

BUSINESS

SEPTEMBER 2026 | ISSUE 19

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STIVEN MUCCIOLI
CEO at BKN301

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People Operations Director –
Middle East at Sovereign PPG

BEYOND THE HIRE: BUILDING THE WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE

"QATAR IS A FASCINATING MARKET, LEAPFROGGING
OTHER TRADITIONAL FINANCIAL CENTRES"

"AI IS AN ORGANIC PART OF BUSINESSES,
NOT AN ADD-ON"





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► Editorial



Dear Readers,

As always, August has given us a mixed news basket. On the one hand, the Middle East conflict, now in its seventh month, has already cost Qatar more than US\$10 billion (QR36.4 billion) in lost liquefied natural gas (LNG) export revenues, energy think tanks have reported. How the Hormuz Strait will be managed going forward is of critical importance for Qatar, impacting buyer confidence in security of supply from the country. The country is unable to act as a reliable supplier of gas to the global market, state finances continue to suffer, and buyers are increasingly looking to diversify their sources of LNG supply.

QatarEnergy has already extended force majeure on some deliveries till November, which will mean lower export volumes even after the strait reopens. However, global oil majors are unanimous that while the regional conflict has weakened Qatar's position, the country's long-term prospects remain robust. Strong projected global LNG demand growth means the country's economic model remains fundamentally sound despite the damage to its infrastructure, finances, and reputation.

As a matter of financial prudence, Qatar has slashed government budget by 30 percent, reduced overseas aid spending by roughly 85 percent, the *Financial Times (FT)* has reported in end-August.

Tarik Yousef, a senior fellow at the Middle East Council on Global Affairs, told the *FT* that officials were "seriously contemplating" substantial further spending cuts next year

if the crisis continues into the year's final quarter. "The authorities have managed the crisis effectively, but the hit has been massive. They have been drawing on accumulated financial buffers to keep the economy going and maintain liquidity. But ultimately, that leaves a substantial hole in the budget," Yousef said.

Qatar's wise investment decisions across its borders remain unabated. Qatari Diar's (the real estate arm of Qatar Investment Authority) US\$30 billion (QR109.2 billion) investment could transform a very remote, pristine coastline in Africa into a world-class city (*details in our News section*)

Qatar is taking the next leap in sustainability through its aviation fuel deals with Egypt. Green Sky Capital, secured funding for a sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) production facility in Egypt's Ain Sokhna, valued at US\$500 million (QR1.8 billion).

Qatar's foreign reserves amount to US\$55.54 billion (QR202.17 billion) amid robust financial stability. Within the reserve portfolio, gold accounted for an increasingly significant share, surging to 28.9 percent. The Qatar Central Bank (QCB) recently reported a comprehensive overview of Qatar's monetary and institutional developments, highlighting key achievements that strengthened the financial sector's overall resilience and inclusiveness.

Turn the pages to read about how Qatar is perceived by financial leaders such as Stiven Muccioli, CEO at BKN301, who feels that the nation is leapfrogging other traditional financial centres. We look at the employee-employer dynamics through Nina Pacic, people operations director – Middle East at Sovereign PPG who sheds light on everything human resources should do to remain relevant.

Reach out to us should you need any topic covered, as we await a choc-a-block events calendar in the coming months.

Manu G Parmar

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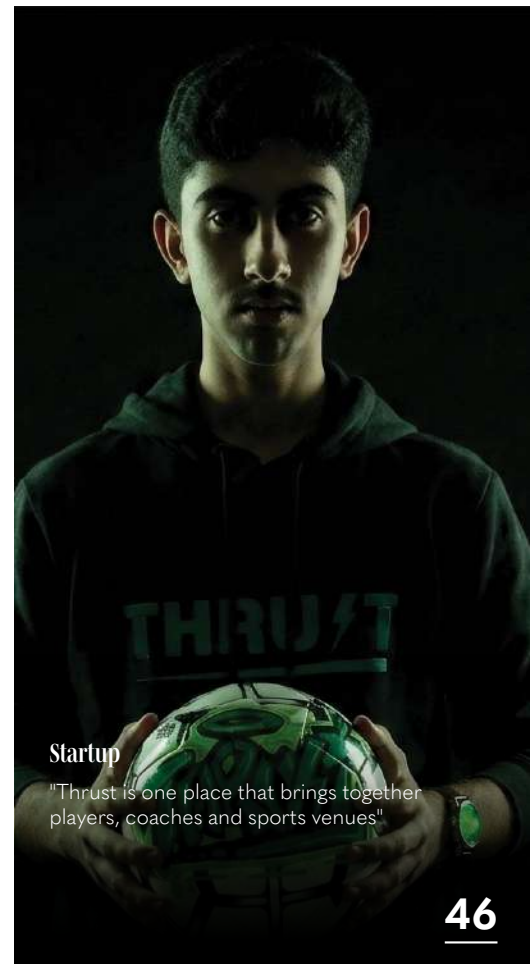
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11 QATAR-BASED CEOS NAMED IN *FORBES* TOP MIDDLE EAST 100 LIST

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NEPAL DEVASTATED BY CATASTROPHIC FLOODS

A landscape buried in mud. Thousands of families waiting for answers. A nation confronting one of its deadliest disasters in decades.





Nepal continues to reel from the catastrophic August 26, 2026 flash floods, triggered after a glacier collapse sent enormous volumes of water, mud and debris through Himalayan valleys and communities.

More than 1,300 people have died across Nepal and Tibet, while thousands remain missing. Rescue teams are still searching hydropower tunnels where workers are feared trapped beneath debris. Homes, roads, bridges and major energy infrastructure have been destroyed.

The disaster has also damaged multiple hydropower projects and left communities facing a long and difficult recovery. UNDP estimates that approximately 2.2 million tonnes of debris were deposited across analysed areas in Nepal.

Behind every number is a family, a home and a community changed forever.

Nepal now faces not only recovery – but an urgent question about climate resilience in the Himalayas.

FOREIGN COMPANIES COMING TO QATAR NEED TO BE THE RIGHT ONES

Like its neighbours across the Gulf, Qatar has spent more than a decade building an economy that can generate growth beyond oil and gas. Foreign investment has been a catalyst for that ambition, but rather than chasing scale for its own sake, Qatar is taking a more calculated approach, becoming increasingly selective about the companies it attracts and what they bring with them, writes Thomas Jennings**.

Advanced manufacturing, logistics, technology and financial services are among the industries it's targeting. That means attracting companies prepared to put meaningful capital and operations into the country.

And it's prepared to pay for them.

The country's US\$1 billion (QR3.64 billion) incentives programme, launched in May 2025, can cover up to 40 percent of eligible local investment costs over five years. But there's a fairly high bar for accessing it. Applicants generally need to invest at least QR25 million and create high-skilled jobs, with further criteria depending on the sector.

EnergyX is a good example of what that can look like in practice.

The US energy technology company isn't just opening an office in Qatar. It's establishing its international headquarters and global command centre there, alongside AI-powered energy operations, global export management and a smart manufacturing facility.

More than 140 jobs are expected over five years, with partnerships also planned with Qatari universities and research institutes.



One investment, in other words, can bring capital, jobs, technology, manufacturing capability and research relationships into the country at the same time.

Look at Qatar's wider Foreign Direct Investment figures and a similar picture starts to emerge.

The country attracted 373 projects in 2025, up 52 percent in a year. They brought US\$3.4 billion (QR12.38 billion) in capital expenditure and more than 15,000 jobs. Those are impressive headline numbers. But what's underneath them is arguably more interesting.

More than half of the capital went into greenfield projects, while nearly one in two projects were in medium- or high-technology sectors.

That's a much better indication of what Qatar appears to be trying to achieve.

The real prize isn't winning a regional race to attract the greatest number of foreign companies. It's using foreign investment to build capabilities the economy can keep.

The useful number isn't how many foreign companies Qatar can attract.

It's how much each one brings with it. **BL**

** Thomas Jennings is the founder of Midas Media Company and a writer specialising in business and investment across the GCC. His work focuses on the regulatory, economic and commercial developments shaping how companies and investors operate across the region.

BUSINESS AGILITY: INNOVATION IS NOT A FLEX – IT'S A MUSCLE

Innovation fails in most organisations not from a shortage of ideas, but from failing to integrate those ideas into how the business operates day to day. Treated as a sticking plaster or a quick fix, it rarely holds. Businesses that build agility into daily decisions, distributed across every function and practised through constant small iteration, will outlast those that treat innovation as a periodic initiative, writes Dr Shaheena Janjuha-Jivraj**.

The businesses still standing after the next disruption won't be the ones with the best innovation lab, they'll be the ones that integrated innovation into their DNA.

Every leadership offsite now features the language of innovation: labs, hackathons, innovation days. Participants leave energised, ready to act, but back at their desks, promotions and bonuses still reward repeating what worked before. Brilliant ideas stay locked in people's minds until enthusiasm burns out.

The "flex" model fails because it's structurally isolated. Treated as a standalone activity with no clear KPIs, innovation becomes fragmented from real decision-making and easily forgotten. Most organisations have an abundance of good ideas, what's missing is the infrastructure to let them grow into products and services.

Real agility rests on structural habits: reviewing innovation alongside financial performance, distributing ownership across every function rather than one isolated team, building tolerance for risk and failure, and favouring small frequent adjustments over rare transformation pushes. None



Leadership is central to fixing this issue. The culture leaders create cultivate innovation or unwittingly destroy it. More often than not leaders believe they are promoting a strong culture of innovation, when in fact the opposite happens.

A muscle, once built, keeps working quietly and compounds. Most competitors can copy a good idea within a year. What can't be copied quickly is an organisation that has spent years training itself to move. **BL**

of it works without psychological safety and without it, employees keep ideas contained rather than embedding change into daily decisions.

*** Dr Shaheena Janjuha-Jivraj, FRSA is co-founder of Delta Futures, executive advisor and trainer working with senior leaders in companies, family offices and government bodies to transform leadership. She is adjunct faculty at London Business School, HEC Paris and Hult Ashridge. She is an author on several books on leadership and regular Forbes contributor.*

QATAR BUYS DOZENS OF US LNG CARGOES TO KEEP ASIAN PARTNERS SUPPLIED

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QatarEnergy (QE) bought 33 liquefied natural gas (LNG) spot cargoes from the US this year, with deliveries planned for South Korea, Taiwan, Bangladesh, India, and Japan, *Reuters* has reported.

The purchases are meant to keep supplies flowing to key Asian customers after Iran's closure of the

Strait of Hormuz and retaliatory attacks on Gulf infrastructure halted Qatari gas exports.

The volume is a major jump from the four cargoes QE had bought last year. The state producer had declared force majeure back in March, freeing it from contractual obligations, but continues sourcing gas elsewhere to

protect its decades-long reputation as one of the world's most reliable suppliers, the sources said, with one describing the purchases as a gesture of good faith toward key customers.

Worth roughly US\$1 billion (QR3.64 billion), the 33 cargoes equal about a third of QE's monthly exports before the conflict, according to *Reuters*' calculations.

Asia normally takes around 80 percent of Qatari LNG. Kpler data shows 28 cargoes have been delivered, with five more en route to South Korea, Taiwan and India. QE bought the shipments directly from US producer Venture Global LNG and from several of its customers.

The US now holds the title of the world's largest LNG exporter, and producers have profited from the hunt for alternative supplies since Russia's invasion of Ukraine and now the war on Iran.

HYDROCARBONS

QATARENERGY CANCELS GAS DELIVERIES TO ITALY'S EDISON UNTIL EARLY NOVEMBER OVER IRAN WAR

QatarEnergy (QE) has notified Italian utility Edison, one of its biggest customers in Europe, that it has extended a force majeure suspension period on liquefied natural gas (LNG) deliveries until

early November due to the US-Iran war.

The Italian utility received the updated notification from Qatar recently, sources said.

Qatar will not be able to deliver five LNG cargoes scheduled

for delivery between the end of September and beginning of November, Edison said in a message posted on Italy's GME platform for the gas market.

That will bring the total number

TANKER CARRYING QATARI LNG STRUCK WHILE TRANSITING HORMUZ



A liquefied natural gas tanker carrying a shipment from Qatar was struck by a projectile while transiting the Strait of Hormuz, according to security intelligence firms and ship tracking data, threatening to further disrupt deliveries of the super-chilled fuel through the key waterway. Security consultancies Vanguard Tech and Marisks identified the ship as the Gaslog Shanghai LNG tanker. The UK Maritime Trade (UKMTO) Operations

had alerted that a vessel was struck in the strait off the Omani coast overnight, without identifying it. There was no environmental impact so far, the UKMTO said.

The carrier picked up an LNG shipment from Qatar around July 27, and stopped sending a signal on July 31 near the western entrance of Hormuz, according to ship-tracking data compiled by Bloomberg and Kpler. It appears that the ship wasn't sending

a signal when it was struck in Hormuz. Greece-based Gaslog, which manages the vessel, didn't immediately respond to a request for comment outside of regular business hours.

The conflict in the Middle East has disrupted LNG traffic through the Strait of Hormuz — a conduit for about a fifth of global flows of the super-chilled fuel. In early July, a Qatari LNG tanker was hit near Hormuz, forcing the world's second largest exporter of the fuel to pause shipments through the waterway for three weeks.

The UKMTO said in a separate alert that another tanker reported seeing an explosion in the water near to it. The vessel wasn't damaged.

In the same week, another Gaslog LNG carrier was hit while in a northern Egyptian port. The Gaslog Salem was struck by a drone at Damietta, security firms said, with no one having claimed for the attack thus far.

of cancelled cargoes to 29, equal to 3.8 billion cubic metres of gas, Edison said in a press release.

Edison confirmed its ability to source alternative gas for all its customers and its ability to fully meet its commercial commitments.

QE stopped supplying the Italian group in April due to the disruptions caused by the US -Iran conflict.

Edison, a unit of French energy group EDF, holds a long-term contract with QE for the supply of 6.4

billion cubic metres of natural gas per year to Italy, around 10 percent of the country's total consumption.

The contract, which has been in force since 2009, has a total duration of 25 years.

In tandem, QE has informed European and Asian buyers that the restriction of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz means that cancellations of LNG cargo will continue, according to media reports.

Among the buyers affected by the

force majeure, which frees parties from liabilities and obligations in cases of extraordinary events or circumstances, are Bangladesh, Pakistan, reports *Doha News*.

Bloomberg has reported that QatarEnergy had extended the force majeure on LNG supplies to Bangladesh beyond September, while it notified Pakistani buyers this week that cargo cancellations would continue into October.

SHELL SAYS QATAR LNG REPAIRS COULD TAKE UNTIL Q1 2027

12

Qatar's damaged liquefied natural gas (LNG) production could take until the first quarter of next year to fully repair, Shell has said.

Chief financial officer Sinead Gorman told reporters, as cited by *Bloomberg*, that sections of Shell's Pearl gas-to-liquids plant hit by a missile strike during the Middle East conflict should be back in service by the first quarter of 2027. However, unaffected

units at the facility could restart as soon as shipping lanes reopen. Despite that, Shell's guidance for the third quarter assumes zero output from Qatar, a sign of how uncertain the timeline for a full resumption remains.

Shell holds a 30 percent stake in QatarEnergy LNG's fourth expansion train at Ras Laffan, equivalent to 2.4 million tonnes a year of equity production, a facility that has

continued operating throughout the disruption. Chief executive Wael Sawan, speaking to *Bloomberg Television*, described the power cut as a short-term event rather than a structural one, while Ms Gorman had earlier this year flagged Qatar as the single biggest swing factor in the group's gas output.

QatarEnergy shut in production across its LNG facilities on March 2 and later declared force majeure, a step that has weighed heavily on Shell's Integrated Gas division, where production fell 31 percent quarter-on-quarter, and LNG liquefaction slipped 2 percent.



QATAR RAS LAFFAN TRAIN FIVE 'GOES OFFLINE'

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Train 5 at Qatar's Ras Laffan plant has gone offline, according to Energy Aspects and Kayros LNG intelligence monitoring.

Drawing on satellite thermal imaging, it said train 5 is now dark, while 6 and 7 appear to be operational.

"The market narrative this week has been about Qatari capacity recovering. Proprietary data tells a different story," it wrote.

The situation remains fluid, with hopes of a deal raised and since stalled. The pivotal plant is responsible for around 20 percent of LNG supply.

QatarEnergy confirmed an internal explosion during the restart of the LNG facility in June.

Closely tied to Ras Laffan's resumption is a solution for the safe passage of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, which remains elusive.

Resuming Ras Laffan's LNG and helium production is "more important" than the reopening of the strait, Air Liquide CEO Francois Jackow had said in April this year.

But four months on, finding a solution to the strait remains imperative for the global economy.

Landon Derentz, vice president for energy and infrastructure at the Atlantic Council, the international affairs think tank, said the relevant question for US strategy is not whether the closure of Hormuz is painful, but whether that pain is more strategically enduring than the concessions Tehran hopes to extract in return for ending it.

"The energy shock is real. Consumers will pay more for energy and political pressure will mount," he said.

"It is important that Washington, nonetheless, seize the opportunity this crisis presents to shape the transformation already underway. The goal should not simply be to reopen Hormuz, but rather to construct an

energy system in which closing it matters far less."

One of Wood Mackenzie's three forecasts it outlined in May, a quick peace, can now be ruled out.

The 'summer settlement' scenario assumes negotiations extend into late summer, with the strait remaining largely closed until September.

In this context, oil and LNG supply shortages persist through Q3, driving a shallow global recession in the second half of 2026. Global GDP growth falls below 2 percent.

Under the most severe scenario, the strait remains largely closed until the end of 2026, with recurring tensions triggering periods of renewed conflict and sustained supply disruption.



BALADNA TO INVEST US\$3.3 BILLION (QR12.01 BILLION) IN SYRIAN FARMING PROJECT

Baladna has embarked on a US\$3.3 billion (QR12.01 billion) in farming and food-processing project in Syria that is expected to employ thousands, as Gulf investors step up efforts to support the country's economic rehabilitation.

The project by Baladna Food Industries, covering 2,400 square kilometres, will produce everything from cotton and wheat to finished products such as textiles and cheese, said Kamel Al Abdullah,

chief executive of the newly formed subsidiary Baladna Syria.

Baladna's project is part of a broader push by Gulf companies to help finance and rebuild Syria's economy after more than a decade of war. Qatari and Emirati businesses have moved into agriculture and other strategic sectors, while Gulf capital and expertise are increasingly being directed towards rebuilding infrastructure and expanding production capacity as

Syria seeks to reconnect with regional markets.

The project will be mostly on land in the Euphrates River Basin leased from the Syrian government. The area, in the eastern Raqqa and Deir Ezzor governorates, makes up 1.3 percent of Syria's land mass.

Baladna has also acquired land in central Syria for a dairy factory. The company is also considering acquisitions in coastal areas of Syria, which have high rainfall and some of the country's richest soil. The company will contract local farmers across the country to produce staples and other food for Baladna, and provide them with material and know how to raise their yield, on top of its direct acquisitions.

QATAR-BACKED RASMAL VENTURES JOINS YUNO'S US\$45 MILLION (QR163.8 MILLION) SERIES B ROUND OF FUNDING

Qatar-backed Rasmal Ventures has participated in a US\$45 million (QR163.8 million) application programming interface (API) Series B round for global payments infrastructure company Yuno, alongside Abu Dhabi-based Further Ventures, GrowthX Capital and a group of international investors.

The round was led by Global PayTech Ventures, with participation from Andreessen Horowitz, Tiger Global, QuantumLight Capital, Monashees, Kaszek and Endeavor

Catalyst. Rasmal Ventures, described by Yuno as Qatar's first investment firm backed by the Qatar Investment Authority, joined as one of the round's strategic regional investors.

The funding will be used for research and development, next-generation payments technology and the expansion of Yuno's global infrastructure, while supporting the company's stated path towards profitability. Founded in Colombia in 2022, Yuno connects businesses through a single API to more than 1,000 payment

methods and over 460 integrations across more than 190 countries.

The investment comes as Yuno increases its presence across the Middle East. In April 2026, Yuno Payments Arabia received Payment Technical Service Provider certification from the Saudi Central Bank. The company has also partnered with Tap Payments to access local payment rails including Mada, KNET and NAPS across all six GCC countries, and has a buy-now-pay-later partnership with Tabby covering Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

QATAR, INDIA HAVE STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD PARTNERSHIP BEYOND ENERGY, SAY ECONOMIC EXPERTS

India and Qatar are entering a new phase in their economic relationship, with analysts on Asian and Gulf economic affairs saying the two countries have an unprecedented opportunity to diversify ties beyond their long-standing energy partnership through greater cooperation in investment, technology, infrastructure, food security and financial services.

According to economists and regional trade experts, while Qatar remains one of India's largest suppliers of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), bilateral trade, estimated at around US\$14 billion (QR50.96 billion) annually, continues to be heavily dominated by

hydrocarbons, which account for nearly 80 percent of total trade.

While the energy partnership has remained resilient for decades, experts argue that expanding cooperation into non-energy sectors would make the relationship more balanced and future-ready.

They note that the elevation of bilateral ties to a Strategic Partnership during the state visit of His Highness the Amir of the State of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani to India in February 2025 marked a significant turning point. The joint target of doubling bilateral trade to US\$28 billion (QR101.92 billion) by 2030 and Qatar's commitment to invest US\$10

billion (QR36.4 billion) in India across infrastructure, manufacturing, fintech and clean energy are being viewed as key milestones in broadening economic engagement.

Trade analysts believe the proposed Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), currently under negotiation, could significantly accelerate investment flows, reduce trade barriers and encourage greater private-sector participation between the two countries.

Economic observers also point to the growing role of the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) in India's expanding economy. Its investments in leading Indian consumer and technology companies are seen as reflecting confidence in India's long-term growth prospects, driven by rapid urbanisation, a growing middle class and continued infrastructure expansion.

QATAR AND TURKEY AIM TO LIFT THEIR TRADE VOLUME TO US\$5 BILLION (QR18.2 BILLION)

Turkey and Qatar aim to lift their bilateral trade volume to US\$5 billion (QR18.2 billion), Trade Minister Ömer Bolat said recently as he hosted Qatar's Minister of State for Foreign Trade, Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Sayed, in Ankara.

"Turkey-Qatar relations have truly made tremendous progress. Our total annual foreign trade increased 53-fold over the past 21 years, reaching US\$1.3 billion (QR4.7 billion) last year," Bolat told reporters after the meeting.

Trade between the two countries climbed as high as US\$2.5 billion (QR9.1 billion) during preparations for the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar, largely due to

construction projects, he added.

Bolat said the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) between Turkey and Qatar, which entered into force last year, would make a significant contribution to achieving the US\$5 billion (QR18.2 billion) trade target.

Turkish contractors have undertaken 206 projects worth a combined US\$21 billion (QR76.44 billion) in Qatar, he also said.

Around 250 Qatari companies have investments totalling US\$7.8 billion (QR28.4 billion) in Turkey, spanning sectors including finance, banking, energy, logistics, media and agriculture.

Meanwhile, approximately 1,116 Turkish companies of various sizes

operate in Qatar's construction, services and manufacturing sectors.

Bolat said that the closure of the Strait of Hormuz due to the war in the region had created logistics and supply bottlenecks, highlighting the need for alternative routes. "The current circumstances have shown that alternative routes are greatly needed to avoid dependence solely on maritime transport and the Strait of Hormuz," he said. Under a transit transportation agreement with Saudi Arabia that took effect on April 15, Turkish carriers have been conducting intensive shipments to Gulf countries through Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, as well as via Iraq and Saudi Arabia. "We will work together to establish these transit and trade corridors on a stronger and more stable basis," he said. Bolat added that Al Sayed conveyed the Qatar Investment Authority's desire to expand its investments in Turkey and said initiatives were underway in this regard.

QATAR'S INWARD FDI RISES 3.3 PERCENT TO QR172.2 BILLION IN Q12026

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The National Planning Council (NPC), in cooperation with the Qatar Central Bank (QCB), has released the results of the Foreign Direct Investment Survey for the first quarter of 2026. The survey showed continued growth in both inward and outward FDI between January and March, providing a positive indication of the country's investment momentum.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Qatar continued its upward trajectory during the first quarter of 2026, with the country's inward FDI position rising 3.3 percent to QR172.2 billion at the end of March, reflecting sustained investor confidence in the Qatari economy and its long-term growth prospects.

At the same time, Qatari investments abroad continued to expand, with the outward FDI position increasing 3.5 percent compared with the fourth quarter of 2025 to reach QR221.7 billion. The latest figures underline the growing two-way flow of investment and Qatar's strengthening position as both an attractive destination for international capital and an increasingly active investor in global markets.

Dr Abdulaziz bin Nasser bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, secretary general of the National Planning Council, said the increase in inward FDI during the first quarter was a positive indicator of Qatar's investment trajectory.

He stressed that the country's investment strategy is focused not only on increasing the volume of investment

but also on improving its quality and maximising its contribution to economic diversification, productivity, knowledge and technology transfer, and the development of high-value-added sectors.

The Council's priority in the coming period, he said, would be to further enhance the attractiveness of the Qatari economy to quality investments and accelerate investment growth in non-hydrocarbon sectors. This approach is aligned with the objectives of the Third National Development Strategy and Qatar National Vision 2030.

The distribution of inward FDI during the first quarter showed a continued concentration in five major economic activities, which together accounted for more than 90 percent of total inward investment.

Mining and quarrying remained the largest recipient, accounting for 45.3 percent of inward FDI, followed by financial and insurance activities with 31.9 percent.

Manufacturing accounted for 13 percent, while information and communication activities represented 2.8 percent and professional, scientific and technical activities accounted for 2 percent.

The figures highlight the continued importance of Qatar's energy sector in attracting foreign capital, while also pointing to significant opportunities to broaden the investment base. Increasing the share of FDI flowing into manufacturing, technology,

professional services and other non-hydrocarbon activities remains a key element of Qatar's diversification strategy.

A broader distribution of foreign investment across sectors would help strengthen the resilience of the economy, create new business opportunities and support the development of knowledge-intensive and high-value-added industries.

Qatar's outward FDI also recorded solid growth in the first quarter, rising 3.5 percent from the previous quarter to QR221.7 billion. The increase reflects the expanding international presence of Qatari investors and the development of economic and investment partnerships in overseas markets.

The growth in outward investment also supports Qatar's strategy of diversifying its assets geographically and across sectors, while seeking sustainable long-term returns.

Financial and insurance activities represented the largest share of outward FDI at 33.5 percent, followed by mining and quarrying at 29.8 percent. Information and communication activities accounted for 10.8 percent, accommodation and food service activities 9.1 percent, and transport and storage 7 percent.

Together, these five activities accounted for more than 90 percent of Qatar's outward FDI, reflecting the broadening international footprint of Qatari capital across financial services, natural resources, technology, hospitality and logistics.

The latest FDI figures are also part of the National Planning Council's broader efforts to enhance the quality, coverage and regularity of Qatar's economic statistics. The data are intended to provide policymakers, investors and other stakeholders with a clearer picture of investment trends and their contribution to national development.

QATAR TARGETS US\$100 BILLION (QR364 BILLION) IN FOREIGN INVESTMENT AS NON-OIL SECTORS POWER GROWTH

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Qatar's non-hydrocarbon economy now accounts for 65.5 percent of GDP as the country targets US\$100 billion (QR364 billion) in foreign investment by 2030, Oxford Business Group (OBG) has said.

Qatar's non-hydrocarbon economy now accounts for 65.5 percent of GDP, highlighting the country's accelerating shift away from hydrocarbon dependence as it pursues an ambitious economic diversification strategy, according to OBG.

The global advisory and research firm's latest publication, *The Report: Qatar 2026* says the country's long-term transformation is being driven by regulatory reform, infrastructure investment and a target to attract US\$100 billion (QR364 billion) in foreign direct investment (FDI) by 2030.

According to the report, growth across construction, trade, tourism, logistics, information and communications technology (ICT) and financial services has helped non-hydrocarbon sectors reach 65.5 percent of GDP.

OBG said Qatar continues to benefit from strong liquefied natural gas (LNG) revenues and one of the world's largest sovereign wealth funds, supporting macroeconomic stability and fiscal strength despite regional geopolitical tensions.

The report said the Third National Development Strategy (NDS-3) is driving Qatar's next phase of economic transformation.

The strategy aims to attract US\$100 billion (QR364 billion) in foreign direct



investment by 2030 through regulatory reforms and a US\$1 billion (QR3.64 billion) incentives programme focused on advanced industries, logistics, digital technologies and financial services.

According to OBG, rising FDI inflows, continued infrastructure investment, population growth and Qatar's position as a regional trade, innovation and energy hub continue to strengthen its appeal as a long-term investment destination.

The publication also explores Qatar's long-term LNG expansion strategy and how the country is balancing its position as a leading global gas supplier with renewable energy investment, sustainability objectives and energy security priorities.

The report highlights the growing

role of 5G, cloud services, artificial intelligence (AI) and enterprise digitalisation in improving business competitiveness and supporting smart city development.

It also examines how digitalisation, fintech innovation and sustainable finance are reshaping Qatar's banking and capital markets while strengthening the country's position as a bridge for international investment.

OBG said sustainable urban planning and affordable housing also remain central to the country's long-term development plans as the country prepares for future population growth through integrated urban centres, public-private partnerships and technology-enabled municipal planning.

QATARI DIAR'S US\$29.7 BILLION (QR108.1 BILLION) ALAM AL ROUM PROJECT IN EGYPT'S NORTH COAST

Prime Minister of Egypt Mostafa Madbouly attended the launch of construction works for the first phase of Qatari Diar's Alam Al Roum project in Egypt's North Coast, a major mixed-use development being implemented in partnership with the Egyptian government.

The project will involve total planned investments of US\$29.7 billion (QR108.1 billion), including US\$3.5 billion (QR12.74 billion) in direct cash investments, with the first phase scheduled for delivery beginning in 2030.

Speaking during the launch ceremony in Matrouh governorate, Madbouly said the government is continuing to accelerate development across Egypt's northwestern coast, describing the region as one of the country's most promising tourism and investment destinations.

Madbouly said the commencement of construction at Alam Al Roum marks an important milestone in the

development of the northwestern coast and reflects the area's growing attractiveness as a Mediterranean tourism and investment hub.

Sheikh Hamad bin Talal Al Thani, CEO of Qatari Diar, presented the master plan and implementation timetable for the project's first phase during the launch event.

The first phase will cover 4 million square metres, with a total built-up area of 1.4 million square metres. It will feature a 2-kilometre beachfront and waterfront promenade, natural sea-connected swimmable lagoons, and 195,000 square metres of artificial swimmable lagoons, while open spaces will account for approximately 85 percent of the total area. The phase will also include a marina with 50 yacht berths, four hotels providing more than 1,000 rooms, sports facilities, retail outlets, and restaurants.

According to Qatari Diar, the first phase is expected to attract

investments of approximately EGP220 billion and create around 30,000 direct and indirect jobs.

The full Alam Al Roum development will span 20.58 million square metres and include a 7.2-kilometre waterfront promenade. The master plan incorporates residential, tourism, commercial, cultural, entertainment, educational, and healthcare components.

The project will also feature 22 kilometres of open lagoons connected directly to the sea, 850,000 square metres of artificial swimmable lagoons, an international marina with capacity for 370 yachts, and a local marina accommodating 120 yachts.

Additional features include an 18-hole golf course covering approximately 980,000 square metres with sea views, alongside more than 3,500 hotel rooms across a range of hotels and resorts.

Alam Al Roum is strategically located on Egypt's North Coast near Ras El Hekma and Marsa Matrouh International Airport. The development is also connected to the International Coastal Road and the electric high-speed rail network currently under construction.

BANKING

QATAR NATIONAL BANK IS TESTING INVESTOR APPETITE WITH A NEW US\$2 BILLION (QR7.28 BILLION) LOAN

Qatar National Bank (QNB), leaning on Asian banks for the first time to broaden its funding base, is testing investor appetite with a new US\$2 billion (QR7.28 billion) loan. The Gulf's biggest lender launched an unsecured



five-year term facility targeting only Asian lenders, and strong demand allowed it to double the size from an initial US\$1 billion (QR3.64 billion). It was priced at 80 basis points over SOFR with a top-level upfront fee of 110 basis points, and QNB called it the largest Asian pure-play syndication by a GCC bank, achieving the tightest pricing for the region. Mizuho Bank acted as sole coordinator, bookrunner and mandated lead arranger.

QCB HIGHLIGHTS FINANCIAL SECTOR RESILIENCE IN 2025 REVIEW



Qatar Central Bank (QCB) recently reported the resilience of the country's financial system despite global economic challenges, alongside 2.9 percent real GDP growth and sustained strength in the banking sector.

In its 2025 *Financial Stability Review* announced on X, the report notes that the banking sector maintained strong performance during the year, with total assets rising by 5.1 percent. Capital and liquidity buffers remained comfortably above regulatory minimums, while stress tests confirmed the sector's ability to withstand adverse scenarios.

The review also highlighted continued progress in Qatar's digital payments ecosystem. The expansion of the Himyan national payment card and sustained growth of the Fawran instant payment platform contributed to greater reach and efficiency, with total retail payment values increasing by 82 percent compared with 2024.

On cybersecurity and financial-sector resilience, QCB said it conducted the country's first sector-wide Cyber Resilience Exercise, established a Cyber Forensics Laboratory, and continued the 'Stay Aware National Information Security Awareness Campaign'. The initiatives

were carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior, the National Cyber Security Agency and the Qatar Financial Centre Regulatory Authority.

QCB stated that the combined efforts aim to reinforce information security while further enhancing the stability and efficiency of Qatar's financial system.

The review also underscored the central bank's efforts to support the continued modernisation of Qatar's financial infrastructure and strengthen the sector's ability to respond to emerging risks.

The growth of digital payment services reflects increasing adoption of electronic transactions and the expansion of secure, efficient payment channels across the country.

QCB's cybersecurity initiatives represent another key area of focus.

The sector-wide 'Cyber Resilience Exercise' was designed to assess preparedness and strengthen the financial system's capacity to prevent, respond to and recover from cyber incidents.

The establishment of the 'Cyber Forensics Laboratory' is also expected to enhance capabilities in investigating and addressing cyber-related incidents.

These developments highlight QCB's continued focus on maintaining financial stability, strengthening institutional resilience and supporting sustainable economic growth while ensuring Qatar's financial sector remains well-positioned to navigate future challenges.

CEO Abdulla Mubarak Al Khalifa said the oversubscription despite challenging global conditions reaffirms QNB's reputation as a high-quality issuer and fits the bank's strategy to diversify relationships worldwide. The deal marks a shift for QNB, which

has historically relied on global and regional banks for its syndicated loans, including a US\$3.5 billion (QR12.74 billion) dual-tranche facility in 2020 and a US\$2 billion (QR7.28 billion) refinancing in 2023. With this Asian-focused transaction, QNB is tapping

deeper liquidity pools in Japan, China and Southeast Asia as it funds general corporate purposes and continues expanding across MEASEA. The success signals that top-rated Gulf banks can still command competitive terms even as funding costs remain elevated.

QATAR MANDATES IFRS S1 AND IFRS S2 FOR BANKS AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

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Qatar has positioned itself as one of the earliest movers in the Gulf region's sustainability reporting landscape, with the Qatar Central Bank mandating the adoption of IFRS S1 and IFRS S2 sustainability disclosure standards for banks and financial institutions effective January 1, 2026.

The Sustainability Reporting Framework from Qatar Central Bank, developed in accordance with the ISSB standards, requires covered entities

to disclose their governance approach, strategy, risk management practices, and metrics around climate-related risks and opportunities.

IFRS S1 establishes general requirements for sustainability-related financial disclosures. IFRS S2 meanwhile addresses climate-specific risks and opportunities, including mandatory reporting of absolute Scope 1, Scope 2, and Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions. Together, IFRS S1 and IFRS

S2 provide a comprehensive framework that connects environmental and sustainability performance directly to financial decision-making.

To ensure the regulatory reporting landscape is harmonised across Qatar's financial system, the Qatar Financial Centre Regulatory Authority (QFCRA) and Qatar Stock Exchange (QSE) have aligned their requirements to IFRS S1 and IFRS S2.

The mandatory adoption of ISSB standards aligns Qatar's financial sector with the country's National Vision 2030, which prioritises economic diversification, environmental sustainability, and the transition to a knowledge-based economy.

AUTOMOTIVE

BRITISH FIRM WEVC TO BUILD CAR AND VAN AT NEW FACTORY IN QATAR

Watt Electric Vehicle Company (WEVC), winner of Autocar's 2026 Innovation Award, has struck a deal with JTA, a major Qatari-based investor, to build two models in Qatar's first dedicated EV manufacturing plant.

The new factory will initially build a new passenger car and a medium-sized delivery van along the lines of WEVC's own recently developed eCV1. It is expected to be ready for manufacturing to start in early 2028.

Production will run initially at around 5000 units a year but will expand considerably beyond that.

Vehicle design and engineering for the project will be led by WEVC, from new premises it plans to open soon in the Midlands, in addition to bases it also occupies in Cornwall and Worcestershire.

Both of the initial Qatari vehicles, and others to be launched later, will be made entirely in Qatar but based on WEVC's highly versatile PACES aluminium skateboard chassis, which uses a series of patented extrusions and joining pieces to greatly simplify jigging and slash manufacturing costs.

WEVC founder and CEO Neil Yates

said the Qatari deal will help accelerate his company's existing plan to establish its own EV manufacturing capability in the UK and will be the forerunner of similar satellite operations in the US and Asia.

"We want to be a partner in local manufacturing operations around the world," he said. "Our way of making cars is being seen as a very effective way of coping with geopolitical difficulties like the rise of tariff barriers. It's also very cost-efficient because it requires low capital expenditure."

QIA ANNOUNCES INVESTMENT IN LESHA QATAR EQUITY FUND

QIA recently announced its collaboration in Lesha Qatar Equity Fund.

Lesha Bank is a Qatar-based Shari'a compliant investment bank founded in 2008. The Fund is focused on achieving capital growth and income by investing in a diversified portfolio of shares included in the QE Al Rayan Islamic Index or constituents of the QE All Share Index in accordance with Shari'a guidelines.

The investment is part of QIA's Active Asset Management Initiative, launched in 2024 to establish partnerships with leading global and local asset managers with GCC expertise. Under the initiative, QIA seed funds managed by its partners by re-allocating shares in Qatar Stock

Exchange listed companies.

Lesha Bank has ambitions to become a global leader in Shari'a-compliant investment banking, offering innovative investment solutions across alternative investments, asset management, and investment advisory service. The bank manages approximately QR 19.2 billion in assets under management and aims to further expand its asset base as part of its long-term growth strategy.

The collaboration with local asset managers such as Lesha Bank further reflects QIA commitment to supporting Qatar's competitive local economy. Through a number of initiatives, QIA seeks to support the continued development and diversification of Qatar's capital markets.

Mohammed Saif Al Sowaidi, CEO of QIA said, "We are pleased to expand our Active Asset Management Initiative through this investment in Lesha Bank, the first locally managed fund under the initiative. This partnership reflects our commitment to supporting the development of Qatar's financial sector and broadening opportunities for local asset managers."

Mohammed Ismail Al Emadi, Group CEO of Lesha Bank commented "Having the QIA invest in our public equity fund focused on Shari'a-compliant listed equities is a powerful endorsement of our investment philosophy and capabilities. We are honoured to be the first local asset manager to join the QIA's Active Asset Management Initiative, designed to boost economic growth and enhance liquidity on the Qatar Stock Exchange. This collaboration reflects a shared commitment between two Qatari institutions to strengthen local capital markets for the long term."

“Having the QIA invest in our public equity fund focused on Shari'a-compliant listed equities is a powerful endorsement of our investment philosophy and capabilities. We are honoured to be the first local asset manager to join the QIA's Active Asset Management Initiative, designed to boost economic growth and enhance liquidity on the Qatar Stock Exchange.”

- Mohammed Ismail Al Emadi, Group CEO of Lesha Bank

**QR19.2
BILLION:**

LESHA BANK'S ASSETS UNDER
MANAGEMENT

QIA BACKS US\$200 MILLION (QR728 MILLION) FUNDING FOR DRIVERLESS FREIGHT FIRM GATIK

Gatik, the leader in autonomous trucking, recently announced \$200 million in financing as demand accelerates for driverless commercial freight across Fortune 50 retail, grocery and CPG supply chains. The Series D round was led by Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) and Koch Disruptive Technologies (KDT), with participation from Millennium Management, ARK Invest, Intact Private Capital and others.

"We believe the company is well positioned to help forge the future of freight transportation." – Cathie Wood, founder, CEO, and CIO of ARK Invest

Gatik has built one of the most commercially advanced businesses in autonomous freight, with more than US\$600 million (QR2.2 billion) in contracted revenue, 85,000 fully driverless orders completed, and 99

percent on-time delivery across its operations. Its trucks move goods across high-frequency regional networks between distribution centres and stores, giving customers a reliable way to add capacity, improve service levels and keep products moving.

"This round, led by some of the world's leading financial institutions, is a clear validation of Gatik's commercial leadership in autonomous freight," said Gautam Narang, CEO and co-founder of Gatik. "We have built Gatik with real revenue, deep customer demand, and AI-driven autonomous technology proven every day in live supply chains. This round gives us the capital to scale with speed and discipline, serve the world's largest companies, and define the future of autonomous freight."

"Autonomous freight is

transforming the global logistics industry, making it more efficient and reliable," said Abdulla Al Kuwari, head of industrials at QIA. "QIA is committed to supporting next-generation solutions providers like Gatik that are shaping the future of freight infrastructure."

"We've long believed autonomous freight has the potential to improve the efficiency and reliability of supply chains," said Byron Knight, president of Koch Disruptive Technologies. "What we're seeing today is autonomy moving beyond a promising technology into real-world commercial operations. Gatik has demonstrated a practical approach to that transition, and we look forward to supporting the company's continued growth."

The latest financing round will help Gatik expand a model built around one of the most commercially compelling applications of autonomy: high-frequency regional routes that connect distribution centres and stores. These routes are time-sensitive, operationally complex and essential to keeping shelves stocked as customer expectations shift toward faster, more predictable access to everyday products.

ECONOMY

QATAR DIAMOND EXCHANGE SIGNS STRATEGIC MOUS WITH BOURSES IN SINGAPORE, SHANGHAI AND TOKYO

The Qatar Diamond Exchange (QDE) has signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with the Diamond Exchange of Singapore, the Shanghai Diamond Exchange and the Tokyo Diamond Exchange during the 41st World Diamond Congress in Singapore.

The agreements reflect QDE's strategic focus on developing closer relationships with established diamond markets across Asia and creating new opportunities for trade and cooperation between Qatar and the region, said QDE in a statement on recently.

Each MoU was signed by director of

the Qatar Diamond Exchange Ghanim Nasser Al Saadi, and the respective president of the partner bourse: president of the Diamond Exchange of Singapore, Fabio Cascapera; president of the Shanghai Diamond Exchange, Lin Qiang; and President of the Tokyo Diamond Exchange, Michio Iwasaki.

AVIATION

The agreements establish frameworks for QDE and the partner exchanges to foster business connections between their respective members, encourage commercial relationships and mutual introductions, and pursue broader areas of cooperation. They will also support bilateral visits and reciprocal participation in industry events, tenders, auctions, viewings and other activities organised or hosted by the exchanges, the statement added.

The partnerships aim to enhance consumer confidence in natural diamonds and precious stones and encourage adherence to recognised industry standards and initiatives, including the World Diamond Council's System of Warranties and those led by the Responsible Jewellery Council.

In this context, director of the Qatar Diamond Exchange, Ghanim Nasser Al Saadi, said, "These new partnerships mark a concrete step in expanding QDE's engagement across Asia. By creating direct links between our members and bourses in Singapore, Shanghai and Tokyo, we are opening new channels for trade, investment and industry collaboration.

The partnerships also reinforce Doha's potential to serve as a trusted gateway connecting Asian diamond markets with the wider international trade, supported by transparency, responsible practices and internationally recognised standards."

Launched in July 2026 and based at Ras Bufontas Free Zone, QDE provides an integrated, regulated platform for diamond trading and related industry services. It connects Doha with international diamond markets while supporting the growth of Qatar's diamond and precious stones sector and the country's economic diversification ambitions under Qatar National Vision 2030.

QATAR LINES UP A US\$4.5 BILLION (QR16.38 BILLION) TANKER FLEET

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Qatar is about to stop borrowing other people's gas stations. On August 20, 2026, the US State Department signed off on a possible US\$4.5 billion (QR16.38 billion) sale of four Boeing KC-46A Pegasus tankers to the Qatar Emiri Air Force, a deal that would let Qatar keep its fast-growing fighter fleet airborne without leaning on allied aircraft.

It is the kind of purchase that says a lot about ambition. Qatar already flies a fighter force that bigger air arms would envy: American F-15QA Eagles, French Rafales and European Typhoons. What it has never had is a way to top them off in mid-air on its own. Four Pegasus tankers would fix that.

The package the State Department cleared is a maximum shopping list, not a signed cheque. Qatar requested up to four KC-46As and eight Pratt & Whitney PW4062 engines, four of them installed and four as spares. Bolted on top are 10 AN/ALR-69A radar warning receivers, Guardian laser transmitters for the Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasure system, missile-warning sensors, secure communications, training gear and the usual mountain of spares and support.

The US\$4.5 billion (QR16.38 billion) is the ceiling. Qatar has not signed

anything, the final figure could come in lower, and the deal still has to survive the US Congressional review process before Doha and Washington can even sit down to negotiate. Boeing, Pratt & Whitney, RTX and Northrop Grumman would share the work.

Boeing built the KC-46A from its 767 airliner, and its trump card is flexibility. The Pegasus can pass fuel through a fly-by-wire boom or through hose-and-drogue pods, which matters enormously for a mixed fleet. Qatar's F-15QAs take fuel through a boom; its Rafales and Typhoons use probes for hose-and-drogue. One tanker type can feed all three.

It is not only about fighters, either. The KC-46 can also haul cargo, passengers and aeromedical patients, giving Qatar a long-range lift capability to sit alongside its Boeing C-17s and Lockheed Martin C-130Js. Doha had previously eyed the Airbus A330 tanker but never pulled the trigger; buying American Pegasus would put tanker support firmly under Qatari control instead of an ally's.

If the deal goes through, Qatar would become only the fourth KC-46 operator on the planet, joining the US Air Force, Israel and Japan.

QFC FIRM REGISTRATIONS RISE 37 PERCENT IN FIRST HALF OF 2026

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The Qatar Financial Centre (QFC), a leading onshore financial and business centre, closed the first half (H1) of 2026 with a 37 percent rise in firm registrations from the same period in 2025, underscoring the strength of its strategy and the appeal of Qatar's business environment to investors and entrepreneurs alike.

QFC onboarded 1,135 firms during the period, bringing its total registered firms to over 4,700 as at the end of June. Growth was recorded across QFC's key focus sectors, with Technology and Innovation leading the way at 544 new firms, followed by Media and Entertainment at 173, Consulting and Professional Services at 166, Wealth at 84, and Fintech at 65. The strong uptake across these sectors reflects the breadth and growing relevance of the QFC platform to firms operating at the intersection of finance, innovation, and advisory services.

QFC's H1 growth was boosted by its performance at Web Summit Qatar 2026, where it received approximately 2,300 business licensing applications, an increase of approximately 44 percent from the previous year. The strong showing reflects the impact of QFC's incentives and streamlined onboarding process to ease market entry, with waived registration and annual fees for the first three years combined with an integrated, one-stop-shop business setup model simplifying the registration journey.

The first half of the year also saw QFC broaden the scope of Qatar's financial services sector, with the registration of Qatar's first-ever Real Estate Investment Trust collective investment fund. The launch of Salwa REIT will offer an economical and efficient way to own income-generating real estate assets in Qatar, marking

a significant milestone in the depth of products available on the QFC platform.

Regionally, QFC strengthened its regulatory cooperation with the Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM) and the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) through reciprocal data protection adequacy recognition. The mutual recognition reflects the close regulatory cooperation between the three centres in establishing a robust data protection regime, streamlining cross-border operations for companies doing business across the region.

The first half of the year also marked a defining chapter for the organisation. Mansoor Rashid Al Khater took over as chief executive officer in January, together with new appointments to QFC's board of directors, and the centre relocated to its new headquarters in Lusail. The relocation positioned QFC at the heart of a smart, sustainable, and rapidly emerging district. The period also coincided with a celebration marking QFC's 20 years of impact and the unveiling of a new brand identity carrying the renewed commitment to help firms 'Grow with Confidence'.

QFC chief executive officer Mansoor Rashid Al Khater said, "Over the years, QFC has built a platform businesses trust to support their growth. As we look ahead, our focus is on deepening that trust, expanding our value proposition, and backing our firms' progress as QFC continues to evolve into a dynamic, future-ready hub for innovation and long-term partnerships."

Stiven Muccioli, CEO at BKN301 has, in his own words, “built, scaled, and exited companies across e-commerce and financial services” – which gave him a first-hand view of how technology can transform established industries. This created his current venture – BKN301 in 2021. Muccioli shares his views on Qatar and its potential for entrepreneurship, fintech investment opportunities what the growth of stablecoins could mean for Qatar’s banks and financial institutions.

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**“QATAR IS A
FASCINATING MARKET,
LEAPFROGGING
OTHER TRADITIONAL
FINANCIAL CENTRES”**

BL: Talk us through your career path.

Muccioli: I'm a technology entrepreneur and investor. Over the years, I've built, scaled, and exited companies across e-commerce and financial services. One of my early ventures was Tippest, which became one of Italy's leading e-commerce platforms, and I later built Ventis, which was acquired by Iccrea Banca Group.

Those experiences gave me a first-hand view of how technology can transform established industries, but also the complexity that often holds financial institutions back. That led me to found BKN301 in 2021.

BKN301 is financial data infrastructure layer focused on one central problem: complexity that slows execution. Banks and fintechs are under constant pressure to innovate and comply with regulation, but most are constrained by fragmented systems built over decades. We help institutions and newcomers modernise without breaking what already works, so they can launch faster, adapt to regulation more easily, and scale without adding disproportionate cost.

From there, the focus has expanded beyond the platform itself. We are actively building an ecosystem through targeted investments and acquisitions, especially around data and AI, to keep that execution advantage over time and scale exponentially in the medium term.

Today, I lead both BKN301 and SM Capital, with a focus on financial infrastructure, data, and AI-driven platforms. Alongside that, I serve as Special Envoy for Innovation & Economic Development for the Republic of San Marino, working where institutions, technology innovation, and global markets intersect.

BL: Having been associated with venture capital as an industry, what top 5 lessons do you want to share for those who are looking for venture capital to start or scale up their business in the region.

Muccioli: Qatar is a fascinating, growing market that is, in many ways, leapfrogging other traditional financial centres. Its fintech story is particularly distinct as the groundwork has been laid in a way that allows firms to scale fundamentally differently from those in many older markets, where legacy infrastructure and regulatory fragmentation can hold them back.

There are decades of tech debt, dependencies, and layers of complexity, and all of that slows everything

down. Even many digital-first challenger banks, which were built to circumvent these hurdles, are still tied to the same legacy infrastructure they originally set out to disrupt.

In terms of lessons for founders looking to attract venture capital, a few key areas stand out.

Firstly, tap into Qatar's entrepreneurial spirit and understand the direction of travel. There's a clear national vision around digital transformation, defined by initiatives such as the Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Qatar FinTech Strategy. Regulators are actively engaged with the market rather than reacting after the fact. In practice, that gives founders the opportunity to build with modern infrastructure and regulatory requirements in mind from day one, rather than retrofitting them later.

I'd also reinforce the importance of getting the foundations right early. In fintech especially, strong infrastructure, data capabilities, and compliance matter because they determine whether you can grow without costs and complexity increasing in tandem. Investors need to see that the architecture underneath the business is capable of supporting long-term scale.

In a similar vein, founders should build for execution, not experimentation. The market is moving beyond proofs of concept. Investors want to understand how an idea can actually be deployed, scaled and sustained, not simply whether it works in a pilot.

Founders should also be able to show investors how they can scale beyond one market. Its geographical position acts as a bridge between established financial markets and fast-growing emerging economies. For investors, the most compelling businesses will therefore be those that can demonstrate how a model proven in Qatar can expand into regional and cross-border use cases.

Lastly, understand that Qatar's VC ecosystem is being deliberately built, and make yourself part of it. Programmes such as Startup Qatar provide funding and support for seed and growth-stage companies. There is a budding network of government grants, events, incubation programmes, and funding available for tech startups to establish or expand operations in this market. Founders should make a point of showing investors how their business can contribute to Qatar's ambition to become a regional hub for innovation.

Stiven Muccioli, CEO at BKN301





**WE ARE ACTIVELY
BUILDING AN
ECOSYSTEM
THROUGH TARGETED
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“CROSS-BORDER INFRASTRUCTURE STANDS OUT BECAUSE QATAR IS WELL POSITIONED AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN ESTABLISHED FINANCIAL MARKETS AND FASTER-GROWING EMERGING ECONOMIES. AS INTEROPERABILITY BECOMES MORE IMPORTANT, THERE IS A GROWING NEED FOR PLATFORMS THAT CAN CONNECT DIFFERENT BANKS, PAYMENT SYSTEMS, REGULATORY ENVIRONMENTS, AND FINANCIAL WORKFLOWS WITHOUT ADDING ANOTHER LAYER OF COMPLEXITY.”

BL: Where do you see the strongest fintech investment opportunities emerging in Qatar, particularly as value moves away from consumer-facing applications and towards the infrastructure, data and compliance layers behind them?

Muccioli: I see the strongest investment opportunities in Qatar moving towards the infrastructure that allows financial institutions to scale. That includes orchestration platforms, real-time payments infrastructure, financial data layers, and compliance technology.

There are already signs of capital moving in this direction. By December 2025, Qatar Development Bank (QDB), through Qatar FinTech Hub and its investment arm, had provided more than QR73 million in investment and financing to the fintech sector. QDB has also introduced a FinTech Development Grant offering co-funding of up to QR1.5 million per company, linked to milestones including technical and regulatory readiness, product development, and market entry.

For investors, the opportunity increasingly sits in the connective layer. As more financial services become digital, banks must connect payments, compliance, data and different providers while maintaining control over the entire operation. Companies that can abstract that complexity and allow institutions to add services or enter new markets without rebuilding their architecture each time become increasingly valuable. That is where I think some of the most durable businesses will be built.

The opportunity for fintechs to expand across jurisdictions is also becoming increasingly important. In areas such as buy now, pay later for example, international expansion is an opportunity for firms seeking sustainable long-term growth. That makes scalability across jurisdictions a particularly important investment consideration, as investors will want to understand whether a fintech's infrastructure can support expansion without creating a new layer of cost and complexity each time it enters a market.

Compliance and data sit at the centre of that challenge; as institutions connect more services and operate across more markets, compliance needs to be built into the underlying infrastructure. The opportunity is in platforms that combine automated controls with strong data foundations, giving financial institutions the ability to respond to regulatory requirements while continuing to scale.



BL: Which areas of Qatar's fintech market may currently be underappreciated by investors, including cross-border infrastructure, compliance automation, financial data and real-time operational intelligence?

Muccioli: In my view, some of the most underappreciated opportunities in Qatar are in the parts of fintech that sit behind the next high profile consumer app. The quieter, behind-the-scenes areas – particularly cross-border infrastructure, compliance automation, financial data, and real-time operational intelligence – are the areas where I expect to see real growth in the region.

Cross-border infrastructure stands out because Qatar is well positioned as a bridge between established financial markets and faster-growing emerging economies. As

interoperability becomes more important, there is a growing need for platforms that can connect different banks, payment systems, regulatory environments, and financial workflows without adding another layer of complexity.

Compliance automation is another area investors should be paying attention to; as financial institutions operate across more products, providers, and jurisdictions, compliance becomes increasingly difficult to manage through disconnected systems. The opportunity is in platforms that can embed compliance into the underlying infrastructure and help institutions adapt across different regulatory environments. That is especially relevant in Qatar, where fintechs are being encouraged to design services with modern infrastructure in mind from the outset.



BL: What are investors looking for from fintech businesses in Qatar today, from regulatory adaptability and data control to resilience and the ability to scale across borders?

Muccioli: Investors in Qatar are increasingly looking at whether a fintech has the infrastructure and operating model to remain resilient as it scales, particularly across different regulatory environments and markets.

Resilience is becoming more important because Qatar's payment infrastructure is being asked to handle substantially more activity. Qatar Central Bank data for June 2026 showed that the country's payment systems processed 75.135 million transactions worth QR99.101 billion during the month, up 21 percent and 40 percent respectively year on year. That kind of growth demands fintech to demonstrate that their technology, controls, and compliance processes can continue to perform as transaction volumes scale quickly.

The ability to expand into new markets without adding too much cost or complexity is also important. Fintechs that build products and services separately can find that each new launch adds more systems, processes and overhead. A platform model avoids some of that by using the same core capabilities, such as payments, onboarding, compliance, risk and data, across different products and markets. This is a key consideration for investors looking at how well a fintech can scale over time.

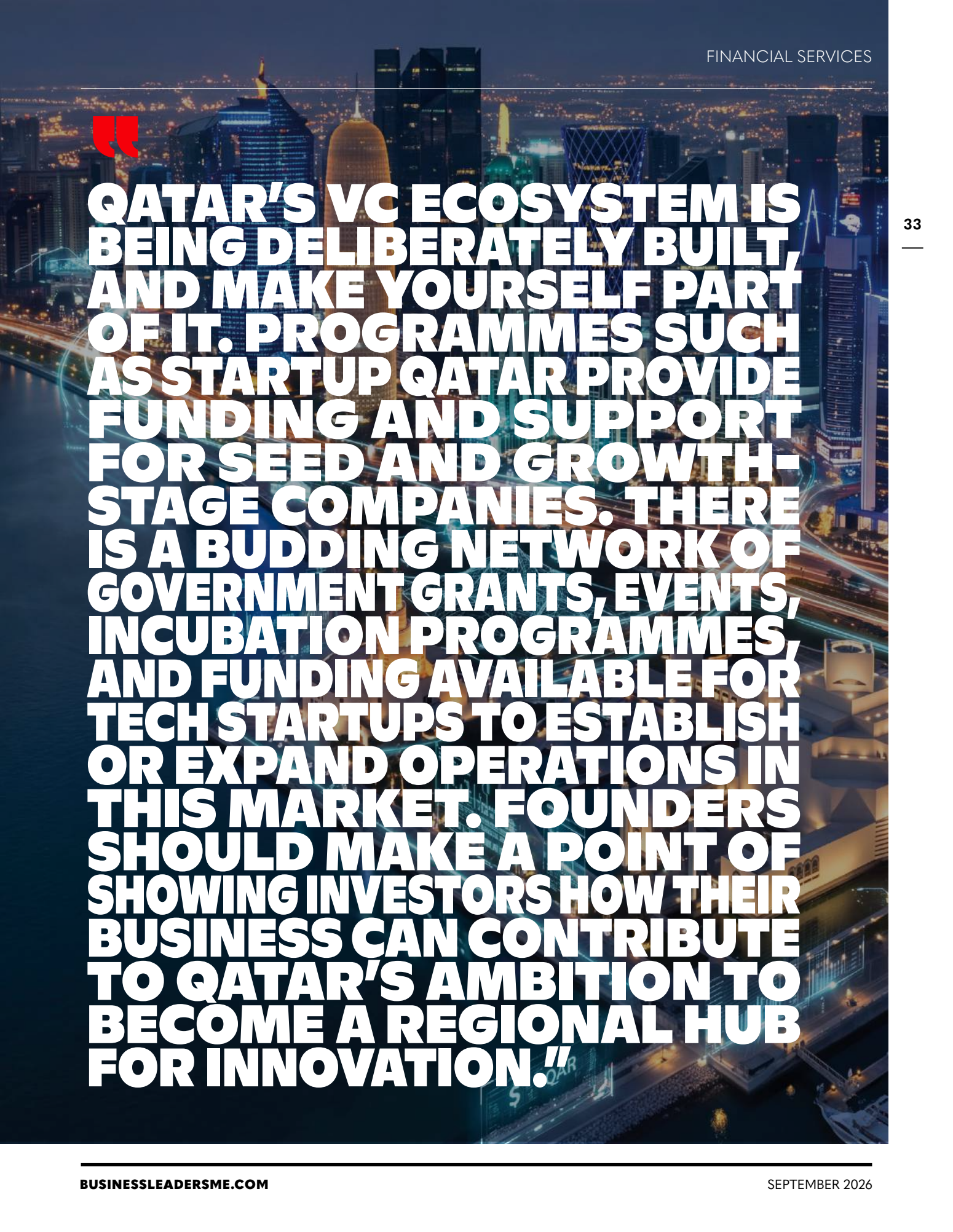
BL: What would the growth of stablecoins mean for Qatar's banks and financial institutions?

Muccioli: The growth of stablecoins in Qatar should be viewed through the lens of the country's regulatory framework. Stablecoins, and most cryptocurrencies, are currently excluded from permitted activity within the Qatar Financial Centre under the Digital Assets Framework.

However, the country has taken a more proactive approach to the tokenisation of regulated, real-world assets, so the immediate opportunity may look more like preparing financial infrastructure for a world in which traditional money and tokenised assets increasingly coexist.

This creates an infrastructure challenge; institutions will need systems capable to connecting new digital assets with existing payment rails and compliance processes, without creating another layer of fragmentation. Trusted data, governance, interoperability, and regulatory compliance thus become just as important as the underlying technology.

In that sense, stablecoins, at this stage, are part of a much bigger picture. This picture is being painted around institutions that can orchestrate digital and traditional finance securely and seamlessly. **BL**



QATAR'S VC ECOSYSTEM IS BEING DELIBERATELY BUILT, AND MAKE YOURSELF PART OF IT. PROGRAMMES SUCH AS STARTUP QATAR PROVIDE FUNDING AND SUPPORT FOR SEED AND GROWTH-STAGE COMPANIES. THERE IS A BUDDING NETWORK OF GOVERNMENT GRANTS, EVENTS, INCUBATION PROGRAMMES, AND FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR TECH STARTUPS TO ESTABLISH OR EXPAND OPERATIONS IN THIS MARKET. FOUNDERS SHOULD MAKE A POINT OF SHOWING INVESTORS HOW THEIR BUSINESS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO QATAR'S AMBITION TO BECOME A REGIONAL HUB FOR INNOVATION."



BEYOND THE HIRE: BUILDING THE WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE

The workplace is changing quickly, but the challenge for Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) employers is practical: how do you build teams that can keep pace with hybrid working, Artificial Intelligence (AI), localisation and changing expectations while still supporting the people doing the work? For businesses, the issue is not just about finding the right people, but creating the conditions for them to stay, develop and become future managers and leaders. With experience across recruitment, people operations and workforce management, Nina Pacic, people operations director – Middle East at Sovereign PPG, brings a practical view of what employers are getting right — and where they still have work to do. Pacic also sheds light on the changing expectations of the GCC workforce, what employers need to consider beyond recruitment so that people want to join, stay and grow with the business.

*Nina Pacic, people operations director –
Middle East at Sovereign PPG*



Currently, the recruitment paradigm has practically reinvented itself compared to the last decade.

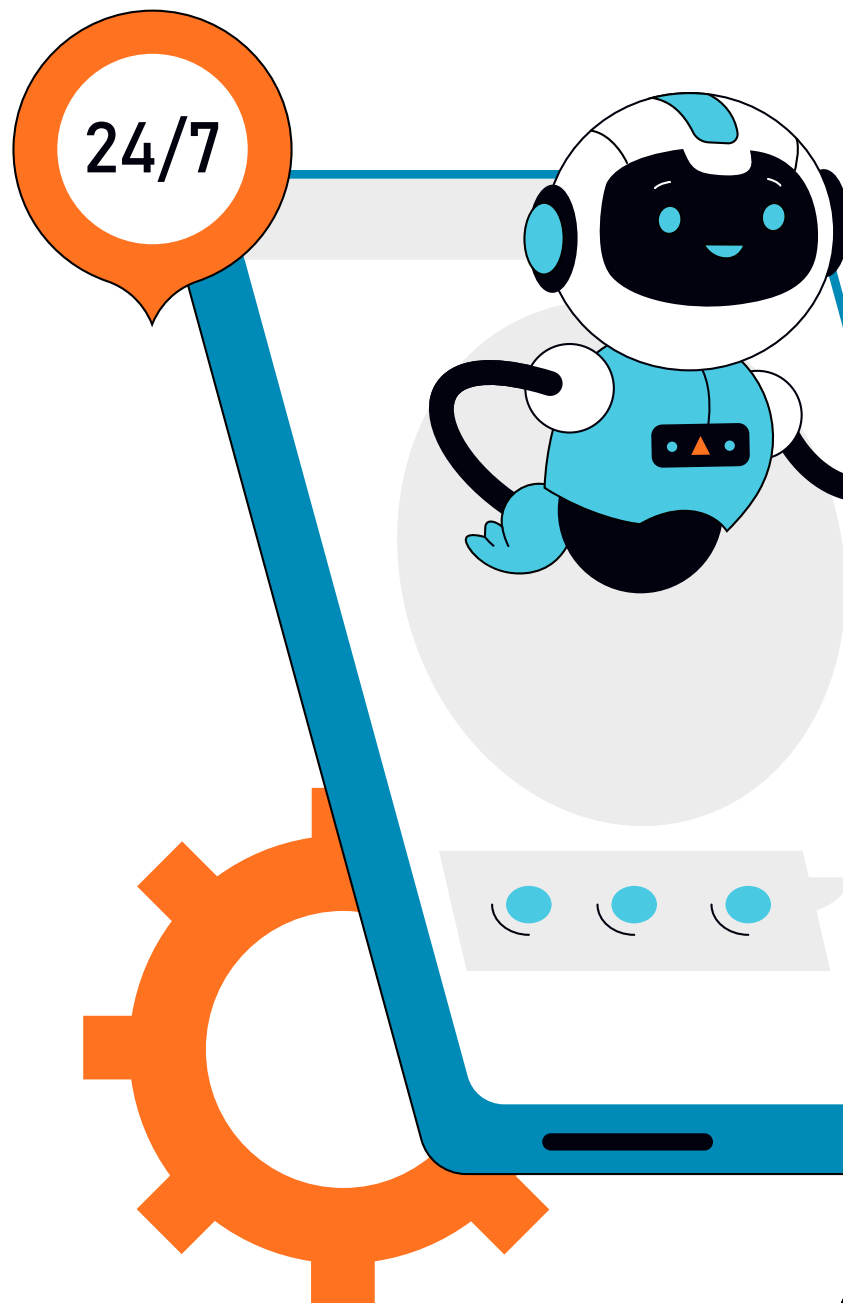
The biggest change is that recruitment has become much less transactional. Ten years ago, many conversations started with a vacancy: can we find someone who can do the job? Today, the better question is: what skills will this business need in two or three years, and are we hiring with that future in mind.

“Qualifications and experience still matter, of course, but they are not enough on their own. I look closely at adaptability, communication skills, judgement, willingness to learn and ability to navigate the change. In this market, where AI, automation, localisation and evolving business models are changing roles quite quickly, potential matters a great deal,” says Nina Pacic, people operations director – Middle East at Sovereign PPG.

Technology has also transformed the recruitment process itself, according to Pacic, adding, “AI-driven sourcing, screening and candidate engagement tools have increased efficiency, but they have also raised expectations around speed, personalisation and candidate experience. The human element remains critical, particularly when assessing culture fit, judgement and long-term potential.”

Candidates are also more informed and more selective. They ask better questions about culture, flexibility, progression and whether the day-to-day experience will match what is being promised. So recruitment is no longer a one-way assessment. It is the first step in building trust with someone you may want to retain for years, opines Pacic.

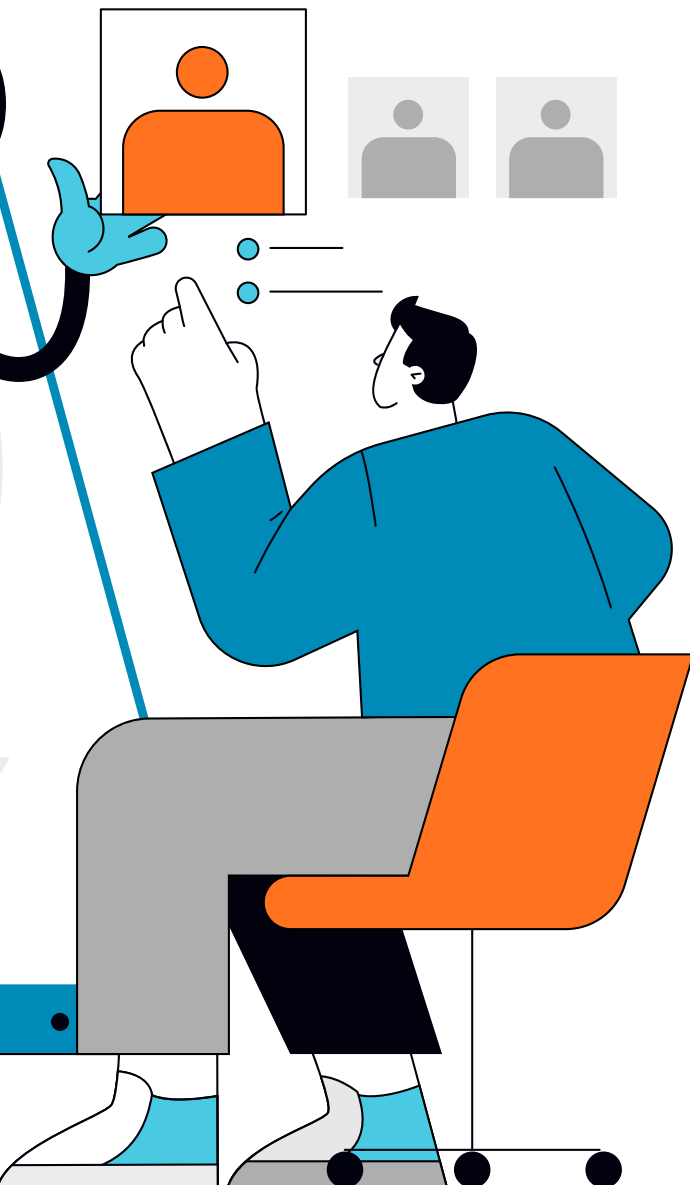
Pacic is emphatic when she mentions, “Ultimately, recruitment has evolved from filling vacancies to building future capability. Organisations that attract and retain the best talent are those that can clearly articulate not only what the role is today, but also how an individual can grow, contribute and build a meaningful career over time.”





Workforce planning has to start with strategy, not with HR working in isolation. Leaders should be asking where the organisation is going, and what people, skills and leadership capacity they will need to get there. That is especially important in the GCC, where growth, digital transformation, AI adoption and localisation requirements are all moving at the same time. You cannot build a sustainable workforce simply by hiring more people. You have to build capability inside the organisation.”

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EMPLOYEE RETENTION

Recruiting younger talent and retaining them over even the medium term (forget the long-term) is quite a task.

How has the workplace got to be really attractive enough to keep the younger talent hooked?

Explains Pacic, “I think employers need to be careful not to reduce this to perks or slogans. Younger employees are not looking for a perfect workplace, they are looking for a workplace that is honest with them and gives them a reason to invest their time and energy. Flexibility, technology and work-life balance are important, but they are not the whole story. What keeps people engaged is usually more basic and more serious: they want to learn, they want their work to mean something, exposure to new experiences and confidence that they are building skills that will remain relevant throughout their careers and they want to see a path forward rather than just a job title.”

Mentorship also plays an important role, emphasises Pacic. Many younger professionals actively seek opportunities to learn from experienced leaders, gain broader business exposure and understand how decisions are made. They want guidance and development, not just a list of tasks to complete.

Financial security is part of that, too, explains Pacic. “At any stage of their career, people may be balancing housing, healthcare, family responsibilities, savings and long-term financial stability alongside other pressures. An employer that recognises those realities can offer something more meaningful than another generic benefit. Consistency matters most. If we tell someone during recruitment that they will have development, flexibility or progression, then managers have to make that real after they join. People do not necessarily leave because everything is difficult; they leave when the reality is too far away from what they were led to expect,” adds Pacic.

MANAGERS' ROLE

To match the pace of workplace changes and new hires, it is imperative that the managers groom themselves differently – more contemporary, more willingly.

Explaining the new need, Pacic is clear when she says, “Managers need to be much more intentional than they used to be. It is not enough to allocate work and check whether it is done. New recruits need clarity, feedback and context. They need to understand not only what they are doing, but why it matters and how good judgement is formed.”

This is especially true for junior employees, adds Pacic. “A lot of learning,” according to Pacic, “happens by observing experienced colleagues: listening to client conversations, seeing how a difficult issue is handled, understanding how priorities are balanced and watching experienced colleagues navigating challenges. In hybrid teams, those moments do not always happen naturally, so managers have to create them deliberately.”

Managers also need to invest more time in career and development conversations than they may have done in the past. “Younger employees want to understand how they can grow, what skills they should be building and where future opportunities may exist. Regular coaching and feedback are often more valuable than waiting for an annual performance review,” Pacic emphasises, adding, “Perhaps most importantly, today's managers need to balance accountability with support. People want autonomy and trust, but they also value honest guidance and constructive feedback. The most effective managers create an environment where individuals feel challenged, supported and able to learn from mistakes.”

“If we only give instructions, we develop task-doers. If we provide context, responsibility, mentorship and feedback, we develop capable professionals and, ultimately, future leaders,” Pacic explains.

EMOLUMENTS AND ENSURING FINANCIAL WELLBEING

Pacic is lucid when she says, “Pay still matters enormously and we should not pretend otherwise. If someone feels they are being underpaid or unfairly rewarded, no wellbeing initiative will compensate for that. But financial wellbeing is not only about salary. People want to feel that their employer understands the pressures they face outside work as well as those within it. Employees want confidence that they can build a stable future. Particularly in today's economic climate, many people are managing housing costs, healthcare expenses, family commitments, savings goals and long-term financial plans. Benefits such as savings support, financial education, retirement planning or greater transparency around pay progression may not be standard across the GCC, but where employers

offer them, they can be seen as a meaningful investment in employees' longer-term financial wellbeing.”

She reframes the context adding, “I would argue that the question for employers is becoming broader: what does the employee actually get from working here? That includes pay, but it also includes security, trust, development and a sense that the organisation is thinking about their future, not only their current output.”

WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY

Covid 19 brought in a new trend – workplace flexibility which was the need of the hour then just for sheer survival.

How has work from home and managing a batch of youngsters who would want flexibility like work from home added to the challenge of managers? Or is it more of a boon?

Flexibility can be a real advantage, but only if it is managed properly, according to Pacic. The pandemic proved that work does not always have to happen in one place or within fixed hours for people to be productive. But flexibility without structure, communication and clear expectations can create confusion and disconnect. For managers, one of the biggest challenges is ensuring that younger employees continue to develop while working in a more flexible environment. When you are early in your career, you do not always know what you need to ask or which situations are important learning opportunities. Much of professional development happens through observation: listening to conversations, seeing how experienced colleagues manage difficult situations and understanding how decisions are made in practice.”

There is also the challenge of building connection and belonging, explains Pacic and brings in the age-wise expectations of employees by saying, “Younger employees want flexibility, but they also want to feel part of a team and understand where they fit within the organisation. Managers therefore need to create opportunities for collaboration, mentoring and relationship-building, whether people are working remotely or in person.”

Effective managers today spend less time monitoring presence and more time focusing on outcomes, coaching and communication. Trust becomes increasingly important, alongside regular feedback and clear expectations, in the opinion of Pacic.

“So I do not see it as office versus home. The better question is: what does this person need in order to perform well and develop? Sometimes that is focused time at home. Sometimes it is time with a manager, a client meeting, coaching or team collaboration. The most effective managers are those who can balance flexibility with development and create an environment where people can succeed regardless of where they are working,” explains Pacic.



AT ANY STAGE OF THEIR CAREER, PEOPLE MAY BE BALANCING HOUSING, HEALTHCARE, FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES, SAVINGS AND LONG-TERM FINANCIAL STABILITY ALONGSIDE OTHER PRESSURES. AN EMPLOYER THAT RECOGNISES THOSE REALITIES CAN OFFER SOMETHING MORE MEANINGFUL THAN ANOTHER GENERIC BENEFIT. CONSISTENCY MATTERS MOST.”

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

For effective skills development of both new recruits and the existing managers so that both feel rewarded and one can effectively manage the other, workplaces are viewing training as an ongoing investment.

Explaining this, Pacic says, “The strongest companies are moving away from treating training as a one-off event. Development has to be part of the way people work: regular feedback, mentoring, coaching, practical exposure and gradually increasing responsibility. There is also a growing focus on skills and capabilities rather than simply job titles. Organisations are looking at what future skills the business will need and creating development opportunities that help employees build those capabilities over time. This is particularly important as technology, AI and changing ways of working continue to reshape roles and career paths.”

Managers need that development as much as new recruits, opines Pacic. Too often, someone is promoted because they are technically strong, and then they are expected to manage people without enough support. Managing people is a different skill set. It requires communication, delegation, difficult feedback, conflict handling and the ability to develop others.

“Mentorship and exposure are becoming increasingly important as well. Both new recruits and emerging managers benefit from learning alongside experienced colleagues, gaining broader business understanding and being exposed to different perspectives and challenges. Some of the most valuable development opportunities come through real experiences rather than formal classroom training,” adds Pacic.

The most effective development is usually the kind that connects learning to real work. You learn something, you apply it, you receive feedback, and then you build judgement over time. That is what makes development meaningful for the employee and useful for the business.



EMPLOYEE RETENTION

Explaining the outlook on workforce retention in the present times – when jumping jobs is quite the in-thing and youngsters think differently about workplace loyalty compared to the earlier generation, Pacic says, “We need to be realistic about retention. Employees have more visibility of the market than they did before, and younger employees in particular are less likely to stay somewhere simply because that is what previous generations might have done.”

That does not mean loyalty has disappeared, in Pacic’s books. She adds, “It means loyalty has to be earned. Many employees are looking for opportunities to develop new skills, gain exposure to different areas of the business, work with strong leaders and continue growing professionally. If they cannot see those opportunities internally, they may look elsewhere. In that sense, changing jobs is not always a rejection of an employer; it is often a search for growth.”

The challenge for organisations is therefore not simply retaining people for the longest possible time. It is creating an environment where high-performing employees continue to feel engaged, valued and able to progress. Career pathways, mentorship, meaningful work and ongoing development play a significant role in achieving that, explains Pacic.

How is the workplace today planning the workforce – in terms of the joint rubric of skills development, rewards and succession planning?

“Workforce planning has to start with strategy, not with HR working in isolation. Leaders should be asking where the organisation is going, and what people, skills and leadership capacity they will need to get there. That is especially important in the GCC, where growth, digital transformation, AI adoption and localisation requirements are all moving at the same time. You cannot build a sustainable workforce simply by hiring more people. You have to build capability inside the organisation,” explains Pacic.

Succession planning should be part of that much earlier than it often is. If today’s junior employees are to become tomorrow’s managers, they need experience, mentorship, context and feedback now. Rewards should support the same message, so people understand how they can progress and what is expected of them, Pacic opines.

“The businesses that manage this well are not treating recruitment, retention, learning, rewards and succession as separate conversations. They connect them, because every one of those decisions shapes whether people can see a future in the organisation,” signs off Pacic. **BL**

“ I WOULD ARGUE THAT THE QUESTION FOR EMPLOYERS IS BECOMING BROADER: WHAT DOES THE EMPLOYEE ACTUALLY GET FROM WORKING HERE? THAT INCLUDES PAY, BUT IT ALSO INCLUDES SECURITY, TRUST, DEVELOPMENT AND A SENSE THAT THE ORGANISATION IS THINKING ABOUT THEIR FUTURE, NOT ONLY THEIR CURRENT OUTPUT.

*Saran B. Paramasivam, regional director,
Middle East & Africa, Zoho*





AI IS AN ORGANIC PART OF BUSINESSES, NOT AN ADD-ON"

Saran B. Paramasivam, regional director, Middle East & Africa, Zoho, in conversation with *Business Leaders ME*, sheds light on a swathe of subjects – from productivity to decision intelligence, exploring how organisations across the Middle East are leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) to transform business operations, decision-making, and enterprise software, while maintaining responsible AI practices and governance. Paramasivam also examines AI adoption across enterprises and SMEs, regional trends, and the role of AI in supporting national digital transformation initiatives.

My path has been unconventional by most standards. I joined Zoho straight out of high school in 2005 as the first student selected into what is now known as Zoho Schools of Learning, so no traditional degree, no conventional route in," says Saran B. Paramasivam, regional director, Middle East & Africa, Zoho, commenting on his career path.

Starting as a software developer, Paramasivam moved into product management, and spent a significant part of his career shaping Zoho Creator, the company's low-code platform. That experience, according to Paramasivam, gave him a deep understanding of how businesses think about technology and what it takes to translate complex problems into real solutions.

Over nearly two decades, Paramasivam's role evolved across product, customer engagement, and strategy and that journey brought him to where he is today, leading Zoho's business across the Middle East and Africa as its regional director.

"I often say I did not just work for Zoho; I grew up with Zoho. And honestly, that depth of experience is what I bring into every market conversation across the MEA region," asserts Paramasivam.

AI IN DAY-TO-DAY DECISION MAKING OF BIG BUSINESSES VERSUS SMES

In the opinion of Paramasivam, for large enterprises, AI has already shifted from a nice-to-have to something embedded in daily decisions, forecasting, resource planning, customer response times.

"The difference isn't whether AI matters, it's how it's being adopted. Big businesses often have the budget and internal teams to build custom AI solutions. SMEs don't have that luxury, so their AI adoption has to come built into the tools they're already using, not as a separate investment. That's actually the more interesting story right now: SMEs adopting AI isn't about 'catching up' to enterprise, it's about accessing the same intelligence without needing enterprise-level resources to get there," explains Paramasivam.

How, in Paramasivam's view, is AI transforming modern business software and enterprise operations?

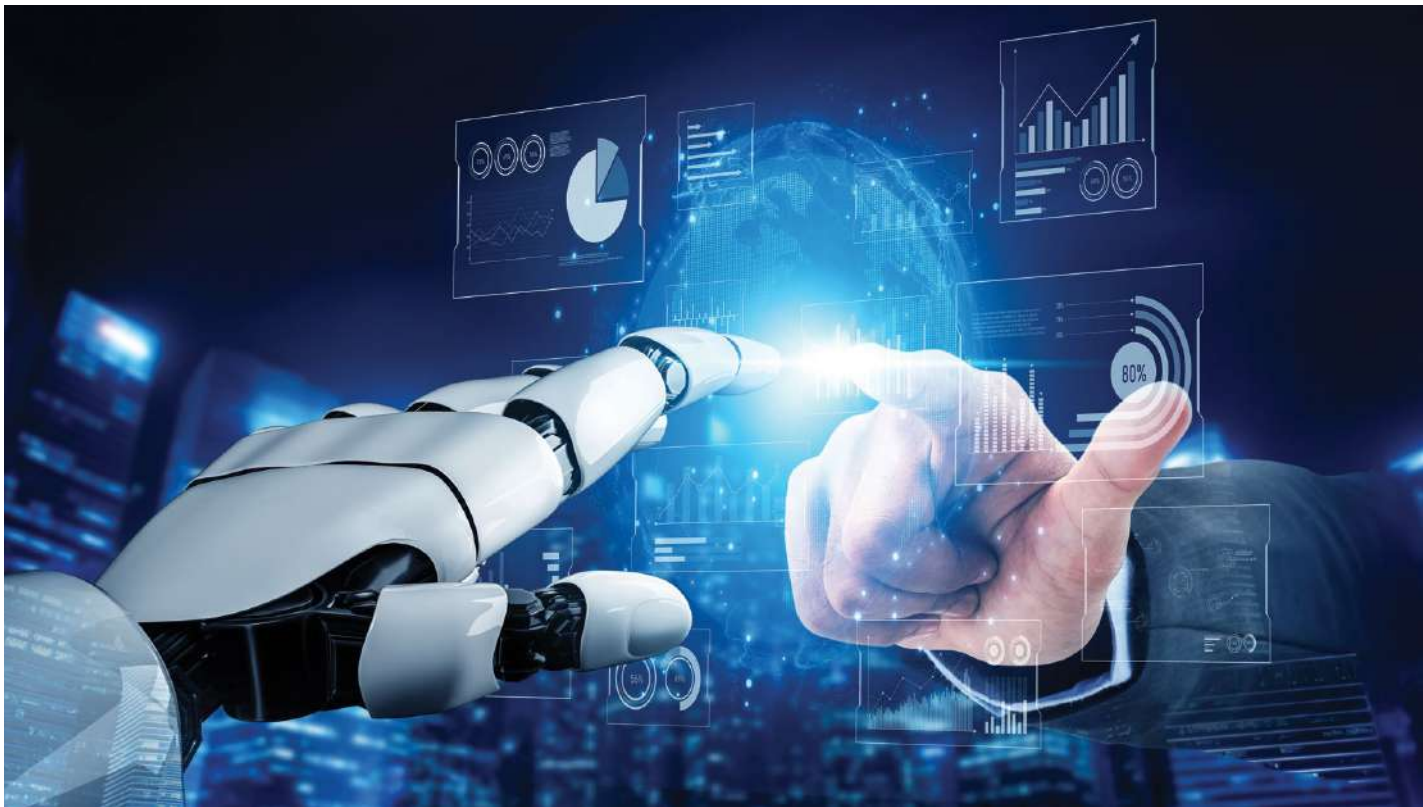
Software used to be a tool one operated, explains Paramasivam. "Now it's becoming something that operates alongside you. The shift is from static systems where a person

has to pull a report, interpret it, and act, to systems that surface the insight and, increasingly, take the next step themselves. The businesses getting real value aren't the ones bolting AI onto old workflows, they're the ones rebuilding their operations around the assumption that AI is part of the process, not an add-on to it," adds Paramasivam.

The evolution from AI assistants to AI agents is something integral to Zoho. In the explanation of Paramasivam, an assistant answers when asked. In contrast, an agent acts without being asked, within boundaries that are pre-set. That's a meaningful shift, and it's also where the risk conversation gets real. An assistant giving a wrong answer is a nuisance. An agent taking the wrong action, updating a record, sending a payment, changing a customer status, has actual consequences.

"So this evolution isn't just a capability story, it's a trust and governance story. The businesses moving fastest here are the ones building the guardrails at the same time as the capability, not after. That's also why, as we build AI agents within Zoho, our approach is governance-first, not capability-first," opines Paramasivam.

“AN ASSISTANT ANSWERS WHEN ASKED. IN CONTRAST, AN AGENT ACTS WITHOUT BEING ASKED, WITHIN BOUNDARIES THAT ARE PRE-SET. THAT'S A MEANINGFUL SHIFT, AND IT'S ALSO WHERE THE RISK CONVERSATION GETS REAL. AN ASSISTANT GIVING A WRONG ANSWER IS A NUISANCE. AN AGENT TAKING THE WRONG ACTION, UPDATING A RECORD, SENDING A PAYMENT, CHANGING A CUSTOMER STATUS, HAS ACTUAL CONSEQUENCES.”



“WE’LL SEE LESS TALK ABOUT AI AS A STANDALONE FEATURE AND MORE ABOUT IT AS INFRASTRUCTURE, SOMETHING THAT HAS TO BE GOVERNED, TRUSTED, AND VERIFIED, THE SAME WAY WE THINK ABOUT SECURITY OR COMPLIANCE TODAY. AND I THINK THE BUSINESSES THAT WIN IN THIS NEXT PHASE WON’T BE THE ONES WITH THE FLASHIEST AI DEMO, THEY’LL BE THE ONES WHO BUILT AI ON A FOUNDATION THEY CAN ACTUALLY TRUST AND CONTROL.”

RESPONSIBLE AI STRATEGIES ALONGSIDE PRIVACY AND GOVERNANCE

The businesses doing this well are treating governance as part of the AI architecture, not a policy document sitting separately from it, explains Paramasivam.

“That means permission layers that mirror the organisation’s actual structure, so AI only surfaces what a given person is already cleared to see. It means knowing exactly where data lives and who has access to it. And it means building recovery and accountability into the system from day one, not scrambling to add it after something goes wrong. Responsible AI isn’t a separate initiative from AI adoption, it has to be the same initiative,” mentions Paramasivam.

In the region, what kind of evolution have businesses undergone to adopt AI into their day-to-day operations?

In the opinion of Paramasivam, the shift being witnessed across the region is from AI being used for specific, isolated use cases to becoming embedded in everyday business operations.

Companies are increasingly applying AI across functions, from customer service and sales to finance, HR, and operations, to improve productivity and decision-making. Government-led investment and national AI strategies have helped accelerate this adoption, but the bigger shift is happening at the business level: the conversation is moving from whether to adopt AI to where it can create the most value and how it can be integrated responsibly into the way people already work, describes Paramasivam.

In explaining the role AI will play in supporting the GCC’s digital transformation ambitions, Paramasivam says, “AI is the layer that makes a lot of the region’s broader digital transformation goals achievable at speed, not just on paper. National strategies around economic diversification and digital government depend on businesses being able to operate more efficiently, and AI is a big part of how that efficiency gets realised. But infrastructure and ambition alone don’t get you there, businesses need software that’s actually built to put that AI to work inside their real operations, not just AI as a separate initiative running alongside the business.

In hindsight, did businesses foresee that AI would grow into this juggernaut that it has become, even two years ago?

Paramasivam is unequivocal when he says, “Honestly, no, not at this scale. Two years ago, most conversations I had with businesses treated AI as an interesting experiment, something to keep an eye on. Very few people were planning for a world where AI would be making decisions inside core business processes this quickly. What surprised a lot of people isn’t that AI got better, it’s how fast the expectation shifted, from ‘AI is optional’ to ‘why don’t you have this yet.’”

Projecting AI and its impact over the next two years, Paramasivam mentions that the next two years are less about AI getting smarter and more about AI getting more responsible and more embedded. “We’ll see less talk about AI as a standalone feature and more about it as infrastructure, something that has to be governed, trusted, and verified, the same way we think about security or compliance today. And I think the businesses that win in this next phase won’t be the ones with the flashiest AI demo, they’ll be the ones who built AI on a foundation they can actually trust and control,” signs off Paramasivam. **BL**



When one has dreams that refuse to budge, we get entrepreneurs. Meet Sagar Asnani, a young Bahrain-based entrepreneur, of a sports aggregator – Thrust - a platform where athletes can discover communities and opportunities to play, coaches can build their digital presence and access new clients, and venues can connect with active sporting communities and better utilise their infrastructure.

**THRUST
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VENUES"**

Sagar Asnani, entrepreneur

47

“I’VE LEARNT TO WORK IN WHATEVER GAPS I CAN FIND. IF I HAVE AN HOUR, I’LL USE IT. IF I HAVE 20 MINUTES, I’LL USE THAT TOO. I ALSO TRY TO SEPARATE THE URGENT FROM THE IMPORTANT, BECAUSE OTHERWISE I’LL SPEND THREE HOURS ANSWERING MESSAGES AND CONVINCE MYSELF I’VE HAD A PRODUCTIVE DAY.”



BL: Talk us through the inspiration that led to Thrust.

Asnani: The inspiration for Thrust came from something that honestly felt a little ridiculous to me. I realised that booking a flight to another country could be easier than organising a game of sport with a few friends.

For a flight, I can open an app, choose where I want to go, pick a time, pay, and I’m done. But if I want to play a game of football, tennis or squash, suddenly I’m messaging five different people, trying to find a court, figuring out timings and hoping everyone is available.

And the funny thing was, all the pieces already existed. There were players who wanted to play, coaches who wanted students, and courts that had availability. They just weren’t connected.

That was the thought that led to Thrust: if we can make booking a flight this simple, why can’t we make playing a sport just as easy?

So I wanted to build one place that brings players, coaches and sports venues together and takes away all that unnecessary back-and-forth.

BL: How do you manage your time and energy being a student and running Thrust?

Asnani: I don’t. I negotiate with myself.

There are days when I have an exam the next morning, a school event, and someone from Thrust messaging me asking for something, and somehow all three expect me to believe they’re the priority.

I've learnt to work in whatever gaps I can find. If I have an hour, I'll use it. If I have 20 minutes, I'll use that too. I also try to separate the urgent from the important, because otherwise I'll spend three hours answering messages and convince myself I've had a productive day.

And honestly, Thrust has become pretty good revision avoidance. Sometimes I'll tell myself, I'll just work on this for 20 minutes before studying... and suddenly it's midnight.

So I wouldn't say I've found the perfect balance. I've just become very good at convincing myself that there is one.

BL: As a sports matchmaker, between players, coaches and courts, what has it taught you on logistics, negotiation and trying to match schedules?

Asnani: Even with an app like Thrust, where the whole idea is to connect players, coaches and courts in one place, you first have to build trust.

When I started approaching coaches and venues, I was 15 and telling them about this platform I'd built. Naturally, some people were a little sceptical. Before asking someone to put their business onto your platform, you have to prove that you're actually going to add value.

Then there is the interesting logistics problem on the venue side. A lot of sports courts don't have automated booking systems. Someone might walk into a venue and book a court in person, while someone else is looking at Thrust and sees that same court as available. So keeping what happens offline at the venue connected with what's happening online on the app becomes a challenge.

That's taught me that building a sports platform isn't just about writing code. You have to understand how sports actually work on the ground and then figure out how technology can fit into that reality, rather than expecting everyone to change the way they already operate.



BL: Talk us through how it all works to eventually bring a sporting event on the ground.

Asnani: I think the way I'd look at it is slightly different. Thrust isn't really an event organiser. We're the infrastructure that helps make the activity happen.

For example, if someone wants to play a game, they can use Thrust to find other players, discover a coach or find a venue. Instead of having to separately message people, call courts and figure everything out themselves, the idea is to bring those pieces together in one place.

So we're not necessarily the ones running the event. We're making it easier for the people who want to play to actually get on the court and play.

And that's really what I want Thrust to become: not the organiser of every sporting activity, but the platform that makes organising it almost effortless.

BL: How do you manage the manpower for running this venture?

Asnani: In the beginning, it was pretty much just me cold calling and messaging coaches and venues. I'd explain Thrust, get ignored a few times, get "not interested" a few times, and then occasionally find someone who was willing to give it a shot.

As Thrust grew, I realised I couldn't keep doing everything myself. I now work with a small team, including people older than me, who help with things like promotions and getting Thrust in front of more people.

That's actually been an interesting experience. I'm still a student, so I'm working alongside people who have more professional experience than I do. I've had to learn that being the founder doesn't mean I have to be the most experienced person in the room. If someone knows more about something than I do, I'd rather listen to them and learn.

At the same time, I still have to be comfortable making the final call when it's my responsibility. I think that's taught me a lot about leading people who may actually be older and more experienced than me.

BL: What are the lessons that you've learnt in this journey?

Asnani: Two things, mainly.

First, people really don't care about your age. I honestly thought being 15 when I started would be a big part of the story. I thought people would either be impressed by it or not take me seriously because of it. In reality, once you start talking to a coach or a venue, they don't really care that you're 15. They care about whether you can actually do what you're saying you'll do.

And secondly, people don't support you just because they like what you're building. They support you when there's something in it for them.

I learnt that the hard way. I'd sometimes be really excited about Thrust, explain the whole idea to someone, and expect them to be excited too. Then I'd get absolutely nothing back.

A coach doesn't care that I spent months building an app. They care if I can help them find players. A court doesn't care that Thrust has a nice interface. They care if it can help them get bookings.

That was a pretty important reality check for me. Your passion gets you started, but the value you create is what gets other people to come along.

BL: Looking back, what has changed from the time you set up Thrust?

Asnani: Pretty much everything. When I started Thrust at 15, it was just an idea. Now we have 500+ monthly active users, a South Asian Games winner, Bahrain's best-voted gym trainer, numerous coaches and multiple venues on the platform.

Over time, I also started getting emails from people wanting to join Thrust, collaborate with us, and surprisingly, even someone who wanted to buy a share of the company. And the funniest part? He was a young kid himself.

The biggest difference is that Thrust went from something I was building on my laptop to something people are actually using in the real sporting community.

BL: How have you evolved as a person since you set Thrust up?

Asnani: I think I've become much more patient, but more importantly, I've learnt how to actually listen.

When I started, I'd go into conversations wanting to explain Thrust and convince people to use it. Over time, I realised some of the best ideas weren't coming from me.

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For example, one of the venue owners suggested that we should distinguish between peak and off-peak hours because their availability and pricing worked differently at different times. It was a simple suggestion, but it made a lot of sense, so we actually implemented it.

That taught me the difference between listening to someone and actually doing something with what they tell you.

I've also become much more comfortable with rejection and things taking time. Earlier, I'd want everything to happen immediately. Now I'm much more willing to listen, test something, change it, and keep going.

I think I've gone from trying to prove that I could build something to being much more focused on learning from the people I'm building it for.

BL: Looking forward, where do you see Thrust in 2 years' time?

Asnani: In two years, I'd love Thrust to be the platform that comes to mind when someone thinks about playing sport.

Like, if you need to search for something, you instinctively think of Google. I'd love someone who wants to play a sport to instinctively think, I'll check Thrust.

That obviously sounds ambitious, and I'm very aware we're still a long way from that. But I'd rather set a goal that feels slightly crazy and work towards it than set one I already know we can reach.

I'd also like to see Thrust expand further across the Middle East, with a stronger team behind it and a much bigger network of players, coaches and venues.

I'm not expecting to have conquered sports in two years. But if we've built something that people across the region genuinely rely on to play, find a coach or find a venue, I'd be pretty happy.

I guess I'd rather shoot for the moon. Even if I miss, at least I'll have aimed pretty high. **BL**



QUICK FIRE

■ **Your inspiration behind Thrust:** Trying to figure out why booking a flight is easier than getting a game of sport going.

■ **One book that has guided you in this journey:** I'd actually say my own book, *The World of Poems*. No, it's not an Amazon bestseller, but it is on Amazon! I wrote it when I was 13. It was a children's poetry book, and looking back, I think it shaped how I approach things. I was young, had no real reason to think I could write a book, but I just started writing, finished it and put it out there. That mindset of not waiting until you're 'ready' to create something definitely carried over into Thrust.

■ **How do you rewind?:** This is rewind for me, honestly. Working on Thrust is my rewind from school. After spending the whole day studying, it's nice to switch over and work on something I actually chose to build.

■ **Best holiday destination:** Anywhere with a good beach, but honestly, give me a plate of samosas and I'm already halfway to my dream destination.

■ **One advice to budding entrepreneurs:** I'm probably not qualified to give entrepreneurial advice yet, I'm still figuring it out myself! But I'd say just start. You learn a lot more from actually doing something than from endlessly planning it.

11 QATAR-BASED CEOS NAMED IN *FORBES* TOP MIDDLE EAST 100 LIST

Eleven chief executives leading Qatar-based organisations were named in *Forbes Middle East's* Top 100 CEOs 2026 ranking, underscoring the country's growing influence across banking, energy, telecoms, insurance and financial services.

The annual list, which features 102 executives across 100 entries from 21 nationalities, recognises leaders who have delivered strong financial results while driving innovation, resilience and long-term growth.

Banking dominates with 30 entries, followed by real estate and construction with eight. Forbes compiled the ranking

using company disclosures, annual reports and industry data, assessing regional impact, leadership experience, company size, financial performance and innovation.

The strong Qatari presence reflects continued efforts to build globally competitive institutions aligned with National Vision 2030, reinforcing Qatar's status as a leading regional business and investment hub.



NAME: Saad Sherida Al Kaabi

COMPANY & DESIGNATION:

President and CEO, QatarEnergy

COMPANY HIGHLIGHTS:

Another year of international expansion, including MoUs for offshore exploration in Syria, studying Cypriot gas development via Egypt's infrastructure, and an offshore hydrocarbon discovery in the Republic of the Congo.



NAME: Abdulla Mubarak Al Khalifa

COMPANY & DESIGNATION:

Group CEO, QNB Group

COMPANY HIGHLIGHTS:

QNB reported total assets of about US\$387.3 billion (QR1.4 trillion) and a Q12026 net profit of US\$1.2 billion (QR4.4 billion), operating in more than 28 countries with over 900 locations.



NAME: Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Faisal Al Thani

COMPANY & DESIGNATION:

CEO, Qatar Free Zones

COMPANY HIGHLIGHTS:

The authority's licensed investor base reached 837 companies by end-2025, with expected cumulative investments of US\$5.3 billion (QR19.3 billion) and more than 13,000 jobs created.



NAME: Ahmed Hashem

COMPANY & DESIGNATION:

Acting Group CEO Dukhan Bank

COMPANY HIGHLIGHTS:

The Bank posted a Q12026 net profit of US\$117.8 million (QR428.8 million) and total assets of US\$34.7 billion (QR126.3 billion) while expanding open banking and fintech partnerships.



NAME: Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Fahad bin Faisal Al Thani

DESIGNATION:

Group CEO, Doha Bank

COMPANY HIGHLIGHTS:

The Bank updated its logo featuring a bold letter 'D' inspired by the sail of a traditional Qatari dhow, symbolising continuous progress and innovation. They also issued and listed a US\$150 million (QR546 million) digital bond with instant T+0 settlement on the London Stock Exchange.



NAME: Salem Al Mannai

COMPANY & DESIGNATION:

CEO, Qatar Insurance Group

COMPANY HIGHLIGHTS:

In H1, 2026, the company's net profit reached QR365 million, with insurance revenue rising 15 percent to QR4.8 billion, gross written premium grew 4.3 percent to QR5.9 billion and investment income increased by 2.8 percent.



NAME: Aziz Aluthman Fakhroo

COMPANY & DESIGNATION:

CEO, Ooredoo Group

COMPANY HIGHLIGHTS:

In H1 2026, Ooredoo's revenue increased by 4.6 percent to QR12.5 billion; EBITDA grew by 7.4 percent to QR 5.5 billion (normalised: +6.1 percent to QR 5.5 billion); while net profit declined by 5.1 percent to QR1.8 billion (normalised: +3.7 percent to QR 2.0 billion).



NAME: Abdullah Al Sulaiti

COMPANY & DESIGNATION:

Managing director, Qatar Gas Transport Company's (Nakilat)

COMPANY HIGHLIGHTS:

In H1 2026, Nakilat's net profit reached QR857 million, showing steady performance despite regional conflicts impacting shipping routes. Fitch Ratings has affirmed Nakilat Inc.'s US\$850 million (QR3.1 billion) senior secured bonds (senior debt) due 2033 at 'AA-' and its US\$300 million (QR1.09 billion) subordinated second priority secured bonds (junior debt) due 2033 at 'A+' with stable outlook.



NAME: Abdulrahman bin Hesham Al Sowaidi

COMPANY & DESIGNATION:

CEO, Qatar Development Bank (QDB)

COMPANY HIGHLIGHTS:

QDB has reported that its business incubators and accelerators supported more than 620 beneficiaries in 2025, while its investment portfolio exceeded QR385 million. At the local business development level, about 3,100 companies benefitted from the bank's training and capacity-building programmes. Indirect financing through guarantees exceeded QR600 million, while direct financing approached QR2 billion. QDB also reported that the total value of Qatari exports supported by the bank reached about QR2.85 billion, while financing for export operations stood at around QR778 million.



NAME: Mansoor Al Khater

COMPANY & DESIGNATION: CEO, Qatar Financial Centre Authority (QFCA)

COMPANY HIGHLIGHTS:

QFCA closed the first half (H1) of 2026 with a 37 percent rise in firm registrations from the same period in 2025, underscoring the strength of its strategy and the appeal of Qatar's business environment to investors and entrepreneurs alike. QFCA onboarded 1,135 firms during the period, bringing its total registered firms to over 4,700 as at the end of June. Growth was recorded across QFC's key focus sectors, with Technology and Innovation leading the way at 544 new firms, followed by Media and Entertainment at 173, Consulting and Professional Services at 166, Wealth at 84, and Fintech at 65. The strong uptake across these sectors reflects the breadth and growing relevance of the QFC platform to firms operating at the intersection of finance, innovation, and advisory services.



NAME: Bassel Gamal

COMPANY & DESIGNATION:

Group CEO, Qatar Islamic Bank

COMPANY HIGHLIGHTS:

In H1 2026, the bank's profit reached QR2.225 billion, up from QR 2.175 billion year-on-year. It also raised full-year 2026 financing growth guidance to 10-11 percent, bolstered by government lending. It successfully issued a US\$750 million (QR2.7 billion) international sukuk in March 2026.



GENERAL TAX AUTHORITY SIGNS MOUS TO STRENGTHEN PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION IN THE TAX FIELD

The General Tax Authority places great importance on building effective partnerships with national educational institutions to support the development of professional training and qualification programmes and strengthen its efforts to build specialised expertise in the tax field.

As part of these efforts, the Authority signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with Qatar Finance and Business Academy. The agreement was signed by HE Khalifa bin Jassim Al Jaham Al Kuwari, president of the General Tax Authority, and Dr. Khalifa Al Salahi Al Yafei, CEO of Qatar Finance and Business Academy.

The Authority also signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with Qatar University, represented by Ghanim bin Khalifa Al Attiyah, assistant president of the General Tax Authority for Tax Affairs, and professor Dr. Ibrahim Mohammed Al Kaabi, executive vice president for academic affairs at Qatar University.

These partnerships support the development of the “Tax Specialist” programme, helping to enhance the readiness and capabilities of professionals to keep pace with developments in the tax landscape.

The collaboration aims to expand opportunities for partnership and facilitate the exchange of expertise and knowledge between the Authority and academic and professional institutions. It also seeks to leverage their capabilities to enhance professional qualifications in tax-related disciplines, contributing to the development of qualified national human capital capable of meeting labour market needs and supporting the country’s economic development.

These partnerships will enable the participating entities to benefit from the “Tax Specialist” Certificate programmes and contribute to its delivery and further development. This, in turn, will support the qualification and certification of specialists capable of providing tax services and advisory support in accordance with the regulations, rules, and instructions approved by the Authority. It will also contribute to enhancing the quality of professional practices and promoting efficiency, transparency, and compliance in the services provided to taxpayers.

This initiative forms part of the Authority’s efforts to make the “Tax Specialist” Certificate available in the future to a broader range of individuals seeking to specialise and pursue careers in the tax field. At a later stage, the Authority also looks forward to opening the programme to other national educational institutions, encouraging Qatari youth to pursue careers in taxation and helping meet the growing demand for specialised professionals within the Authority and across various entities and sectors in the State of Qatar.

The General Tax Authority affirmed that building sustainable partnerships with educational and professional institutions is a key pillar in advancing professional qualification and development. Such partnerships will help the tax sector keep pace with developments in the field, while responding to labour market needs and supporting economic development in the State of Qatar.

BL



QATAR'S EXPORT UNIT VALUE INDEX INCREASES BY 17.64 PERCENT IN Q2 2026

The National Planning Council (NPC) has issued the Export Unit Value Index (EXUVI) for the second quarter of 2026. The index recorded an increase of 17.64 percent compared to the corresponding quarter of 2025 (Q2 2025), and a rise of 6.45 percent compared to the first quarter of 2026 (Q1 2026).

The increase reflects higher unit values of exported goods and demonstrates the resilience of the Qatari economy amid international developments, despite regional economic and geopolitical challenges, as well as the associated volatility in global markets and supply chains, said NPC in a press release.

Regarding the index composition, each main group is assigned a relative weight based on its value in the base year (2018). The "mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials" group had the largest relative weight at 88.77 percent, followed by "chemicals and related products" at 8.04 percent, while "manufactured goods classified chiefly by material" ranked third at 2.63 percent. Together, these three groups account for approximately 99.5 percent of the total EXUVI weight.

The increase in the EXUVI was driven by gains recorded across eight main groups, led by chemicals and related products at 34.73 percent, followed by mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials at 4.25 percent, manufactured goods classified chiefly by material at 3.31 percent, crude materials, inedible, except fuels at 3.14 percent, miscellaneous manufactured articles at 1.92 percent, beverages and tobacco at 1.00 percent, machinery and transport equipment at 0.50 percent, and food and live animals at 0.46 percent.

A decrease of 1.00 percent was recorded in only one group commodities and transactions not classified elsewhere in SITC. The animal and

vegetable oils, fats and waxes group remained unchanged during Q2 2026.

The EXUVI rose by 17.64 percent compared to the corresponding quarter of 2025, driven by increases in six main groups: Chemicals and related products (+35.94 percent), mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials (+16.14 percent), manufactured goods classified chiefly by material (+14.46 percent), crude materials, inedible, except fuels (+7.38 percent), food and live animals (+5.26 percent), and commodities and transactions not classified elsewhere in SITC (+0.56 percent).

On the other hand, three groups recorded decreases: beverages and tobacco (-3.52 percent), machinery and transport equipment (-1.45 percent), and miscellaneous manufactured articles (-0.47 percent). Meanwhile, the "animal and vegetable oils, fats and waxes" group remained unchanged.

The EXUVI is a key statistical indicator that tracks changes in the unit values of exported goods and provides important insights into foreign trade dynamics and related economic activity. The index is calculated in accordance with the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC Rev. 4), which classifies exports into ten main groups comprising 56 commodities, in accordance with the Harmonized System (HS). The publication of this index falls within the framework of the National Planning Council's commitment to providing reliable statistical data to support evidence-based decision-making and advance economic and developmental planning in the State of Qatar. **BL**

PARENTING IN THE AGE OF AI

From *New York Times* bestselling author Dana Suskind, a timely, urgent guide to parenting in the age of artificial intelligence (AI) – and protecting what matters most in childhood



Dana Suskind

As AI enters nurseries, playrooms, and classrooms, parents are being sold a “smart” childhood at every turn. This book is a guide to protecting the most important label of all: human raised.

Dr. Suskind writes here to set forth some templates about how to keep your parenting (especially) guided toward making human connections, so that your children end up more human-focused than digitally guided people as adults. After all, the goal is not “good kids,” but adults capable of thriving in the world around them.

Some folks will likely fault Dr. Suskind’s work because she does not come out flatly against using AI-tools in parenting, including exposing children to the products of AI. While there are valid ethical critiques of many AI-systems, she approaches the situation with the realism that says: “There will be AI, so how do we deal with it?”

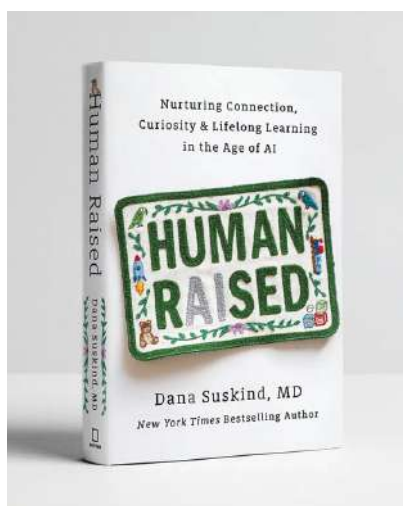
You have basic guidance on researching AI and what you should and should not use it for. There are

several chapters first establishing the very real need for parents and caregivers to be human-first in their interactions with children. Suskind makes plain that imperfect human interaction far supersedes algorithmic perfection.

Each chapter in this book ends with a helpful TLDR section, giving you, the reader, the main takeaways from each chapter. One should still read the

chapters! However, life gets busy. You will see the value of each chapter as you check these chapters out. If you see this book on a bookstore shelf and want to know if it’s worthwhile, take a peak at any of those chapter endings.

Finally, almost worth the price of purchase itself, she walks the reader through an investigative framework using DETECT as an acronym. This shows up in the body of the text starting in chapter 8, but then is helpfully pulled-out into an appendix for easy reference. **BL**



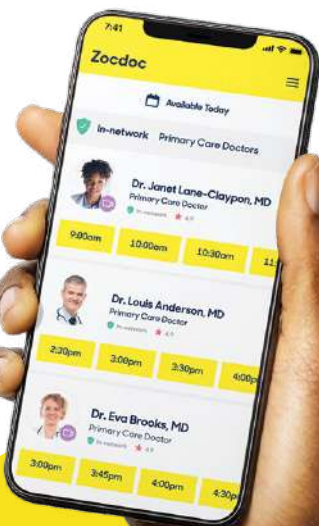
FOUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR RAISING CHILDREN ALONGSIDE AI

- Human connection is irreplaceable
- Own your imperfections
- Protect the early years
- Enhance – don’t replace - connection

HEALTHCARE MADE EASY!

Zocdoc simplifies doctor appointment booking by showing real-time availability across thousands of healthcare providers and enabling same-day scheduling. Its insurance verification feature reduces a major friction point in the healthcare system. Startups building appointment-first health platforms often cite Zocdoc as the benchmark for frictionless patient acquisition.

Zocdoc is the beginning of a better healthcare experience for millions of patients like you. With Zocdoc, one can find doctors you love and make appointments online, instantly – no more phone calls or long wait times! But simple appointment-booking is just the start. You can also see what other patients are saying with Zocdoc reviews, stay on top of important checkups with our wellness reminders, even fill out medical forms online – just once – and use them for future appointments. And while there are many ways to unite modern patients and doctors, Zocdoc has just one mission: to give power to the patient with the belief there's no better way to deliver the great healthcare experience that the patient deserves. **BL**



THE PROS AND CONS

KEY PROS:

- **Easy booking:** Zocdoc makes it easy to go from searching to scheduling in just a few taps.
- **Insurance matching:** Users appreciate the ability to filter doctors and specialists who explicitly accept their specific health insurance plans.
- **Helpful reminders:** The platform sends automated notifications and text reminders for upcoming appointments.

COMMON CONS:

- **Appointment mismatches:** Some patients report arriving for scheduled visits only to find out from the provider's office that the time slot was unconfirmed or double-booked.
- **Insurance & pricing confusion:** Users without insurance note that the app can repeatedly prompt for insurance details or lack upfront pricing transparency.
- **Provider gripes:** Users on the provider side report a consensus that high per-booking fees and calendar synchronisation challenges can frustrate medical practices.



Business Leaders Magazine and Startup Grind Doha have officially partnered.

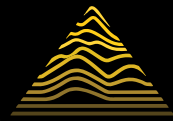
Empowering Qatar's founders and innovators
with stronger visibility, strategic media
exposure, and powerful business recognition.

What Members Receive:

- Premium Founder Storytelling
- Strategic Media Exposure
- Powerful Business Visibility

**Be Seen. Be Recognised.
Be Remembered.**





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