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Qatar & Azerbaijan sign several deals

Emir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev oversaw the signing of several agreements.

The Peninsula

Qatar and Azerbaijan yesterday signed several agreements to strengthen bilateral cooperation in various fields. The Emir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev oversaw the signing of the agreements. Aliyev left Doha yesterday evening after his two-day official visit, *Qatar News Agency* reported yesterday.

The two sides signed Memorandums of Understanding in the fields of culture, youth and sports, and between the ports department of Qatar and its Azerbaijani counterpart. Qatar Civil Aviation Authority signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Civil Aviation Administration of Azerbaijan. The two sides signed a protocol amending the cargo agreement. They also signed a cooperation agreement on the protection of endangered species in their natural habitat.

The agreements were signed after the Emir and Azerbaijan President held a round of official talks in the Emiri Diwan.

They reviewed bilateral relations and the means to enhance them in all fields.



Emir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, during talks at the Emiri Diwan, yesterday. Deputy Emir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Thani and Prime Minister and Interior Minister H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani also present.

They also discussed a number of regional and international issues of joint interest, particularly the latest development in the region.

The Deputy Emir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Thani, the Prime

Minister and Interior Minister H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani and a number of ministers also attended the talks and the signing ceremonies.

The Emir hosted a luncheon banquet in honour of President Ilham Aliyev and

the accompanying delegation at the Emiri Diwan yesterday. The Azeri President and the accompanying delegation were seen off at HIA by the Minister of Economy and Commerce HE Sheikh Ahmed bin Jassim bin Mohammed Al-Thani.

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Emir to meet Bahrain's PM today

EMIR H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani will meet today morning at the Emiri Diwan, with Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, where they will review fraternal relations and means of enhancing them to serve the interests of both peoples. They will also discuss the latest developments in the region.

Hamad Port-Truck Route link road opens

THE Public Works Authority (Ashghal) opened a road linking the new Hamad Port and Truck Route, which falls within the scope of works of the New Orbital Highway project. The opening ceremony was attended by Minister of Transport and Communications H E Jassim bin Saif Al Sulaiti, Minister of Municipality and Environment H E Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Rumaihi and Ashghal President Eng Saad bin Ahmed Al Mohannadi, along with a number of senior officials of relevant authorities and institutions.

→ Full report on page 6

FUEL PRICE HIKE

5 Dirhams
Petrol prices will go up by 5 dirhams from March 1.

QR1.70
Price of super grade petrol for a litre. It was QR1.65 in February.

QR1.60
Price of premium grade petrol for a litre. It was QR1.55 in February.

QR1.55
Price of Diesel for a litre. It was QR1.50 in February.

Source: Ministry of Energy and Industry.

Ooredoo among top 50 brands

The Peninsula

Ooredoo is the fastest-growing of any of the major telecoms brands in the region, rising in value by 48% from 2016 to 2017 and featuring in the top 50 telecoms brands in the world, according to a new report by leading valuation and strategy consultancy Brand Finance.

According to the report, Ooredoo's brand value has consistently increased since the company began its global brand roll-out, which the report calculates as \$3.1bn in 2017. With more than 138 million customers, the Ooredoo brand is becoming one of the most widely-recognised communications brands in the world today.

The news comes as Ooredoo hosts one of its largest and most technologically-advanced product demonstrations at Mobile World Congress 2017 taking place in Barcelona this week, said a press release.

The report, Telecoms 500 2017, values the brands of operators and infrastructure companies around the



Ooredoo Chairman Sheikh Abdulla bin Mohammed bin Saud Al Thani (left) and Deputy Group CEO Waleed Al Sayed.

world. Brands are first evaluated to determine their strength, based on factors such as marketing investment, familiarity, loyalty, staff satisfaction and corporate reputation, and this is used to determine what proportion of a business's revenue is contributed by the brand.



This information is then used to rank the world's 500 most valuable telecoms brands. Ooredoo has risen to become the 47th biggest telecoms brand in 2017, appearing in the top 50 for the first time in its history.

→ Continued on page 6



100 billboards featuring Al Ghafa trees installed

THE Ministry of Municipality and Environment installed 100 billboards featuring Al Ghafa trees, to create awareness about the endangered plant which represents Qatari heritage. These billboards have been installed in the main streets and places, and it aims to spread awareness about environmental issues specially among students.

Meanwhile, the environmental monitoring department caught a number of violations committed by a company in Al khor. The company had put up offices and sanitation station without permit at work site. The ministry has taken legal action against the company.

Many motorists caught for wrong overtaking

Sanaullah Ataulah
The Peninsula

Many erring motorists have been caught as the traffic authorities have intensified monitoring on vehicles engaging in wrong overtaking and other serious violations of the traffic law.

The vehicles caught flouting the rules have been summoned to the Vehicles Seizure Section

of the Traffic Department located at street No. 52 of Doha-Industrial Area.

Article 64 of the Traffic Law has stipulated jail for one week up to one year and fines of QR3,000 to QR10,000 for violations including wrong overtaking. The revised traffic law provides for a reconciliation paying a fine of QR1,000.

Overtaking at "continuous line" leading to exits and intersections will also result in similar

punishments. Many motorists unaware of this rule have been caught by the radars or the traffic patrolling team, *The Peninsula* has learnt.

"I received a message on Sunday night from the Traffic Department through Metrash notifying about a traffic violation (wrong overtaking) by my car and asking me to report to the seizure section", a motorist told *The Peninsula*.

"The next day early morning

I visited the investigation unit of the seizure section of Traffic Department at street No. 52 of Doha-Industrial Area. The official at the counter asked me to pay a fine of QR1,000 and warned me of a seizure of my vehicle for a month in case of repetition of the violation."

"After paying the fine I received a message which read "vehicle plate No. ... is no longer wanted by investigations section," he added.

Representative of contracting company said a bus belonging to his company was seized for two weeks for repeated violation two days in a row.

The bus was caught earlier for wrong overtaking and was given a warning.

The authorities have been tough over such violations and no leniency has been shown in terms of punishment, it has been learnt.

Qatar and Azerbaijan sign agreements



Emir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani held talks with the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, in Doha yesterday. Later, Emir and President of Azerbaijan witnessed the signing of a number of agreements between the two countries.

Sidra's research branch opens three main labs

Fazeena Saleem
The Peninsula

Precision medicine

▶ The three labs which are operational at Sidra are Omics Core, Genomics Core and Deep Phenotyping Core.

▶ The research infrastructure aims to enable the implementation of precision medicine.

Sidra's research branch has opened three main labs and the state-of-the-art facilities have been brought into operation recently with high calibre expert teams from all over the world.

The outstanding translational research infrastructure at Sidra aims to enable the implementation of precision medicine, said Dr Ena Wang, Acting Chief Research Officer at Sidra.

"Sidra's research branch aims to advance the understanding of the pathophysiological mechanisms of diseases, develop early prevention, accurate diagnostic and advance therapeutics, and improve the health outcomes of the women and children of Qatar," said Dr Wang yesterday on sidelines of a media tour of the labs.

"Our research teams are currently working on several research programmes that align with national priorities and health care needs to help facilitate prevention, early and targeted intervention for certain conditions such as cancer, obesity, preterm birth and genetic

disorders that are affecting the local population," she added.

The three labs which are operational at Sidra are namely Omics Core, Genomics Core and the fourth core lab, a Clinical Research Center is under development.

"The state-of-the-art facilities have been brought into operation and are staffed by high calibre scientific teams," said Dr Wang.

"We are competitive at an international level now, creating comprehensive Qatari genomic databases which will form the building blocks for Precision Medicine, not only in Qatar, but



Dr Ena Wang (left), Acting Chief Research Officer at Sidra Medical Research Centre; Max Renault, Director, Research Operations, and Wei Liu, Associate Level Director, Clinical Genomic Core.

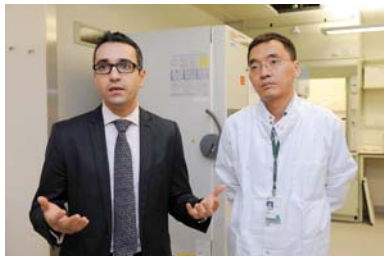
in the wider Middle East," said added.

The Omics Core lab at Sidra can help with the extraction of DNA from a range of sample types including saliva and blood samples, the Genomic Core lab handles sequencing of DNA extraction samples and the Deep Phenotyping Core (DPC) Labs possesses technologies some of which are unique to the whole Middle East and North Africa Region.

"The Genomic Core lab can support clinical requests internally but also again at a national

and international level. We can support clinical whole genome sequencing and clinical testing requests. At a national level, we provided the sequencing support for the first phase of the Qatar Genome Program," said Max Renault, the Director of Research Operations at Sidra.

Sidra is also preparing to open a Zebrafish facility and it would provide researchers access to state of the art equipment and facilities for studying vertebrate development biology and developing zebrafish models of diseases.



Pic: Salim Matramkot / The Peninsula

"As a biological system, the zebrafish model offers distinct advantages for researchers. It has stable, easily observable and testable development behaviors. It is cost-effective, its genome is fully sequenced and its embryonic development is very rapid," said Wei Liu, Director of Clinical Genomic Core at Sidra.

"It will be a key facility for identifying genes in disorders like cancers and cardio-vascular disease in humans, and help identify potential new treatments," he added.

Further, at a national level Sidra's research branch has collaborations with Qatar Genome Programme, Qatar University, Qatar Biomedical Research Institute, Qatar Biobank, Weill Cornell Medicine in Qatar, Texas A&M, National Center for Cancer Care and Research, Interim Translational Research Institution (ITRI), Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Anti-Doping Lab Qatar. Also at an international level Sidra is working in close collaboration with organisations from the United States, Europe, Thailand and Japan.

Over 3,000 to attend Qatar women's conference

The Peninsula

Over 3,000 women are expected to attend the Qatar Women's Conference to be held under the patronage of Sheikh Abdulla Bin Zaid Al Mahmoud Islamic Cultural Center (Fanan) on March 3 from 6pm at the QFA Auditorium in Al Wakra Sports Club.

Dr Sabreena Leil (pictured), the Director of Tawassul Europe, will be the chief guest of the event, which will be inaugurated by Dr Ameena Al Jabir of Qatar University, P Ruksana, President, Girls Islamic Organisation (GIO), and Shihab Pukkottur, Secretary, Jama'at Islami Public Relations, Kerala

will address the gathering.

A special magazine as part of the event will be released by GIO President P Ruksana, said Programme Convener Thawiyibba Arshad at a press conference yesterday.

"The conference aims at enlightening women about their status and rights in Islam. Women are a part of the society and they have a key role to play in the development towards a truly Islamic society and beyond," said Nafesath Beevi, the Chief Chairperson of the conference.

"If a woman is knowledgeable about this world and the hereafter, she will be able to improve her family, and through

that the whole society. For this, she needs to learn and live by the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet (Peace be upon him), she added.

The female companions of the Prophet (PBUH) are examples of some of the best women in Islam, she added.

Talk shows, debates, story sharing and table talks were organised in various parts of Qatar as part of the conference.

The Media Convener Suleikha Bashree, General Convener, Sareena Babseer, Vice-Chairman Naseema Teacher, Shaheena Siraj and Meharban K C also attended the press conference held in Doha.

Al Muraikhi meets ministers

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs H E Sultan bin Saad Al Muraikhi met separately with the Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linas Linkevičius and Paraguayan Foreign Minister Eladio Loizaga on the sidelines of the high-level meetings of the 34th session of the Human Rights Council, currently underway in Geneva.

The two meetings reviewed bilateral relations and means of boosting and developing them on all fronts.

