



General Manager Dr Nasser M Marafih

## Competitiveness Performance

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ing the quality of customer service offered to clients. Qtel, he pointed out, is currently implementing the Qatarisation plan and some 30 per cent of its employees are currently Qatari nationals. Marafih said Qtel is one of the top employers of Qatari nationals, adding that the company will continue to recruit all qualified citizens who meet the required criteria. He admitted that earlier Qatari nationals preferred to work in the national oil and gas firms due to higher salaries and incentives they offer, but now, an increasing number are interested in taking up jobs with Qtel. According to Marafih, some 50 per cent of Qtel staff are Qatari nationals, if the higher management is also included. The chairman revealed that Qtel also has a budgetary allocation specifically for financing further training for qualified Qatari citizens. He said the company prefers to train such nationals internally.

# New York daily to publish feature on Qatar economic development

DOHA: *The Daily News*, the largest locally-sold newspaper in New York City, is producing a special feature on Qatar's economic growth and the potential it holds for US investors.

"The downturn in the US economy has made the astute and educated American investor go exploring for opportunities in emerging markets like Russia, China and the Middle East.

Qatar appears to be a splendid gateway at the moment to enter the Middle East markets," said Paul Bryne, a journalist with US Media, a media agency which produces economic reports in different parts of the world for the *Daily News*.

Paul and his colleague, Magali Bongrand, are currently in Doha producing a report for a planned 16-page feature on Qatar in the *Daily News*.

"Ever since the events of September 11, 2001, the people of New York have opened their eyes with a lot of curiosi-

ty. Bookstalls in the city now have more publications on Islam, Middle East and the Arab world than ever before," said Magali.

The US is a very economy-gearred nation and people there are beginning to realise that economic stability in every part of the world is essential for peace and prosperity, she said.

In one of its recent surveys, the *Daily News*, which has a daily readership of 3.5m, found its readers wanting more information on the possibilities of investing and forming joint ventures or business alliances in the Middle East.

"They wanted to know which countries in the Middle East hold the best promise," said Magali.

Explaining why they picked Qatar, Paul said, "Qatar has a very stable political environment and is very safe for foreign investors.

We wish to highlight the opportunities available not just in the oil and gas sector

but in other areas like tourism and finance." Magali added that education is another very promising area for investors and pointed towards the establishment of the Qatar branch of the renowned New York-based Weill Cornell Medical College. "What events like this also do is show the stability of the country. If senior professors and also students from the US are willing to come here, it definitely sends a message," she said.

She said Doha enjoys a distinctive advantage over Dubai, in that, the latter is already fully developed and saturated. "Dubai has no secret anymore that we could write about. Also the prices are skyrocketing in Dubai, whereas Qatar is a virgin field and the government is offering much better opportunities for foreign investors."


Paul said the "very dynamic economic vision of the Qatari leadership" is something that the American people need to be made aware of.

- THE PENINSULA



Journalists Paul Bryne and Magali Bongrand who are in Doha to produce a special feature on Qatar for New York's Daily News.

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# The Penins

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## News In Brief

### Exchange data with handshake

TOKYO: Two Japanese telecoms giants have developed technology that turns the human body into a broadband-paced link that allows e-mail addresses to be exchanged through a simple handshake, a report said yesterday. The technology, developed by Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corp and its subsidiary NTT DoCoMo Inc, uses the body's conductivity and adds the smarts of a personal digital assistant (PDA), the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* said. A device attached to a PDA can send and receive weak electrical signals through people, with human bodies as communications circuits, the paper said, citing sources close to the companies. Apparel and handbags have their own conductivity, allowing an electrical connection to a PDA that can remain in one's pocket, the paper said.

### Singapore prison inmates cut album

SINGAPORE: A group of Singaporean inmates have come up with their own version of jailhouse rock, releasing a CD of their songs. Of the 12 songs recorded on the CD titled *Aspirations*, 10 were written by 14 inmates from the Kaki

## ' Hamas men slay Palestinian police chief'

# Israeli tanks, copters raid Gaza; 14 killed

KHAN YUNIS: Israel tanks backed by helicopters killed 14 Palestinians in a raid on a bastion of the Hamas group in the Gaza Strip yesterday, while deadly street battles broke out between the group and Palestinian police following the slaying of a top commander.

The violence drew a swift rebuke of Israel from the United States amid its attempts to calm the region ahead of any military action against Iraq, and further hampered efforts by EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana to ease the two-year conflict in meetings with leaders from both sides.

In the raid on the southern Gaza town of Khan Yunis, eight Palestinians were killed by a single missile fired from a helicopter gunship, medics said.

Scores others were wounded, and with about a dozen people in critical condition the death toll was likely to rise, they added.

It was not immediately clear how many of the dead and injured were gunmen or civilians. Hospital officials said eight people were wounded when a tank shell and machine-gun fire hit a hospital after the raid.

The assault on Khan Yunis came after a home-made Palestinian rocket was fired at a Jewish settlement in the northern Gaza Strip without causing any injury or damage, the Israeli army said.

The army said its operation was launched to destroy the "terrorist infrastructure" in an area known as a stronghold of Hamas, which makes Qassam rockets. It said its troops came under fire, but suffered no casualties.

Gaza sector commander General Israel Ziv told Israeli public radio the army had taken into account the possibility of civilian victims, but claimed that "most of the dead were armed men who attacked

officers set up a road block in Gaza City to intercept Brigadier General Rajeh Abu Lehya, the 55-year-old head of the Palestinian riot police.

They stopped several cars and when they came across his, one member shouted out, "This is the man," and the other gunmen surrounded the commander.

Abu Lehya was taken with his two bodyguards to the Nusseirat refugee camp south of Gaza City, where he was tortured and then shot 10 times, police said. The guards were released and the car torched, police said.

Street battles with Hamas loyalists ignited shortly thereafter when police tried to arrest at least one militant who had allegedly fired on a patrol.

More Hamas members and supporters came to attack the police, with one of the militants shooting at the officers, injuring two of them.



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