk-on march.

The question now is whether the buyers spurring these gains are appropriately assessing what Trump will do — or dangerously throwing caution to the wind.

Amir’s visit to Iran to boost ties and economic growth

QNA
Doha

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani’s official visit to Iran today underscores the strong historical ties between the two nations and their mutual commitment to enhancing relations. The visit holds particular importance given the current regional dynamics, necessitating high-level consultations and coordination on key challenges.

Qatar remains dedicated to strengthening strategic relations with brotherly and friendly nations, aligning with the vision set forth by His Highness the Amir.

During the visit, His Highness the Amir will meet Iranian President Dr Masoud Pezeshkian and senior officials to discuss bilateral relations, focusing on economic, commercial, and investment co-operation. The agenda also includes discussions on regional and international developments, emphasising security and stability. This visit builds upon a history of diplomatic engagements aimed at fostering deeper collaboration in multiple sectors.

Qatar and Iran share longstanding and evolving relations, built on geographic proximity, cultural ties, and mutual respect. Iran was among the first nations to recognise Qatar’s independence, establishing diplomatic ties in 1972. Since then, both countries have maintained continuous dialogue and high-level engagements to foster collaboration. These relations are rooted in shared cultural, religious, and social commonalities, as well as mutual interests in maintaining peace and stability in the region.

His Highness the Amir previously visited Iran in January 2020 and May 2022, where discussions covered political,



economic, and commercial co-operation, along with tourism, investment, transportation, and communications. Regional and global issues were also addressed. These visits reinforced Qatar’s diplomatic strategy of engaging in initiatives that support regional stability and mutual economic growth, leading to key agreements aimed at improving trade relations.

In October last year, President Dr Pezeshkian visited Qatar, meeting His Highness the Amir at Lusail Palace to explore ways to enhance co-operation, particularly in economics, energy, and culture. The leaders also discussed regional concerns, including Gaza, the occupied Palestinian territories, and Lebanon. Additionally, they held a bilateral meeting focused on global developments and mutual interests, reinforcing a shared vision for regional peace and economic collaboration.

Further strengthening ties, HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed

bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met President Pezeshkian in Tehran last November to discuss bilateral relations and regional issues, including Gaza, Lebanon, and de-escalation efforts. The discussions also focused on expanding economic ties and trade partnerships, with both sides committed to advancing strategic projects beneficial to both nations. Diplomatic efforts to mediate conflicts and enhance regional stability were also explored.

Political co-ordination has been reinforced through structured dialogues such as the first meeting of the Political Consultation Committee in Tehran in May 2022.

Economic relations between Qatar and Iran continue to grow, with Iranian companies actively participating in the Qatari market alongside Qatari firms in sectors such as trade, services, and energy. The two nations share the world’s largest natural gas field and are leading LNG producers.

In December, HE the Minister of Commerce and Industry Sheikh Faisal bin Thani bin Faisal al-Thani and Iranian Minister of Energy Dr Abbas Aliabadi co-chaired the 10th Qatar-Iran Joint Economic Commission in Doha.

The Qatar-Iran Joint Economic Commission and the Qatari-Iranian Joint Business Council serve as key platforms for economic collaboration. These bodies bring together business leaders to explore investment opportunities and strengthen commercial ties in sectors such as agriculture, industry, infrastructure, and food security. Enhanced co-operation between the private sectors of both countries is expected to drive innovation, employment, and economic diversification in key industries.

A series of agreements and memoranda of understanding further cement bilateral relations across diverse fields, including politics, diplomacy, media, youth and sports, maritime navigation, transportation, free zones, electricity, water, higher education, scientific research, culture, health, and tourism.

Qatar’s position as a global business and investment hub is reinforced by world class infrastructure, progressive economic legislation, and incentives for foreign investors. The country actively seeks to expand partnerships with brotherly and friendly nations, fostering commercial alliances and investment opportunities across multiple sectors. With its advanced regulatory framework and investor-friendly policies, Qatar remains an attractive destination for Iranian businesses seeking to expand operations in the Gulf region. The continuous collaboration between both nations in different sectors underscores their mutual commitment to shared prosperity and sustainable development.

Qatar, Iran ambassadors hail historic visit

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani’s visit to Tehran demonstrates the vigorous and outstanding bilateral relations, said Qatar’s ambassador to Iran Saad Abdullah Saad al-Mahmoud al-Sharif.

Speaking to QNA, the ambassador added the visit today sets sights on better economic, trade and investment relations and brings to the fore regional and international issues of shared concern.

His Highness’ visit is highly important given the two nations’ commitment to buttressing bilateral partnerships for the interest of the two peoples, and to further co-ordinating on the regional and international issues, the ambassador added.

Highlighting the mutual trust between the two sides, Al-Sharif recalled a September 2023 Qatar-mediated prisoner exchange between the US and Iran, a deal that also saw Iranian assets in Korea unfrozen.

Also part of the solid foundations to propel bilateral relations, he added, are MoUs across cultural, scientific, economic, industrial and commercial areas and the joint committees that follow up on joint co-operation. He also spotlighted the many Iranian firms op-



Saad Abdullah Saad al-Mahmoud al-Sharif, Qatar’s ambassador to Iran



Dr Ali Salehabadi, Iranian ambassador to Qatar

erating in the Qatari markets, and the 16 weekly flights between the two countries.

The ambassador referred to Doha’s hosting of the 10th Joint Economic Co-operation Commission in December 2024, which addressed multi-sector co-operation avenues and culminated in both sides approving measures to cement trade, investment and industrial co-operation — to push ahead the trade exchange volume and streamline the flow of goods, services and investments. Iranian ambassador to Qatar Dr Ali Salehabadi emphasised that His Highness the Amir’s visit is a continuation of the deep-rooted relations built on mutual trust and shared interests between the two countries.

In remarks to QNA, the ambassador said the Amir’s visit is a clear indication of the two countries’ unflinching determination to bolster the bilateral relationship.

He pointed out that the bilateral meetings between the leaderships of the two nations offer a platform to augment the political, security and economic co-operation based on the joint political visions to peacefully resolve regional conflicts through effective, constructive and influential diplomacy as part of the two nations’ unwavering commitment to deepening bilateral ties and significantly enhancing the persistent bilateral cooperation and coordination. Dr Salehabadi lauded Qatar’s crisis-resolution efforts and initiatives under the leadership of His Highness the Amir, particularly its recognised efforts in the Gaza Strip. He added His Highness the Amir had exerted invaluable efforts to stand in defence of humanity, especially throughout the crisis in Gaza.

Dr Salehabadi highlighted that the recent visit of Iranian President Dr Masoud Pezeshkian to Doha constituted a turning point in advancing bilateral co-operation during which vital agreements were signed to co-operate in the political, economic and cultural areas. (QNA)

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Integrating AI in QF University Classrooms



By Noor Al-rawi
Doha

As artificial intelligence (AI) continues to reshape industries worldwide, universities are increasingly exploring its potential in education. At Qatar Foundation (QF), AI is being integrated into various academic fields, including university classrooms, where it is revolutionising both teaching and learning experiences.

One of the leading voices in this transformation is Professor Uday Chandra of Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q). In his course, Politics of AI, students critically engage with the societal and political implications of AI while actively using AI tools to enhance their academic work. Unlike many faculty members who remain hesitant or resistant to AI in education, Chandra is embracing challenging students to navigate its benefits and limitations firsthand.

In an exclusive interview with *Gulf Times*, Chandra sees it as an opportunity to rethink traditional learning methods. In his class, AI is used to help students structure their arguments, refine their writing, and develop creative approaches to assignments. Through guided experimentation, students learn not only how AI can enhance their academic work but also how to critically assess its limitations and ethical considerations.

Chandra explained his point of view regarding the future of AI in higher education to *Gulf Times*:

AI as a tool for learning

Q: How do you envision AI transforming the educational landscape in the coming years, particularly at Georgetown University in Qatar?

A: AI tools are already being used by students to read and write in college and beyond. From brainstorming for an essay or a presentation to editing one's prose, students use a range of AI platforms and apps to carry out tasks. At work in future, they will need to do the same to boost productivity in an ethical manner.

Sadly, universities, especially faculty and staff, are slow to embrace AI. Proper skilling is needed with annual refresher courses for university employees to understand how campuses can leverage AI tools without compromising academic integrity.

Q: What challenges do you foresee in integrating AI into educational practices, both for faculty and students?

A: The primary challenge, to my mind, is understanding what AI is and how it can help us be more productive. Fundamentally, AI, or human-inspired AI, is an extension of ourselves. We can train tools to help us compose a first draft of an email, for example, or to follow a step-by-step algorithm to accomplish a certain task. Once everyone has a shared understanding of the new technology available to us today, we can better wrap our heads around it.

The micro-challenges of implementing AI policies on a campus are, in my view, secondary. The IT department (or a new AI department/programme) may need to offer a series of workshops, some of which must be mandatory from an HR perspective to ensure a basic minimum awareness of what AI is and does. Faculty should play with these tools to understand how lesson plans, exam questions, assignment design, etc can improve with automation of some work processes. Similarly, students can write better and improve their understanding of what they're being taught by embracing AI. Both faculty and students can also appreciate with training that unethical conduct also leads to the creation of poor quality content. Being ethical and being accurate are closely connected.



Professor Uday Chandra of Georgetown University in Qatar, Qatar Foundation

Each campus needs to develop teaching and learning units, who should assist faculty to incorporate AI into their classrooms and assignments. They should also assess or evaluate the impact of AI in boosting student learning outcomes. Unless one does this in a careful empirical manner, all our discussions about the future of AI in education will remain at an abstract, philosophical level. We need hard numbers and cold facts in each campus to figure out how to proceed

Q: What AI tools do you currently recommend for students to use in their assignments, and how do they enhance the learning experience?

A: There are too many to list here, but ChatGPT is by far the most commonly used tool. I also recommend Claude, Google Notebook LM, and Gemini for related but different products. There are also specific tools for generating a preliminary literature review or bibliography. Students pursuing research can be introduced to these tools. Similarly, PowerPoint or Canva now have AI features that can significantly enhance the quality of a power point presentation. Even a Kahoot quiz can be boosted by AI tools: upload a list of questions and AI can generate a bunch of slides with quiz questions in a matter of seconds.

Q: How do you assess the accuracy of AI-generated content in student work, and what warnings do you provide to students about relying on these tools?

A: We need to model best practices in a classroom, whether AI-related or not. We must not be afraid to demonstrate how to use AI tools and platforms in a classroom setting. We should also reconsider assessment or the kinds of assignments we ask students to complete. Students need to see what bad or poor AI output looks like in order to avoid the temptation of a quick fix. We shouldn't overestimate young people's knowledge about AI tools. They are learning too, and universities have a responsibility to ensure that they under-



Georgetown University in Qatar campus.



stand how to use these tools accurately and ethically.

Q: How do you evaluate assignments that incorporate AI? Are there specific criteria you use to ensure academic integrity?

A: Instead of the old style of assignments that get students to repeat what was said in a lecture or textbook, we need to reimagine student assignments. We need to specifically design tasks that require AI use. For example, students can conduct an interview with a policymaker (or migrant worker) and compare it with an AI-generated interview transcript. The learning comes from this comparative exercise and the reflection it gives rise to. This is how humans learn. None of us can learn how to drive or swim by memorising terms and giving canned responses to questions. Then why should we force young people to learn this way? Once we reimagine school and college assignments, the problem of academic integrity will go away on its own. It exists now only as a remnant of an older way of teaching and learning, which, as we know, serves the majority of students poorly.

Q: There is often a stigma surrounding the use of AI in education. How do you address concerns from students and faculty about relying on AI tools?

A: I wouldn't call it stigma. It is mostly ignorance of what AI is and how its power can be harnessed without embarrassing ourselves. This is why I proposed training workshops all year round. It would help to have a dedicated group (a mix of IT, academic professionals, students and faculty) to come together and set campus standards on what is proper AI use (and what isn't). Each campus may have a slightly different approach, but clear communication of standards is essential. Otherwise, academic integrity is impossible because each professor is currently empowered to do as they please. Some colleagues worldwide are going back to

blue book exams, which test nothing at all except short-term memory. This kind of panic response smacks of defensiveness: it tells students that their professor is afraid of them and, worse, too lazy to learn something new.

Q: How do you think upcoming generations will perceive the use of AI in education? Will the current stigma persist, or evolve?

A: I think AI is becoming commonplace now in universities and office spaces. It is becoming akin to Google searched or Wikipedia, which were stigmatised early on before becoming essential to our lives at work and beyond. I expect to see the same happening with AI tools. Normalising use is the first step: early adopters may have a headstart, but over time, the curve shifts enough to accommodate the average person in society. All technology use follows the same pattern with early adopters, the majority, and laggards. This is the life cycle of technology adoption, and I don't see AI following a different trajectory.

Q: What skills do educators need to cultivate to effectively integrate AI into their teaching methodologies?

A: First, one needs to start with the basics: what is artificial intelligence, and how is it connected with and different from human intelligence? Thereafter, specific aspects of reading and writing with AI tools can explain how enhanced skill building is possible. AI is, after all, a domain of human creativity. We must experiment after an introduction to the basics. We do not need to become coders to use AI effectively, though it certainly helps to understand coding, algorithms, machine learning, etc.

Advanced training workshops by library staff can introduce faculty and students to tools such as Elicit for literature reviews or Claude for making a bibliography. There is more to ChatGPT too. Beyond summarising, detailed reverse outlines with page references

QF is positioning itself at the cutting edge of AI-driven education offering students not just theoretical knowledge but practical insights into the technologies shaping their future

are possible. One can craft discussion questions to break down assigned readings more effectively than is possible with human intelligence only. Similarly, writing with AI tools must incorporate a whole gamut of activities from brainstorming to proofreading. AI is a terrific editor: it flags major and minor issues with a text, and raises questions for us to consider in terms of writing choices. Faculty are often unaware that their everyday practices can be enhanced significantly using the new tools available. Once they appreciate what is possible, a realistic sense of expectations from students will also emerge.

Q: Are there any collaborative projects or initiatives at Qatar Foundation that focus on AI in education?

A: Northwestern University and Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar have recently launched Artificial Intelligence Initiative (AI2), a new strategic flagship initiative focused on meeting the global challenges of artificial intelligence and making decisive contributions to research, teaching, and professional development in that area.

Q: In your opinion, what areas related to AI in education should researchers focus on to better understand its impact?

A: I think each campus needs to develop teaching and learning units, who should assist faculty to incorporate AI into their classrooms and assignments. They should also assess or evaluate the impact of AI in boosting student learning outcomes. Unless one does this in a careful empirical manner, all our discussions about the future of AI in education will remain at an abstract, philosophical level. We need hard numbers and cold facts in each campus to figure out how to proceed. It is perfectly fine, even desirable, if an engineering campus works out a different modus operandi from, say, GU-Q.

Shifting faculty perspectives

With professors like Uday Chandra leading the way, QF is positioning itself at the cutting edge of AI-driven education offering students not just theoretical knowledge but practical insights into the technologies shaping their future.



Education City campus.



Snapshots from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's state visit to India.



Qatar-India ties all set for further expansion

From Page 1

Bilateral relations and ways to enhance and expand them, particularly in the areas of economy, investment, and energy, in addition to several regional and international issues of mutual interest were discussed during the session.

His Highness the Amir and the Indian prime minister witnessed the exchange of two agreements between the governments.

The first was an agreement on establishing a bilateral strategic partnership while the second was aimed at avoiding double taxation and preventing fiscal evasion concerning income taxes.

The session and the exchange ceremony were attended by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Af-

fairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, HE the Chief of the Amiri Diwan Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Khulaifi, HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi, HE the Minister of Labour Dr Ali bin Saeed al-Marri, HE the Minister of Communications and Information Technology Mohammed bin Ali al-Mannai, HE the Minister of Commerce and Industry Sheikh Faisal bin Thani al-Thani, and a number of members of the official delegation accompanying His Highness the Amir.

On the Indian side, the session was attended by External Affairs Minister Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal, Minister of Labour and Employment and Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Dr Mansukh Man-

daviya, Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri, and several senior officials.

On the occasion, the Indian prime minister hosted a luncheon banquet in honour of His Highness the Amir and the accompanying delegation.

Earlier in the day, His Highness the Amir was accorded an official reception ceremony upon his arrival at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Indian President Droupadi Murmu and Modi led well-wishers to welcome His Highness the Amir.

The official reception ceremony began with the entry of His Highness the Amir's motorcade accompanied by the President's Cavalry Regiment to the ceremony venue.

A 21-gun salute was fired in honour of His Highness's visit and in recognition of the strong relations

Amir ends New Delhi visit

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani left New Delhi yesterday after a state visit to India. His Highness the Amir and the accompanying delegation were seen off at Palam Air Base by Indian Minister of External Affairs Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Qatar's ambassador to India Mohammed bin Hassan al-Jaber, Indian ambassador to Qatar Vipul, and members of the Qatari embassy.

His Highness the Amir was accompanied during the visit by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani and an official delegation. - QNA

between the two friendly countries.

During the ceremony, the national anthems of Qatar and India were played before His Highness the Amir reviewed the guard of honour and shook hands with the official Indian delegation, the members of the government, senior officials, and military and security leaders.

The reception ceremony was attended by HE Sheikh Mohammed and members of the official delegation accompanying His Highness the Amir.

Amir meets Indian VP, BJP leader

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani held a meeting with Indian Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar and his accompanying delegation at His Highness's residence in New Delhi yesterday.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed the friendly relations and bilateral co-operation between the two countries and ways to enhance them, in addition to exchanging views on a host of issues of mutual interest.

His Highness the Amir also held a meeting with Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president and Minister of Health and Family Welfare Jagat Prakash Nadda and his accompanying delegation.

The agenda included bilateral relations and ways to foster them, particularly across areas of health and medical care, along with topics of mutual interest.

The two meetings were attended by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani and a number of members of the official delegation accompanying His Highness the Amir. - QNA

Qatar and India share saga of deeply rooted ties

From Page 1

The bond is based on mutual interests, trust, respect, and fruitful co-operation, with both nations keen to propel these relations to new heights that meet the two peoples' aspirations.

In his official remarks in the Indian capital New Delhi yesterday, His Highness the Amir emphasised the depth of historical relations between the two countries and reiterated that India is one of Qatar's most important economic partners.

Qatar-India relations have been remarkably evolving, particularly following His Highness the Amir's first state visit to India in March 2015, which gave a strong impetus to bilateral ties and laid the foundation for a new phase of relations.

The discussions during this visit led to the signing of several agreements and resulted in a joint statement expressing satisfaction with the current state of bilateral relations, which are further strengthened by regular high-level visits.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi made an official visit to Qatar in June 2016, followed by a second visit to Doha in February last year.

During these visits, His Highness the Amir and Prime Minister Modi held official talks on areas of co-operation, particularly in the economic, investment, development, and energy sectors, and exchanged

views on major regional and international issues of mutual interest.

Economically, India is Qatar's second-largest trading partner, with more than 20,000 Indian SMEs operating in Qatar, including both fully owned enterprises and joint venture companies.

Trade and economic co-operation, along with mutual investments, form the cornerstone of the growing commercial ties between the two nations.

The average trade exchange between the two countries has reached about \$16bn annually in recent years, with Qatari energy exports to India constituting a significant portion of this exchange.

Qatar is a vital partner in India's energy security, providing around 45% of India's liquefied natural gas (LNG) imports.

On January 25, the 20th anniversary of the first Qatari LNG shipment to India's Petronet terminal was celebrated, and on February 4, the 2000th LNG shipment from Qatar was delivered, marking a significant milestone in the strong energy partnership between the two nations.

Addressing a Qatar-India Business Meeting in New Delhi yesterday, the Chairman of Qatar Chamber Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim bin Mohamed al-Thani noted that bilateral trade between both countries witnessed remarkable growth over the past year, exceeding QR43.3bn in just 11 months.

In February last year, QatarEnergy entered into a 20-year LNG Sale and Purchase Agreement (SPA) with India's Petronet LNG for the supply of 7.5m tonnes per year (MTPY) of LNG destined to the Asia's third largest economy.

Pursuant to the terms of the SPA, the contracted LNG volumes from Qatar will be delivered ex-ship to terminals across India onboard QatarEnergy's vast LNG fleet, starting May 2028.

Petronet first entered into an agreement for the supply of LNG from Qatar in 1999 for the delivery of 7.5 MTPY.

That was followed in 2015 by another agreement for the supply of an additional 1MTPY of LNG, raising the total annual long-term volumes contracted between the two sides to 8.5MTPY.

In remarks welcoming the successful conclusion of the SPA last year, HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi declared: "This agreement is another key milestone in the long-standing energy partnership between Qatar and India and comes on the heels of the 20th anniversary of the first liquefied

natural gas shipment to India."

According to Qatar's ambassador to India, Mohammed Hassan Jabir al-Jabir, the two nations signed a long-term agreement (in February 2024) worth \$78bn as a critical step toward exporting 7.5m tonnes of Qatar's LNG to India annually for 20 years starting from 2028.

India, the world's largest country by population and seventh-largest country by area, is strategically located near important trade routes.

It is the fifth-largest economy globally, after the US, China, Japan, and Germany.

With its vast potential, India attracts significant foreign investment, particularly in energy, technology, infrastructure, and agriculture.

It should also be noted that Indian expatriates also comprise the single largest community in Qatar.

Indian media have confirmed that His Highness the Amir's visit marks a significant milestone in strengthening relations between Qatar and India to broader horizons.

The visit underscores both nations' commitment to enhancing ties in economic, commercial, cultural, and other fields, with the aim of benefiting their peoples and fostering regional stability and development.