

## Schools urged to exert efforts to overcome obstacles

## Ministry ready for next week's secondary-level exams



Media experts attend the conference in Doha

## 'Digital media facing security threat'

## Experts discuss technology and media at Doha Summit

DOHA, May 11: Held under the patronage of His Excellency Sheikh Hamad bin Thamer Al-Thani, Chairman of Al Jazeera Media Network, AJMN's "Future of Media Leaders Summit" concluded today at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Doha. The Summit, the first of its kind in the region, prominent figures and leaders of the world's top broadcasting and media organizations to discuss innovation and transformation strategies in the face of digital disruption.

The closing day began with a pair of presentations about the ways increased social media use has affected media organisations relationship with their content and audiences. Keynote speaker Mohammed Nanabhai, Deputy CEO at Media Development Investment Fund, outlined how quickly the way news organisations and their audiences interact have changed. He reminded attendees that as recently as 20 years ago, information moved in one direction, from media providers to consumers. Since then, however, the flow has become increasingly back-and-forth.

"People on social media are now the first one to cover events such as protests, and that in turn drives media coverage. That coverage then drives people to take part in these events, which creates even more coverage on social media. It becomes a cycle," Nanabhai said.

## Engage

He noted several contradictions that social media has created for the media industry. For example, organisations have lost their direct link to their audiences, but are paradoxically able to engage more with them. While new narratives and voices are emerging that were once overlooked, at the same time censorship by state actors is also on the rise.

Al Jazeera Executive Director Dr Yaser Bisher addressed the changing relationship between media and audience in his presentation about Al Jazeera's digital strategy. He outlined the major challenges Al Jazeera faces in a social media-driven world, including shortened attention spans, fragmentation of audiences, and the sheer volume of content being created.

Bisher urged attendees to focus on user experience, using the Apple iPhone as an example. The iPhone experience doesn't begin when one turns the phone on, he said. Instead, it begins from the very idea of being a part of what is perceived of as a separate group of iPhone owners and that experience is reinforced by Apples stores and buying experience.

"Put your content in a unique user experience," Bisher said. "Understand the triggers that lead your users to go where they do for the information they are seeking. That is where the user experience starts, not when they open the app."

As media organisations become more connected to their audience, the opportunities for hostile actors to take advantage of that connectivity increase as well, said Haroon Meer, founder of South African firm Thinkst Applied Research. His presentation on cyber security and the broadcast industry served as a wake-up call for a field he said has been until recently isolated from such threats.

## Connectivity

Increased connectivity and complexity, a shortage of IT security experts, and a rise in motivated attackers all combine to threaten broadcast media in ways the industry may not be prepared for, he said, and addressing those threats requires a fundamental change in mindset.

"The threat is real. Broadcast has been protected almost by accident because you have been hidden on an island, and you're not anyone," Meer said. "You will be breached. The question is, how will you react?"

The afternoon began with a presentation by Ken Morse, Media CIO at Cisco Systems, who spoke about the way newsrooms are evolving in the digital age.

"Media distribution is absolutely going through a renaissance," he said.

In closing the Summit, Dr Mostefa Souag, Acting Director General of Al Jazeera Media Network, said, "This conference represents a unique opportunity for TV and digital media professionals in our region to discuss ideas related to the latest technologies relevant to their work, and to learn about the latest technological innovations in television broadcasting, digital media platforms, cloud storage, data security and content dissemination. We hope that it has contributed to a clearer picture of the future of the media and the expected

changes in the nature of our work, so that we can prepare to keep pace with this development and make maximum use of it."

Along with Al Jazeera, sponsors of the event include Cisco, Microsoft, Avid, CommVault, SAP, Smart Global, and Tech Mahindra, as well as the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

When the summit began, keynote speaker Paul Lee, Partner and Global Head of Research for the technology, media, and telecommunications (TMT) industry at Deloitte, presented research about the ways digital and traditional media are complementing each other. While mobile device usage has climbed over the last three years, live television consumption has remained steady and significantly higher than digital usage.

"Digital transformation will never end, but it doesn't need to be zero-sum disruption," Lee said. "It doesn't have to be them versus us; it can be them and us."

He added that although people are spending more time on their phones, certain forms of media, such as feature films and television series, do not lend themselves to mobile consumption because of the limitations in screen size.

"People glance at social networks, but they gaze at longform video," he said. He noted that while live media consumption has declined and digital consumption as increased, live television remains overwhelmingly the best way for advertisers to reach a broad audience. Furthermore, older audiences tend to prefer live content that demographic, based on its buying power, is highly appealing for advertisers.

Lee's speech was followed by a roundtable on how media organisations are adapting to digital transformation. During that discussion, experts debated the extent to which digital platforms will subsume traditional media.

"Nobody will know the difference between digital and traditional in the next 10 years. Consumers will be in control of the industry in the next decade," said Josbert van Rooijen, Vice-President of Strategic Programs at Ericsson Broadcast and Media Services in the Netherlands.

## Adapted

Al Jazeera's Mohamed Abuagla, presented on how the organisation has constantly adapted to changing technology over its 20-year history. When the channel launched, mobile phones were primitive, as were collaborative technologies. Since then, changes in communications models and behaviours, from social media, mobile devices, consumption habits and collaboration tools, have blurred the lines of media.

All of these changes were happening at the same time as Al Jazeera expanded internationally and increased its digital presence. To manage this expansion, Abuagla spearheaded Al Jazeera Workplace Transformation, which unified the networks global locations, allowing them to be more flexible, collaborate better and share media faster.

"Transformation has to be holistic, involving people, processes and technology," Abuagla said. "To become more transformative, you need to become a service provider."

He identified several developing technologies that will continue to shape Al Jazeera's approach, including artificial intelligence (AI), Big Data and Blockchain.

Rainer Kellerhals, Industry Lead for Media and Cable EMEA at Microsoft, spoke on cloud and cognitive computing's impact on newsrooms. He noted that the proliferation of big data gives journalists a powerful new source of information that they can mine and present to their audiences in new ways.

"Data journalism is about understanding the story from the data and bringing it to life," he said.

Kellerhals also addressed the way news organisations are using data to deliver more relevant content to their audiences. "Data will drive the transition from traditional mass media to personal media with visualisation," he said. "Together, we are working with news organizations to leverage tech for the benefit of its audience and employees."

A panel discussion followed, in which participants shared their thoughts on the challenges the broadcast industry faces as it moves to the cloud. Wolfgang Wagner, Director of Production and Engineering at German broadcaster WDR, said media organisations will necessarily have to merge functions that in the past had been separate.

KUWAIT CITY, May 11: Director General of Farwaniya Educational Zone Jassem Bu Hamad affirmed the readiness of the ministry for the commencement of the secondary-level final examinations which will kick off next week, reports Al-Seyassah daily. Bu Hamad declared that the

ministry is collaborating with all school administrations, which have been exerting tremendous efforts to overcome all obstacles and ensure everything is carried out under calm and serene atmosphere.

He said Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Mo-

hammad Abdullatif Al-Fares has been following up the progress, showing commitment to interests of students and supporting learning activities.

Bu Hamad revealed about a meeting he held recently with school principals and chairmen of committees that are respon-

sible for executing mechanisms planned and prepared for the examinations to ensure they were in line with rules and regulations.

He indicated that 19,146 students are qualified to sit for the examinations, including students of adult education, homeschoolers and students of private schools.

## Need to shed light on Gulf women who broke the glass ceiling – panel

Kuwait's Dr Al-Kadi addresses Atlantic Council

WASHINGTON, May 11, (KUNA): A panel of Gulf women affirmed Wednesday that women's empowerment is an issue all over the world, not just in the Gulf countries but there is a need to shed light through international media on the Gulf women who "broke the glass ceiling" and show the real image of women in the Gulf.

Speaking at the Atlantic Council on "Progress and Challenges for Gulf Women," the panelists agreed that there needs to be an increase of awareness in the Gulf, especially regarding women's participation in leadership positions.

Founder and Director of Women's Research and Studies Center in Kuwait, Dr Lubna A-Kadi stressed that women are now economically empowered in Kuwait "but the challenge is women in leadership positions, where they are only 10 percent, which reflects they are not given equal opportunity in the government sector."

"Otherwise women are economically empowered and legally empowered where women as lawyers are very effective but women in leadership are still lagging behind," she reiterated.

For her part, Secretary General of the Qatar National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, Dr Hamda Al-Sulaiti affirmed that women in Qatar have achieved a lot in all sectors in a short period of time.

She added "but there still is a need for more achievement especially in engineering and financial sector as we need more women — also in the political sector." "Women in Qatar also face challenges in terms of leadership in politics," she noted. She stressed that the "empowerment of women is an issue worldwide not just in the Gulf world."

## Interest

Furthermore, Assistant to the Secretary General, King Abdulaziz Center for National Dialogue and Board Member of the Saudi Human Rights Commission, Amal Almoalimi stressed that Saudi Arabia's vision 2030 "showed great interest in women empowerment and one of the main goals of the vision is to increase participation of women in the labor market." She noted "there is more to come and we are expecting the best to come yet." She affirmed that the Saudi government is working to increase awareness regarding women's participation in the labor market.

She added that the main obstacle is that "for some women they are their own obstacle through being ignorant, not ambitious enough, or weak where they just go with the flow." "We need to raise awareness and strengthen women and young girls to know their rights and to advocate for themselves, to reach out and fight for what they deserve," she remarked.

She stressed "women need to empower women first. Mothers should empower their daughters." As for women's participation in the political life which remains to be "lagging behind," Dr Al-Kadi said that women are a greater percentage of voters in Kuwait "but not all women vote for women." "Women do not have the network that men have" that would enable them to win the parliamentary elections, and they do not have the "monetary funds to campaign, lobby and do what is necessary during campaigning," she remarked.

She stressed that there is a need to "awaken" voters to vote for women to get more women into the parliament.

"The problem is having a network and resources which is a major disad-



Hamda Al-Sulaiti



Top and above: photos from the event

Photos by Mahmoud Jadeed

## KCS organises Palestine disaster symposium

Kuwait Cultural Society (KCS) recently organized a symposium entitled, "Palestine Disaster", during which the speakers unanimously agreed that the disaster in Palestine led to other disasters.

They said the sectarian crisis has been planted to ensure Muslims engage themselves in incessant

disputes, up to the extent of living in perpetual catastrophe. The situation has produced millions of refugees from Yemen, Syria and Libya where thousands of lives have been lost.

Notable personalities at the event included Ambassador of Iran to Kuwait Ali Enayati, former State Minister for National Assem-

bly Affairs Abdul-Hadi Al-Saleh, former Minister of Public Works and State Minister for Municipality Affairs Fadel Safar, renowned Shiite scholar Sheikh Hussein Al-Ma'atouq, Vice-Chairman of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry Abdul-Wahab Al-Wazzan and ex-MP Mubarak Al-Najadah.

## Kingdom's Vision 2030 development plan

## Saudi eyes private sector's participation

RIYADH, May 11: MEED's Saudi Arabia Forum has highlighted the increasing role of the private sector in the future development of the kingdom.

As part of the kingdom's Ambitious Vision 2030 plan, the government is targeting to increase the private sector's contribution to GDP from 40 per cent to 65 per cent.

This will be achieved through increasing the use of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and through the privatisation of government entities, including the listing of up to 5 per cent of state oil major Saudi Aramco, with the \$100bn IPO set to be the largest ever conducted.

"We are trying to make the private

sector a real partner," said Fahad bin Sulaiman al-Tekhaifi, Deputy Chairman of the board, and President of the General Authority for Statistics (GaStat). "We need to learn how to utilise the technical abilities (of the private sector) to address the (country's) needs and realise the 2030 programme."

With billions of dollars worth of investment required to meet the aims of the Vision 2030, the private sector will play a key role in delivering vital infrastructure and services.

Richard Paton, head of infrastructure advisory, Middle East and South Asia, head of PPP and Public Sector Strategy, deal advisory, KPMG, outlined the benefits of utilising

Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) to develop infrastructure from utilities and transport to healthcare and education.

"PPPs reduce the requirement for capital costs, reducing pressure on government budgets, and also allows risk transfer," said Paton. Paton also discussed the planned shift of role for government in the kingdom, from a service provider to a regulator.

He said that the kingdom's airport company, General Authority for Civil Aviation was a prime example of this, with the government aviation body set to split into two, with the government becoming a regulator and the private sector building and operating airports.

vantage" for women, she reiterated. In Saudi Arabia, Almoalimi said that in the 2016 municipality elections, 21 women won from remote areas which reflects the "ability of women to engage in politics is slowly evolving there."

## Concept

She affirmed that the "concept of having female participation is changing in a good way." Meanwhile, on the sidelines of the event, Dr Al-Kadi stressed to KUNA the importance of participating in such forums, saying "they are an opportunity to show

what progress we have made — it also removes stereotypes they might have had of our country, of women in the Gulf." She affirmed the importance of "reaching out to them and it's important they hear what we are doing and the progress." As for the biggest stereotype there is of women in the Gulf, she said it is the role women play in society, saying "they think we are playing the typical roles of teachers, mothers; not really vital roles in the development process so to tell them that women are in the oil sector, women are managing big major banks and educational institu-

tions." "This helps show that women are not just acknowledged in Kuwait but they are capable of heading these positions," she added.

Dr Al-Kadi voiced belief that Kuwaiti men and women still need to do more, although Kuwaiti women's progress is faster than that of men. Women are moving out of their comfort zones? taking jobs that are very demanding." She stressed that women "are moving in the right direction but they need more encouragement not just from their families but even from the government," concluding "I think we will see some very good changes in the future."