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'Solar bake sale' for a charitable cause

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Pain and pleasure for Andy Murray



DOW JONES	QE	NYMEX
12,393.45	8,416.83	86.52
-26.41	-56.22	-1.30
-0.21%	-0.66%	-1.48%

Latest Figures

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In brief

ARAB WORLD | Sanctions

Qatar-based directors of Syrian bank quit

The Qatar-based directors of Syria International Islamic Bank (SIIB) resigned their roles at the behest of the Gulf Arab state's central bank, to comply with US Treasury sanctions against the lender. SIIB, formed in 2006 by Qatari and Syrian investors, was designated under anti-weapons proliferation laws by the US government on Wednesday, freezing its assets in the US and prohibiting US firms and individuals from doing business with it. "Qatari investors in SIIB will not seek board representation and will remain passive investors," the central bank said in a statement yesterday. "The Qatar-based directors of SIIB have resigned." Qatar International Islamic Bank (QIIB) and Qatari investors own a combined 49% stake in the Syrian lender, with a QIIB representative chairman of SIIB. Other Qatar-based board members include representatives from Private Projects Co. and Qatar Islamic Insurance Co.

EAST ASIA | Politics

Suu Kyi takes centre stage on Thailand trip

Myanmar democracy champion Aung San Suu Kyi will make her first major international engagement after more than two decades of isolation when she addresses world business leaders today in Bangkok. The Nobel Peace laureate has stolen the show at a meeting of Asian leaders and top businessmen at the World Economic Forum on East Asia in the Thai capital, drawing crowds of well-wishers and photographers wherever she goes. Suu Kyi's first trip abroad in 24 years comes after the opposition leader was elected to Myanmar's parliament in an April by-election, in dramatic reforms sweeping the country since direct army rule ended last year.

BRITAIN | Diplomacy

Queen announces her N Irish visit in advance

Britain's Queen Elizabeth is to visit Northern Ireland next month, Buckingham Palace said yesterday, the first time since the outbreak of sectarian violence in the 1960s that a trip there by the monarch has been announced in advance. The visit, part of the 86-year-old Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee celebrations, raises the possibility of her first meeting with former guerrilla commander Martin McGuinness, once a leading figure in the Irish Republican Army who currently serves as the province's No. 2 official. **Page 9**

Sheikh Tamim meets Kuwaiti team



HH the Deputy Emir and Heir Apparent Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani met at his Emiri Diwan office in Doha yesterday a delegation of the Foreign Affairs Committee from the Kuwaiti National Assembly, headed by Chairman of the Committee, MP Mohamed Jassim al-Saqer. The meeting was attended by Speaker of the Qatari Advisory (Shura) Council Mohamed bin Mubarak al-Khulaifi.

Qatar budget surplus rises three-fold

By Pratap John
Chief Business Reporter

Qatar's budget surplus would have scaled up almost three-fold in 2011-12 on the back of "higher-than-budgeted" oil price in the last financial year, a new report shows.

According to QNB Financial Services, Qatar's budget surplus is estimated to have risen to QR62.4bn from the projected QR23bn in 2011-12 due to increased revenues from condensates, liquefied natural gas and petrochemical products in the last financial year.

"In place of the budgeted \$55 a barrel, the actual oil price averaged \$112.8 a barrel, up 105% on the estimated \$55 a barrel in 2011-12," QNB Financial Services said in an update yesterday.

However, QNB Financial Services said no preliminary data has been released as yet on the 2011-12 budget by the Ministry of Economy and Finance.

At the start of the fiscal 2011-12, Qatar had expected to book a budget surplus of QR22.3bn.

The budgetary surplus will allow the country to deploy its resources prudently as has been the case in the past and increase spending on infrastructure upgrade and key sectors such as education and health.

QNB Financial Services also esti-

ated that Qatar would have earned revenue of QR231bn in 2011-12 against the budgeted QR163bn.

The total expenditure in 2011-12 is estimated to have reached QR168.7bn compared with the budgeted QR140bn in the financial year with a significantly higher outlay for major infrastructure projects and the education and health sectors.

QNB Financial Services estimates the current expenditure in 2011-12 at QR112bn compared with the budgeted QR75bn in the financial year.

After being chosen to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup, Qatar had allocated a substantial amount of its annual budget in the 2011-2012 fiscal for infrastructure development. According to the NDS, Qatar plans to invest over QR130bn in 2011-2016 through state-run companies, on roads and utilities among others.

According to the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the outstanding on Qatar Government's external debt stood at QR87.7bn in fiscal 2011-12 that ended in March this year.

A recent Economist Intelligence Unit report said Qatar had taken on large amounts of debt to finance new gas and petrochemical facilities, but its substantial foreign assets and revenue inflows from hydrocarbons exports will enable it to meet its debt-service obligations easily.

Initiative to promote Arabic

QNA
Doha

The Forum on Advancement of Arabic Language, which concluded yesterday its first edition at Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC), has endorsed the Doha Declaration that included the most important visions and ideas that the forum's participants have reached regarding the advancement and protection of Arabic.

The declaration has launched the Qatari Initiative for Arabic Language Advancement, which covers several fields such as education, media, linguistic scientific research, translation, linguistics, and computing.

The initiative calls for enhancing communication with Arabic language academies, so as to overcome the obstacles and unify energies in order to promote language. It also demands the setting of a linguistic policy that reflects the initiative.

Doha Declaration also said that the initiative calls for developing Arabic language scientific research, stressing that it's a language of science, research, intellect and creativity that accommodates developments and rapid changes.

During their closing speeches, heads of the Arabic language academies and participating experts have praised the efforts of Qatar and HH Sheikhha Moza bint Nasser in organising the forum, stressing their satisfaction with the results reached throughout the forum. **Page 20**

Syria risks disastrous civil war: UN chief

AFP
Damascus

UN chief Ban Ki-moon warned yesterday that Syria risks a "catastrophic civil war" following the Houla massacre, as Washington slammed Moscow over its Syria policies.

Damascus regretted Ban's warning and denied any responsibility in last week's slaughter of 108 people, blaming "armed gangs" for the killings that have triggered international outrage.

And as Syrian rebels threatened to escalate their operations if President Bashar al-Assad's regime does not meet a 0900 GMT ultimatum today to observe a UN-backed ceasefire, activists called for nationwide protests.

The rallies to be held today will honour the 49 children killed in Houla, activists said on the Syrian Revolution 2011 Facebook page, describing them as "flares of victory."

State television also called for prayers "in all of Syria's mosques" today for the Houla dead and for "all the country's martyrs."

Speaking in Istanbul, the UN chief said Damascus must implement the six-point peace blueprint brokered by UN-Arab League envoy Kofi Annan, which has been violated daily since April 12.

"I demand that the government of Syria act on its commitment to the Annan peace plan," Ban said.

"The massacres of the sort seen last weekend could plunge Syria into a catastrophic civil war, a civil war from which the country would never recover."

The UN says some of the 108 people slaughtered in the central Syrian town of Houla on Friday and Saturday were killed by artillery tank fire.

But the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights says most were summarily executed, and some UN officials have said there were suspicions of involvement by pro-government Shabiha militias.

But Damascus yesterday insisted a preliminary investigation showed "armed gangs" carried out the Houla killings.

"It appears that all the victims came from peaceful families who refused to rise up against the government or

take up arms, but had rows with armed groups," said General Kassem Jamal Sleiman, head of the probe.

"Killing children does not meet any goal of the government but those of the armed groups," he said, insisting that regular troops were attacked by the gunmen but did not enter the area before or after the assault.

Syrian foreign ministry spokesman Jihad Makdissi dismissed Ban's warning.

"It is regrettable that the Secretary General of the UN has departed from his mission of maintaining peace and security in the world to becoming a herald of civil war," Makdissi told reporters.

But Washington's UN envoy Susan Rice said Syria's denials of involvement in Houla were a "blatant lie", as she and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton slammed Russia's policies in the crisis.

Rice condemned as "reprehensible" Russian arms deliveries to Syria, after reports last week that a Russian ship carrying weapons had arrived in the Syrian port of Tartus.

"The massacres of the sort seen last weekend could plunge Syria into a catastrophic civil war"

"With respect to the reported docking of a ship carrying Russian arms, this is obviously of the utmost concern given that the Syrian government continues to use deadly force against civilians," she said.

Clinton, speaking in Denmark, also warned that civil war could erupt in Syria because of Russia's policy of resisting UN Security Council action against Damascus.

The Russians "are telling me they don't want to see a civil war. I have been telling them their policy is going help to contribute to a civil war," Clinton said.

The rebel Free Syrian Army's command inside the country, meanwhile, gave President Bashar al-Assad's government an ultimatum, setting midday today (0900 GMT) as the hour of reckoning.

If the regime "does not meet the deadline by Friday midday, the command ... will no longer be tied by any commitment to the Annan plan ... and our duty will be ... to defend civilians," a statement said.

Pakistan a 'misrepresented' nation at international level: Khar

By Ramesh Mathew
Staff Reporter

With the strengthening of democracy in the country, Pakistan is engaged in a confidence-building exercise not only among its immediate neighbours in South Asia, but also at the international level, Foreign Affairs Minister Hina Rabbani Khar said in Doha yesterday.

She was addressing a special session on her country's foreign policy, held under the aegis of Brookings Centre Doha.

While explaining her country's position on a host of issues, the foreign minister asserted that Pakistan was a "misrepresented" nation at international level, and the government in power in the South Asian country was making all possible efforts to remove this "misconception" about the country as a "West-basher" at different levels.

"Even though our nation has made numerous sacrifices on a number of issues, sometimes willingly or otherwise, it is still unfortunate that our efforts are not being properly recognised by the powers that be," said Khar.

Even while acknowledging that her country is confronted with a number of problems, including such turbulent and complicated issues as Afghanistan, the minister said there had been a reasonably good improvement in Pakistan's relations with its neighbours, in particular India.

"We are through a confidence-building process even while discussing such critical decades-old issues as Jammu and Kashmir. One of the main examples of substantial improvement in relations is the rising levels of talks between India and Pakistan these days to boost trade between them," she said.

The efforts to normalise trade between the two countries, she said, and

Praise for Qatar

Pakistani Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar has highlighted Qatar's initiatives to promote dialogue, underlining the 9th US-Islamic World Forum's addressed issues and in-depth discussions between the two sides.

In her speech yesterday at the forum in Doha, the Pakistani FM expressed her appreciation and respect towards Qatar and HH the Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, an Islamic leader with great achievements for his country and the Islamic world.

She thanked HH Sheikhha Moza bint Nasser for her leading initiatives in support of women as well as in science and education. She also praised the efforts of HE Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabor al-Thani and his keenness on holding the forum every year.

granting the most favoured nation status to India, like Pakistan's business relations with more than 100 other countries, would go a long way in building trust and confidence among the two neighbours.

The minister expressed hope that by the end of this year, there could be substantial improvement in trade relations between India and Pakistan.

Khar also highlighted the necessity of effecting a remarkable improvement in trade at the SAARC (South Asian Association of Regional Co-operation) countries level on the lines of strides in trade made between the Asean nations.

While deliberating on the need of improving Indo-Pakistan bilateral relations, Khar asked "could one expect to find a solution overnight to many of such critical issues that could not be solved even in 40 years?"

The minister felt the EU countries have demonstrated their keenness to

improve ties with Pakistan in a big way in recent months and she felt the strengthening of democratic traditions in her home country has gone out well with most of the 27 EU members.

"Now the EU has a better understanding of the situations that we face and hence there has been a remarkable scope for strengthening ties between Pakistan and EU nations now."

Khar recalled that owing to an extremely difficult situation last year her country suffered heavily in terms of military and economic losses and FDI's fell to \$300-600mn from the previous year's \$7.8bn.

Even while terming 2011 as an extremely difficult year for Pakistan's bilateral relations with the US, the minister said the two countries had enjoyed long-standing relations for more than 60 years and each knows the necessity of engaging the other in talks. **Page 2**



Hina Rabbani Khar during her briefing of Pakistan's Foreign Policy, hosted by Brookings Centre Doha yesterday. PICTURE: T K Nasser

Qatar-backed programme to provide aid to Tunisian youth

A new Qatar-backed, community-based programme, in association with World Bank, will provide immediate assistance to unemployed youth in two of Tunisia's poorest governorates, help them build skills and employment for the long-term, and foster a cadre of positive change agents among the area's marginalised youth.

The World Bank programme is supported by Silatech, a Doha-based social initiative which aims to connect young people in the Arab world with employment and enterprise opportunities.

The Emergency Grant to Support Young Rural Tunisians Affected by Multiple Shocks will specifically target young people with little access to public services and livelihood opportunities in the Kasserine and Siliana governorates, where the unemployment rates in these central western governorates are far higher than the national average.

"In addition to the recent political instability, Tunisia has been hit with a series of overlapping systemic shocks," says Gloria La Cava, World Bank Task Team Leader for the project, "the global food and financial crises

have had the greatest impact on these areas, with scarce infrastructure and social services, and young people have borne the brunt of direct consequences such as the falling demand for labour."

Funded by a grant from the Japan Social Development Fund, the project, a 30-month pilot to test the design, will focus on the most vulnerable among the rural youth population between the ages of 18 and 34. The project's various programmes have been designed to assist those with low skills and lower levels of education.

The project covers three major

components, including youth-led local initiatives, which promote youth participation in community service through local NGOs, innovative training courses, internships or apprenticeships as well as support to youth micro-entrepreneurship.

"This is an important initiative which provides immediate relief to young job seekers, while also building the capacity of civil society and increasing youth employability"

The project is based on the principle that a successful skills

training programme should be demand-driven.

Its design was the result of extensive consultations with local youth, civil society organisations, business leaders and Tunisian Government authorities. The private sector will be fully integrated into the project, with the Tunisian branches of two leading international companies, Microsoft and Manpower, organising training modules as in-kind donations. Moreover, Silatech and Tunisian telecommunications company, Tunisiana, are jointly launching a service, as in-kind donation, to provide the project with mobile

solutions that ensure inclusive access to youth, as well as effective programme monitoring. Job seekers in the governorates of Kasserine and Siliana will be able to apply using SMS and USSD mobile technologies, the most basic levels of mobile connectivity available to the vast majority of youth. Silatech and Tunisiana are also developing mobile tools to determine project impact, reach and performance, and verify fund disbursements.

Jo Aggarwal, director skills and employment at Silatech, said: "This is an important initiative which provides immediate

relief to young job seekers, while also building the capacity of civil society and increasing youth employability. Silatech is excited to partner with the World Bank and Tunisiana to make the initiative more accessible and transparent through mobile innovations."

A recent analysis of the 2009 Labor Force Survey revealed that Kasserine and Siliana had one of the highest unemployment rates in the country. The percentage change in unemployment between 2005 and 2009 was 32.2% for Kasserine and 10.8% in Siliana while the change in the national average was 2.6%.

Call to train employees in dealing with emergencies

A comprehensive plan should be adopted to train all employees of private and public entities in the country to deal with emergencies, Faysal al-Emadi, director general of Job Qualifying Centre (JQC) has pointed out in a statement to the local Arabic daily *Arrayah*.

He stressed the importance of heading the lessons learnt from the recent Villaggio mall incident.

"The plan is to qualify all employees at various work locations to respond adequately to emergency cases, especially after many government departments have moved to their new headquarters at the Towers Area," he explained.

Al-Emadi indicated that it is necessary to maintain such a plan at the respective work locations in collaboration with the Civil Defence Department at the Ministry of Interior and highly qualified experts in disaster management and the proper use of emergency and fire exits and escapes.

He further stressed that raising awareness and knowledge about this has become an absolute necessity. Eventually, an awareness plan should be included in the annual training scheme of each company.

Al-Emadi demanded that government officials should be

intensively trained on emergency management and dealing with incidents of fire in particular. "The ability of an official to take the right decision at the right moment would certainly save lives and spare potential loss of property," he maintained.

"The plan is to qualify all employees at various work locations to respond adequately to emergency cases, especially after many government departments have moved to their new headquarters at the Towers Area"

He further suggested that it is of high importance to form a team which will be assigned with disaster and emergency management at all work locations whether public or private.

The main role of the team would be to give safe and secure exit for staff in case of emergency or fire.

JQC director general also suggested the need to create teams of staff qualified to manage the evacuation processes.

They should be familiar with the safe assembly points and the exits of the building in question. Signboards also have to clearly indicate exit points and give clear directions leading to them. He pointed out that mock

evacuation drills should be conducted regularly at all work locations, especially at those with more risk of fire.

Such training would familiarise staff with procedures followed in these cases and spare them the injuries or even deaths that may happen because of crowds, rush and potential stampede.

In the meantime, Dr Nasser al-Shafi, an economic expert, said that the Villaggio fire incident was the first of its kind in Qatar indicating that it was necessary to maintain active safety and security procedures with highly trained staff who are able to directly intervene at the moment an accident takes place.

Dr Al-Shafi demanded the creation of a specialised committee comprising members from all entities concerned with safety and security in Qatar.

This committee would be in charge of granting permits to factories, commercial malls and other economic activities and supervise them as well.

He also suggested that this committee should report to the Administrative Control and Transparency Authority. Regular inspection campaigns should be also conducted to spare the country the dire consequences of any such terrible incidents.

Meeting with Tunisian official



HE the Assistant Foreign Minister For Service Affairs Rashid bin Khalifa al-Khalifa holding talks with Tunisian Secretary of State Responsible for Migration and Tunisians Abroad Houcine Jaziri and his accompanying delegation in Doha yesterday. They discussed scopes of co-operation in areas of joint interest and ways of promoting and developing them in addition to the conditions of the Tunisian community living in Qatar. Separately, HE the Minister of State for the Interior Affairs Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa al-Thani also met the Tunisian Secretary of State Responsible for Migration and Tunisians Abroad Houcine Jaziri. They discussed prospects of co-operation in areas of joint interest and ways of promoting and developing them.

Emir, PM receive condolences on Villaggio mall fire

HH the Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani has received cables of condolences on the devastating fire at Villaggio mall from Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, Lebanese President Michel Suleiman, Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse, Cypriot President Demetris Christofias, Sheikh Hamid bin Rashid al-Nuaimi, the member of the Federal Supreme Council of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Ruler of Ajman and Sheikh Ammar bin Hamid al-Nuaimi, the Crown Prince of Ajman. Meanwhile, HE the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabor al-Thani received telephone calls from Prime Minister of the Transitional Government of Libya Dr. Abdul Rahim al-Keab and Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borisov. The Libyan and Bulgarian prime ministers offered condolences to the Prime Minister on the Villaggio mall fire.

Pakistan-US ties must be based on 'mutual respect'

By Noimot Olayiwola
Staff Reporter

Pakistan will forge ahead in its relationship with the US as long as it is based on mutual respect and both parties are willing to endure crises, Minister of Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar said in Doha yesterday.

Delivering a keynote address on the concluding day of the 'US-Islamic World Forum' she stated that Pakistan values its relationship with the US and national consensus is needed in this regard because it is an important issue.

"We feel it is important to truly build consensus across ethnic, linguistic, cultural and political lines. We are confident that parliamentary processes are the voices of Pakistanis speaking with one voice," she said.

Khar explained that when it comes to Pakistan-US relations, the voice of the people has spoken clearly.

"We need to listen to the voice carefully because beyond the headline grabbing stuff... there is real substance for us to consider that the parliamentary process of processing our engagement with the US offers both Pakistan and some of our friends in the US some real great opportunities. We can not afford to lose this unprecedented opportunities."



Hina Rabbani Khar speaking at the forum. PICTURE: Jayaram

The minister recalled that after the Shalala incident, the government took the issue of Pakistan's engagement with the US and Nato to the parliament not because, as some people repeatedly alleged, they were unprepared to take difficult decisions, but rather wanted to ensure that the friendship with the US would endure crises, small and big, at a time of great complications and complexities.

Khar recalled that the big lesson learnt from experiences with the past dictatorship and present democracy was that building consensus in a diverse context, no matter how diffi-

cult, was a prerequisite to dealing credibly with a really big important issue.

To the issue of apology on the death of some Pakistani soldiers (in a US drone attack) she said: "The parliament has articulated the sentiments of the country and its people for a desire for an apology. I believe it is not unreasonable to expect that."

"We lost some 24 of our soldiers, these are brave young men that helped protect us, almost 6,000 of their colleagues in the military and paramilitary forces have laid down their lives fighting against militants and extremists including Al Qaeda

inside Pakistani territory," she recalled.

She mentioned that the parliament has also articulated the need for counter-terrorism tools that are acceptable by the Pakistani people and that will not provide opportunity for extremists recruitment.

The parliament has also unequivocally called for all foreign fighters within Pakistan territory to be expelled.

"No country wants a stable and prosperous Afghanistan more than Pakistan does, not for reasons of generosity, but we appreciate those also, but simply for reasons of hard core self interests," she maintained.

"Just as the legacy of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, we are not afraid of the road ahead and we are not daunted by the challenges that we face today. We will forge ahead, Pakistan will be a friend and partner to its Afghan brothers and sisters," she stated adding that Pakistan will also continue to play its role as an enabler and as a facilitator for peace and stability within the region and in Pakistan.

Other than US-Pakistan relations, she mentioned that domestic issues such as acids attacks on women has become a criminal offence in Pakistan and that issues of other forms of gender discrimination were being dealt with by the parliament.



Valsamma Varghese presenting a memento to Amar Rajan as others look on.

Expert gives tips on effective parenting

Proper, timely and effective training by parents could bring significant changes in their children, said a psychologist from Kerala at a workshop conducted by Marthoma College (Tiruvalla) alumni association - Qatar chapter recently.

Amar Rajan, a psychologist who judged the contestants of two television reality shows said this at a session on effective parenting

held as part of the workshop at Grand Qatar Place Hotel.

"Children are clean slates and it is the proper and effective training given to them by parents that influence them most at different junctures in life," said Rajan.

Leena Varghese (Qatar Foundation) held a session for children while Rajan spoke to parents in a separate session.

More than 250 parents and children attended the two-day workshop.

The concluding meeting was chaired by the alumni president Samuel Varghese. Baby Kuriyan welcomed the gathering and Subhash Mathews proposed a vote of thanks.

At the meeting Valsamma Varghese presented a memento to Rajan.

Grand Heritage Doha Hotel unveils summer promotion

Grand Heritage Doha Hotel and Spa has announced its Grand Summer Promotion, bringing out a luxurious alternative to the extreme heat of the season by inviting guests to experience the hospitality of the Grand Heritage Doha at highly attractive rates. The highlight of the hotel's offer is a discounted double room rate for two nights, on half-board. A media communiqué issued by the hotel highlighted that the Summer Promotion includes a daily breakfast buffet and a three course set menu dinner at its Flavours Restaurant. In order to offer as many guests

as possible the opportunity to enjoy the special rates, the hotel confirmed that the Summer Promotion will run up to August 19. The Summer Promotion also includes a 15% discount at any of the food and beverage outlets, spa treatments and limousine service. In order to accommodate the family spirit of the season and entertain large families, for every room reserved, a second room is being offered at discounted rate with an opportunity for children who are younger than twelve years, to be accommodated in their parent's room, free of charge.

Vodafone to carry out major IT system upgrade tomorrow

Vodafone Qatar will implement a major IT system upgrade that lasts 24 hours from 10pm on June 2. "Customer Care will be fully operational but some services like viewing call records and changes to account details will not be possible during the upgrade window", said Deirdre Hutchinson, Vodafone head (Customer Care). "Customers can reach us 24 hours a day, 7 days a week free of charge on 111 when calling from a Vodafone mobile or +974 7700 7111 when calling from abroad." Vodafone customers on

Freedom plans roaming abroad during this time could experience delays in replenishment of their credit. However, Vodafone customers on Red plans who would like to recharge during this period would not be affected. Vodafone Qatar's Chief Technology Officer Ger Coolen said, "The IT upgrade that will be implemented on June 2 and 3 will ensure that Vodafone Qatar gets ready for future customer growth. It represents a significant investment in our operations that will allow us to bring new products and services to our customers."