Tomorrow is World Tourism Day. In this special edition, Community looks at the bright and beautiful land that is our home: From what makes Qatar unique as a tourist destination to underwater photography, and ambassadors picking their favourite spots.
PRAYER TIME

Fajr 4.07am
Shorooq (sunrise) 5.25am
Zuhr (noon) 11.27am
Asr (afternoon) 2.52pm
Maghreb (sunset) 5.28pm
Isha (night) 6.58pm

USEFUL NUMBERS

Emergency 999
Worldwide Emergency Number 112
Kahramaa – Electricity and Water 991
Local Directory 180
International Calls Enquiries 150
Hamad International Airport 40106666
Labor Department 44508111, 44406537
Mowasalat Taxi 44498888
Qatar Airways 44496000
Hamad Medical Corporation 44392222, 44393333
Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation 44845555, 44845464
Primary Health Care Corporation 44933333, 4493363
Qatar Assistive Technology Centre 44594050
Qatar News Agency 44450205
Q-Post – General Postal Corporation 44450333

Humanitarian Services Office
(Single window facility for the repatriation of bodies)
Ministry of Interior 40253372, 40253373, 40253369
Ministry of Health 40253370, 40253364
Hamad Medical Corporation 40253364, 40253365
Qatar Airways 40253374

Praasathanam
DIRECTION: Deva Katta
CAST: Ali Fazal, Jackie Shroff, Sanjay Dutt
SYNOPSIS: Rural politician marries a widow with kids and gains a respectable position and trusts his stepson more than his own in political matters; thus upsetting his son beyond limits.
THEATRE: Landmark

Prassthanam
DIRECTION: Deva Katta
CAST: Ali Fazal, Jackie Shroff, Sanjay Dutt
SYNOPSIS: Rural politician marries a widow with kids and gains a respectable position and trusts his stepson more than his own in political matters; thus upsetting his son beyond limits.
THEATRE: Landmark

Love Action Drama
DIRECTION: Dihyan Sreenivasan
CAST: Nivin Pauly, Nayanthara, Aju Varghese
SYNOPSIS: The plot follows a man who goes through all kinds of action to impress the girl he likes with a hope to marry her. He has too much money to throw around and too little intellect.
THEATRE: The Mall

Quote Unquote
“I believe things cannot make themselves impossible.”
– Stephen Hawking

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Fax: 44350474
**EVENTS**

**Ezdan Zoo at Ezdan Mall**  
WHERE: Ezdan Mall  
WHEN: Ongoing till October 4  
TIME: 6pm – 9pm  
Let's Get Wild! Hop on over to Ezdan Mall Little Animal Zoo and experience adventurous Safari tours.

**Science and Myth**  
WHERE: Qatar National Library  
WHEN: September 30  
TIME: 10:30am  
Evolutionary theory has been the subject of wide debates questioning the origin and evolution of several species, including humans. In this forum, we will shed light on the principles of evolution in nature and the foundations of the theory and the scientific questions it is trying to address.

**Yoga Class**  
WHERE: Lululemon, Mall of Qatar  
WHEN: Every Saturday  
TIME: 8:30am – 9:30am  
Join the complimentary in-store yoga classes. No registration or mat is required. The class runs on first come first served basis.

**Career Guidance**  
WHERE: Right Track Consultants, Al Sadd  
WHEN: Sunday – Thursday  
TIME: 6pm – 8pm  
Career guidance for course, country, college and entrance for students of Grade IX-XII, of all curriculum. Career assessments administered for stream preference, career test, branch preference, personality, multiple intelligence and learning styles and productivity. For more information, 55448835.

**Artistic Gymnastic Classes**  
WHERE: Qatar Academy Msheireb  
WHEN: Ongoing  
TIME: 3:15pm – 4:15pm  
The olympic sport using horizontal bar, rings and floor exercises on mats for the children from age 4 till 16.

**Ballet Lessons**  
WHERE: Music and Arts Atelier  
WHEN: Ongoing  
TIME: 4pm – 8pm  
For more info e-mail at registration@atelierqatar.com or call on 33003839.

**After School Activities**  
WHERE: Atelier  
WHEN: Ongoing  
Music and arts activities for students taking place after they finish their day in school includes Group Music lessons, Hip-hop, Ballet, Drawing and Painting, Drama Theatre & Taekwondo. Ages between 5 and 10 years old after school hours.

**Hobby Classes**  
WHERE: Mamangam Performing Art Centre  
WHEN: Saturday – Friday  
Mamangam is an art and performance centre started with a vision of spreading our knowledge, interests and experience in various disciplines in arts across different countries for children and adults. Mamangam has become the favourite centre for learning. We offer regular classes in the following disciplines like traditional classical and folk dance forms, art and craft, drawing and painting, personality development and public speaking, Bollywood dance, contemporary, hip hop styles, music both vocals and instrumentals. To develop health consciousness, we train them karate, yoga with special sessions for kids and adults. Mamangam has also come up with chess and robotics in regular batches in an attempt to give a better learning experience, as they sharpen their minds and brains too. For those who wish to register for more details, visit www.mamangamqatar.in

**Arabic Calligraphy Workshop**  
WHEN: Saturday – Wednesday  
TIME: 6pm  
Arabic Calligraphy workshop is back. Come and learn the artistic practice of Arabic handwriting and calligraphy at Music and Arts Atelier. The lessons will take place every Saturday, Monday and Wednesday at 6pm. For more information, contact registration@atelierqatar.com

**Dance and Instrument Classes**  
WHERE: TCA Campus, Behind Gulf Times Building  
WHEN: Wednesday – Monday  
Learn the movements of dance styles in Bollywood, Hip Hop and also the musical instruments such as Piano, Guitar, Keyboard for adults as well kids and move in the world of music. For details, contact 66523871/31326490.
A sporting chance

If there is one thing Qatar takes pride in the most, it is the love for sports. The host country of 2022 FIFA World Cup, Qatar supports all sporting events and activities including cricket, basketball, motor racing, golf and tennis among many other sports tournaments.

By Azmat Haroon

The 14th century Muslim Berber Moroccan scholar and explorer Ibn Battuta famously said that travelling leaves you speechless, and then it turns you into a storyteller. If you think about any keen traveller, it’s hard to imagine someone who doesn’t have a story to tell about a trip. People glee with excitement as they talk about the adventures—and even misadventures—encountered on a trip abroad or even within their own country.

No one who loves to travel would ever tell you that they experienced similar sensations when visiting two different places. That is because every place is unique in its own right, and so are its people, culture, food and the vibe. This vibe is a distinctive emotional atmosphere that you sense intuitively as soon as you land in a city. It is linked to a number of factors including our sense of smell, which is our strongest link to a memory—stronger than our memory of sight or hearing. The scents of a city can bring back the past and set the mood for new experiences.

If we had to describe the vibe of Doha, it would be that of a city that is laid back yet fast-paced at the same time. It is tech-savvy yet steeped in custom and tradition. But that description alone doesn’t suffice to describe the range of experiences you may encounter on a trip to Qatar.

The country rests on a peninsula and so, on one side, you get to experience the thrills of sand dunes and, on the other, also get to enjoy the beauty of its numerous beaches and wadis (valleys). This is the place where you will smell agarwood and oud in most malls and public places, with people sipping karak and minding their own business. If you have travelled to Doha before or plan on doing so anytime soon, here are some reasons we think make Qatar unique for your next travelogue.

Safety: Qatar is home to over 180 different nationalities but despite being highly urbanised and multicultural, the first thing any visitor or traveller would tell you about Qatar is that it’s the safest country in the world, especially for women and children. There are many food and public places that are open 24/7 and even if you stop over at a tea stall at 3am or head down to the Corniche, you will find that you are not the lone night-owl in the country. You can indulge in a live BBQ at one of the many beaches here or play football with your children in one of the many well-kept parks without ever having to worry about a thing.

HIA: Our first point of introduction to a country is undoubtedly its airport. Airports are more than just a port that people travel through on their way to their destination. How visitors experience an airport has a huge impact on their overall impression of a country. In many ways, it is a single deciding factor that determines whether someone would come back and so its crucial to ensure that the memorable first experience is positive ones.

Keeping that in mind, Qatar’s first point of interaction with any traveller is it’s awe-inspiring, state-of-the-art Hamad International Airport (HIA).

Although the giant 23-foot canary yellow teddy bear sculpted from bronze in the duty-free hall is undoubtedly the most insta-famous feature of HIA, the giant bear is just one of the many outstanding attractions at the world’s finest airport. The airport boasts avant-grade facilities, a welcoming atmosphere and
friendly personnel that redefine the way passengers travel. It also has two parallel runways – among the longest in the world, designed to cater to the next-generation aircrafts.

The operations at HIA have continued to increase since its inauguration in 2014, with the airport experiencing one of the busiest travel seasons earlier this year. It reportedly served a total of 9,387,314 million passengers in the second quarter of 2019, compared to 7,892,456 passengers during the same period last year, an increase of 18.9%.

Sports: If there is one thing Qatar takes pride in the most, it is the love for sports. The host country of 2022 FIFA World Cup, Qatar supports all sporting events and activities including cricket, basketball, motor racing, golf and tennis among many other sports tournaments.

The country has invested heavily in its state-of-the-art stadiums and facilities to host sports tournaments. With the 2019 IAAF World Athletics Championships beginning tomorrow in Qatar, Khalifa International Stadium, Qatar Sports Club, and Doha Corniche, will be bustling with sports fans in the upcoming week. Qatar also has the world’s largest indoor multi-purpose dome in the form of Aspire Dome. It is located in Aspire Academy in Doha and has the capacity to host 13 different sporting events simultaneously in a climate controlled arena, in addition to a full sized indoor football pitch.

Museums: If you love arts and museums, Qatar is the place to be. Qatar has created a niche for itself on the world stage thanks to the pioneering work of HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad al-Thani, the Chairperson of Qatar Museums. An array of rich influences came together to inspire the iconic design and architecture of the Museum of Islamic Art Qatar (MIA) by the world-renowned architect I M Pei. Made from limestone, the mega structure stands on the waters of the Corniche as a testament to modern Islamic architecture. The structure and its rich interior has a deep impact on visitors, one where we are compelled to reflect on life and the many mysteries of the universe.

Then, there is the Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim al-Thani Museum, which is the largest private museums of its kind in the region. The museum is ideal for car lovers, historians and culture aficionados alike.

But these are just some of the many other art spaces in Qatar as you will find almost every facility paying homage to art, culture and tradition.

Continued on Page 6

ACTION: Chi Al Shaqab

Photo by Cristina Ionascu
Tourist sites
Perhaps, the hub of all cultural and social activities in Qatar is the Katara - The Cultural Village. Keeping pace with the emerging global culture that emphasises the importance of diversity in human development, Katara Cultural Village is the largest and the most multi-dimensional cultural project of Qatar. It is that one place where people come together to experience the cultures of the world. With beautiful theatres, concert halls, exhibition galleries and cutting-edge facilities, Katara is the place to be if you want to experience a host of multi-cultural activities.

The Katara complex is built with a fusion of oriental and retro-romantic architecture, which is very different from most of Doha's spectacular cultural sites. Other than being a forum for scholars and artists, Katara aims in acknowledging and promoting cultural awareness in Qatar and raising artistic energies through the administration of different organisations, societies, and facilities. Build in a way that epitomises Qatar’s heritage, the landscape of Katara makes it an exquisite venue for cultural, creative, intellectual and artistic activities through symposiums, exhibitions, concerts and all other kinds of artistic ventures that are held here throughout the year.

—With the many streets that appear as mazes and the rough plastered buildings with shops facing the streets, Souq Waqif is a place of many wonders for visitors. If you are a first time visitor, it can be easy to lose your way but don’t let that scare you from exploring one of Qatar’s top tourist destinations. From spices, handicrafts, and souvenirs, to the top restaurants and shisha lounges, there is just about everything for everyone at Souq Waqif.

One of our favourite features of the architecture of the Souq is the rough plastered buildings with small openings facing the streets, which combine to make a walk through Souq both warm and welcoming. Souq is a popular destination for many food lovers thanks to an array of restaurants but for a majority of Doha residents, Souq is the place they go to shop for groceries and seasonal delicacies.

—The range of rocky hills on the north east coast known as Al Jassasiya is renowned for its pre-historic carvings, with a total of 874 carvings, known as ‘petroglyphs’ the earliest thought to date from Neolithic times. Discovered in 1957, they consist of various designs and patterns such as cups in rows, rosettes, ships and foot marks.

— The Barzan Towers are some of the most well-preserved 18th and 19th century fortifications in Qatar located in Umm Salal Mohammed. The recently restored towers were built between 1910 and 1916. Barzan means ‘the high place’ and the towers may have served as a lookout to protect local water sources and as an observatory to determine the dates of the lunar calendar.

—Located on the north-west coast, the immaculately restored Al Zubarah Fort and surrounding 60-hectare archaeological works is a UNESCO World Heritage site and it is one of the most extensive and best preserved examples of an 18th–19th century settlement in the region. It covers the remains of a walled coastal town that once ranked as one of the Gulf’s most important pearl diving and trading centres with links extending to the Indian Ocean. The fort houses a visitor’s centre.

—Some 60 km from Doha in the south-eastern part of the country lies one of Qatar’s most impressive natural wonders, the ‘Inland Sea’ or Khor Al Adaid. A UNESCO recognised natural reserve with a distinct ecosystem, this is one of those few places where the sea encroaches deep into the heart of the desert. Since it is inaccessible by road, this tranquil place can only be reached through the dunes. Khor Al Adaid is one of the three places in the world where the sea meets the sand dunes, with a lagoon system that is perhaps unparalleled elsewhere in the world.
Banana Island Resort by Anantara encourages Team Building activities

ADVERTORIAL

Banana Island Resort
Doha by Anantara offers guests a taste of traditional Qatari hospitality and a unique resort experience with the first and only over water villas in Qatar, as well as a dedicated wellness centre which is one-of-a-kind in the Middle East. The sanctuary island setting in the Arabian Gulf off the coast of Doha offers natural exclusivity and extensive facilities for everyone with unlimited opportunities for relaxation and adventure, wellness, romance, and pure indulgence.

Once guests are at the resort, they feel a world away from bustling Doha, yet is only a 30-minute journey by luxury ferry from Al Shyoukh Terminal located in the city’s downtown area.

Banana Island Resort remains as a top choice not only for individuals and families, but also for companies inclined to promote work-life balance to their team, offering them a unique unwinding experience.

The resort’s 800-metre pristine private shore is ideal for many different activities such as beach volleyball, beach soccer, Frisbee and badminton. You can also organise and engage your employees in a friendly tennis match.

Are you a golf newbie? Doesn’t matter! Golf is a sure-fire hit for the entire team to play at the resort’s 9-hole putting course. It is also easy to build on the team aspect of bowling and use it as a team building exercise. Cheer for your colleagues as you take turns in hitting the pins. As your team takes on the lanes, the friendly and fun atmosphere will boost every bowler to achieve that much-desired strike!

Team members can also share watersports rides like the Banana Boat and Donut Boat rides. One can also start to learn how to surf without braving the ocean — in a controlled environment with professional instructors. With the resort’s two-lane surf pool, waves can be created to suit your particular skill level, allowing guests to master the techniques more easily than being out at sea. Besides a vast array of luxurious experiences, guests and their families can also have a private bonding moment as guests can also assist their little ones at the waterpark.

Banana Island Resort well understands the value of team building activities: It builds trust, mitigates conflict, encourages communication, and increases collaboration within employees or family members. Effective team building means more engaged members, which is a great way to deal with cultural differences, thus promoting synergy and harmonious interactions among various departments.

Sharing these experiences outside the office and working towards a common goal allow bonding to happen more organically and far more effectively.

Banana Island Resort Doha by Anantara offers various team building packages including access to meals and two-way boat transfers. For inquiries, call +974 4040 5050 or e-mail at events.adoha@anantara.com.

ESCAPE TO A WORLD OF LUXURY

Indulge in an exhilarating experience of a breathtaking island that feels a world away. A sanctuary with world class facilities and limitless activities providing relaxation and adventure, wellness and pure indulgence.

Hide away in true Arabian luxury with our pool villas and over water villas setting the mood for an unforgettable stay.

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BANANA ISLAND RESORT DOHA BY ANANTARA
QATAR

The joy of being in the right place
Our community of expats shared with Community, their moments in the sun — in the land of their choice, with great enthusiasm and pride. This space, of course isn’t sufficient to capture the joy of every individual but does about enough to demonstrate the spirit of coexistence — and diversity — of Doha’s landscape.
Towards destination beaches

Sealine Beach, A Murwab Resort, weaves together ancient desert customs and more modern habits and interests.

When Qatar pops up in conversation, most thoughts go straight to the desert. Beyond that, food gets a little love, as does the shopping. But generally speaking, the list doesn’t end there. Mention Sealine—a strip of sandy beach on the country’s southern coast about half an hour’s drive from the city centre—and you’ll likely get a whole lot of stares of excitement and follow-up questions like “Let’s go?” Well, desert has a long-connected history with the Arab world, embedded in the roots, and many people worldwide travel to the desert to truly understand the reserve. Not that just that, but dune bashing and recreational activities in the desert are one of the most popular ‘to do list’ things for the people visiting Middle East.

Amidst the poetical dunes of the Arabian Desert kissed by the blue waters of the Arabian Sea, at Sea Line Mesaied lies the Sealine Beach, A Murwab resort. An unmatched resort destination for sun seekers and adventure lovers, that offers an eco-friendly destination that is as exhilarating as it is tranquil and relaxing. The recreational experience that it offers to the tourists or locals encompasses an energy haven spa, watersports, desert safaris, camel and horseback riding, banana boat rides, dune bashing and more.

The recreational facilities also include football, basketball, tennis and volleyball courts and cricket fields. It doesn’t take long to fall in love with the under-the-radar spot free of tourist clatter and full of charm. Simply put: If you’re looking for the good things in life without added fuss, Sealine Beach, A Murwab Resort is the haven you’ve been dreaming of. The Sealine draws its culture from both cultural heritage and modern influences, weaving together ancient desert customs and more modern habits and interests.

Sealine Resort offers upto five different accommodation options for its travellers, including Royal Villa, Executive Pool Villa, Executive Villa, Ocean Villa, Al Bahr Chalet, Murwab Suite, Standard King and Standard Twin. Travelling solo, with family or in groups, Sealine Resort is well equipped to accommodate you in the serene environment.

The resort has never only been about the accommodation or the kind of room you stay in – it’s about the entire unwinding experience. The Spa and Gym at Sealine Resort is well equipped to take care of your week or work tiredness and rejuvenate your seven chakras for good. The Inara Spa offers several exceptional treatments. From treadmills to Elliptical, Abdominal, Chess Press, Leg Extension, Pec Deck or Multi-Function Equipment – the gym at Sealine Resort offers just the top-notch facilities to help you with your healthy regimen. So when are you going for this ultimate experience of dining in and staying in and having fun at Sealine, A Murwab Resort?

The recreational experience Sealine Resort offers to the tourists or locals encompasses an energy haven spa, watersports, desert safaris and more. The recreational facilities also include football, basketball, tennis and volleyball courts and cricket fields.
Women are likely to respond quickly to natural disasters than men: Study

Women are quicker to take cover or prepare to evacuate during an emergency, but often have trouble convincing the men in their life to do so, a new study suggests.

“We also found that there are many barriers that disadvantage women in the event of a disaster, leaving them behind when it comes to decision-making and potentially slowing down their recovery,” said study lead author Melissa Villarreal from the University of Colorado Boulder in the US.

For the study, the researchers analysed in-depth interviews with 33 women and 10 men across two Texas towns.

Some were from Granbury, which in 2013 was hit by an EF-4 tornado that killed six people and cut a mile-wide swathe of destruction, damaging 600 homes. Others were from West, where an explosion at a fertiliser company that same year killed 15 people and destroyed 100 homes.

Residents were asked about their experiences in the midst of and the years after the disaster. While the circumstances surrounding the events were very different, common gender-influenced patterns emerged.

“Women seemed to have a different risk perception and desire for protective action than the men in their lives, but men often determined when and what type of action families took,” Villarreal said.

In some cases, this put women and their families in greater danger. According to the researchers, eliminating the male head-of-household model is crucial for speeding overall household recovery.

During recovery, women were often charged with “private sphere” tasks like putting the house back together and caring for children while schools were closed, but they often felt excluded from leadership roles in community recovery projects. – IANS
Wordsearch

ACRE  GLASS   SPOONFUL
FOOT   Quart   CASK
PECK   BOTTLE   HOOSHEAD
BALE   GRAM    STACK
GALLON REAM;   CURB
PINT   BUSHEL  INCH
BARREL HECTARE  YARD

Codeword

Every letter of the alphabet is used at least once. Squares with the same number in have the same letter in. Work out which number represents which letter.

Sudoku

Sudoku is a puzzle based on a 9x9 grid. The grid is also divided into nine 3x3 boxes. You are given a selection of values and to complete the puzzle, you must fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains every number from 1 to 9 exactly once.

Bound And Gagged

OH MAN! LOOK AT ALL THESE TACOS.

THE ... HIPSTER. THE SPICY ... IT GOES ON AND ON!

SO MANY DECISIONS. DECI... DECISIONS. HOW WILL I EVER DECIDE?

I HAVE OTHER TABLES, SIR. DOES THE "OVERBOOZE, INFERNAL" REALLY COME WITH A SIDE?

Garfield

“DEAR ASK A DOG, WHAT SHOULD I FEED MY DOG TO MAKE HIM SMARTER?”

“I’LL TAKE THIS ONE, OUIE

CAT FOOD

WHAT’ S THE ARTIST TRYING TO SAY?

THAT HE SHOULD’ VE BEEN SOMETHING ELSE.
PUZZLES

Super Cryptic Clues

Across
1. Is nude ordered to find lingerie? (6)
2. Protect a railway employee (5)
3. A girl got up about one (5)
4. Old man initially in touch is over the top (3,4)
5. Meeting to vex saint (5)
6. Engineers give up and retreat (6)
7. Keep mum confined by benefactor (4,2)
8. Ruined English female sheltered by benefactor (4,3)
9. 21 Quash urban legend started by girl (5)
10. Fly around Finland's capital - until now (2,3)
11. Turns as otter turns (7)
12. Bird, for example? About time! (5)
13. Having a go is troublesome (6)
14. One newspaper in US city that's smart (5)
15. Editing novel that may be set on fire (7)
16. The rest of the afternoon? (6)
17. Have a discussion about one sort of tree (7)
18. Conservative upset by doctor's decay (3,3)
19. Prime time under trees (5)
20. Up or down, it is unacceptable (3,2)
21. Observe the diocese (3)

Down
2. One newspaper in US city that's smart (5)
3. Movie star taking up old card game (5)
4. Attack a sailor, by the sound of it (7)
5. Exhausted boxer, say, tried to change (3-5)
6. Don't be so optimistic - it's past praying for (8)
7. Have a discussion about one sort of tree (7)
8. Mend your old-fashioned well (7)
9. Have a discussion about one sort of tree (7)
10. Have a discussion about one sort of tree (7)
11. Have a discussion about one sort of tree (7)
12. Have a discussion about one sort of tree (7)
13. Have a discussion about one sort of tree (7)
14. Have a discussion about one sort of tree (7)
15. Have a discussion about one sort of tree (7)
16. Have a discussion about one sort of tree (7)
17. Have a discussion about one sort of tree (7)
18. Have a discussion about one sort of tree (7)
19. Have a discussion about one sort of tree (7)
20. Have a discussion about one sort of tree (7)
21. Have a discussion about one sort of tree (7)
22. Have a discussion about one sort of tree (7)
23. Have a discussion about one sort of tree (7)
24. Have a discussion about one sort of tree (7)
25. Have a discussion about one sort of tree (7)

Solution

Wordsearch

Codeword

Answers
Underwater diving can be a new attraction for tourists in Qatar

Sports play an important role when it comes to the future vision of Qatar. The country’s efforts to host different sporting events are at full throttle.

Underwater diving is an activity that offers a different level of experience and sensation. It has fast become popular in the country thanks to its clean waters, beautiful marine life, unmatchable facilities and increasing interest of its diverse population in the activity.

Khaled Zaki is a Doha-based ambassador of Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI). He is an underwater photographer and scuba diver. He is also a master instructor, consultant for diving and underwater photography. He has helped thousands of elite divers over the last two decades to get many certificates. He holds a variety of grand titles and prizes in dive training and underwater filming.

Zaki has been participating in major diving and underwater photography festivals and tournaments. He has also worked in a variety of marine documentary films in the region with BBC network, National Geographic, Qatar TV, Alrayan TV and Al Kass TV. A collection of his underwater photos was also chosen for a few post stamps for Qpost.

On the occasion of World Tourism Day, Community spoke to the PADI ambassador about how the scuba diving can become an attraction for the tourists in Qatar.

"Diving is the fastest growing sport for many decades. The numbers of divers in the world increases every hour according to the PADI. According to the association, there are over 1 million PADI diving certificates issued every year and there are 6,500 PADI dive centres in 183 countries."

Showing his optimism about the future of the sport in Qatar, Zaki said: “In Qatar too, the number of divers continues to increase every year. Most of the new divers in Qatar are locals and the expatriates living and working here. There are, however, people who visit their friends and family in Qatar and try diving or want to learn how to dive during their short visit here.”

The PADI instructor further said: “While underwater diving could play a huge role in promoting and increasing tourism and economy in many sectors particularly with 20% new diving certificates being issued every year, it just needs a little set up and logistics for Qatar to become a diving destination. The country is surrounded by sea water from three sides and has very beautiful marine
Focus on Qatar

—life with many divers visiting the country. The potential diver will buy air tickets, book a room in hotels, rent a car or hire a taxi, eat in restaurants and buy gifts.

“So from my position and experience as consultant PADI ambassador, I see that creating diving traffic for organised diving packages and starting to sell and market it outside Qatar is vital.”

Further highlighting the prospects for Qatar being an underwater diving destination, Zaki said: “There are several dive spots in Qatar. However, there is always a need for more spots specially the ones with easy access from the beach and the ones that are close by and can be accessed by a short boat trip. Many countries in the world find that this is a great source of income – creating more business opportunities in all directions small and big. Since the amount of diving tourism is massive, all divers tend to travel in groups and bring more foreign exchange with them.”

Sharing his long experience of underwater diving and photography, Zaki said: “Underwater diving is exciting, adventurous, social, relaxing, and educational. The diving is very safe if it is learned and practised in a right manner. Even a five-minute reading of a newspaper article about diving can help understand the basics of the activity. We continue to notice thousands of divers jumping in the water with diving gear from the ladder to get on board after a 50 mints of a nice experience diving somewhere. Further, you will be amazed to see how many people going to different airports for diving vacation or just come back home from one. You can have a look at divers on social media handles, @PADITV Integral or Facebook and see millions of posts, likes and followers around the clock every day.

He was happy to see women taking to the sport in good numbers. “Women are getting pretty much involved now in the diving industry as divers and underwater photographers. Currently as professionals, there are too many female PADI diving instructors and dive masters. The ratio will soon reach up to 40% female and 60% males.”

Zaki also sees an environmentally positive side of the diving. “Talking about diving, we must speak about the ‘Aware Week’ that was recently observed from September 14 to 22. The week is marked every year. You will find divers from all over the world diving to clean various dive sites and beaches. There is a massive effort very obviously from all authorities to clean the beaches and then keep them clean. However, people and the communities need to do more specially for prevention of pollution by educational and role-modeling campaigns in social media, TV, and newspapers to manage waste and trash properly when you are on the beach or in the sea besides activating high value of fines for the violations and offenders.”

He added: “We organised a clean-up drive last week in Sealine area. We cleaned a couple of diving spots with dive traffic and managed to clean the sea and get around 120kg of trash, mostly plastic. I hope that many private sector organisations adopt the idea to make a positive move to reduce waste and control single use plastic as it is currently a potential hazard.”

Zaki has captured some very beautiful moments of marine life. Among many of his outstanding photos he likes the one he calls ‘JackFish Breakfast’. “This is one of my very special underwater photos as it was really one of those wreck dives in Thailand on a military vessel. After 25 minutes filming and taking photos for the wreck outlines, I located an unusual behaviour of a giant grouper ‘Hamour’. I was at 18 to 20 metres of depth. I started to decent slowly with this voice in my head saying there was something special going on down there. After I slowly got closer to the Hamour fish, it started to look at me happily, proudly but with caution and slightly opened its jaws. When I looked in its mouth I discovered a living jackfish trapped inside and ready to be smashed, chewed and swallowed in by the huge grouper.”

I didn’t think a lot before I started to point the camera and shoot few quick still-shoots and switched video light quickly and pointed it on to get some videos too before Hamour turned around its back to me to get a private moment with his catch. I was really lucky that I was ready with the right setup, light and condition besides almost half charged battery in the camera and with enough space on the SD card. You need to be always ready for the right moment and to capture it. Once I completed my safety stops and got my head above the surface, I shouted yes because I knew this photo will be a world class winner. The photo has won two world class photo tournaments and a world golden medal and was posted in different divers’ magazines in 2016.”
Doha-based diplomats praise Qatar’s hospitality and modern architecture

By Mudassir Raja

Qatar is a land rooted in tradition and culture. It is popular for having an authentic soul. It is a place where learning from the past informs the contemporary vision.

With all its traditional attractions and modern advancements, Qatar is fast becoming a place where the world comes together. Its multi-cultural demography has ushered in tastes from every corner of the globe.

On the eve of the World Tourism Day, Community approached different ambassadors and diplomats, seeking their point of views about Qatar as a tourism destination.

Belen Alfaro Hernandez, Ambassador of Spain to Qatar, is all praise for different attractions available in the country for the tourists.

About the places she likes, the ambassador said: “There are many wonderful places to visit in Qatar with its spectacular modern buildings and cultural heritage. Doha has been recently named as one of the 7 New Wonder Cities in the World.

“Souq Waqif is a great place for shopping and dining. I like the modern and traditional architecture and culture combined in every part of the city. What I like the most is many museums that Qatar has, such as the Museum of Islamic Art, the best in the world, the Museum of Arab Contemporary Art, a centre for Arab excellence, and the newly opened National Museum of Qatar, which is at the vanguard of its kind, creating a new concept of a museum.”

Ambassador Belen speaks highly of Qatar as a tourist destination. “Hamad International Airport has fast become the global gateway for overseas travellers. Qatar offers true Arabian hospitality with a rich variety of food, safari desert adventure, beaches and dunes. It needs to be mentioned here that Qatar has many attractive sporting events such as the ATP World Tour, which stops in the capital every winter, attracts tennis giants, the Qatar Moto Grand Prix, World Superbikes and Qatar Masters Golf Tournament and much more, including horse racing, camel racing and hunting season for falcon lovers.”

Ivonne A Baki, Ambassador of Ecuador, sees Qatar as a country fast becoming a tourist destination. “It is considered one of the safest tourist destinations in the world, where the tourists are able to observe the generous hospitality which characterizes the Arab culture. This has been helped by the remarkable renovation and the establishment of tourism facilities and the giant urban development. Several new sports stadiums for the 2022 FIFA World Cup, well-connected metro systems, trains in smaller areas, new hotels, new interchanges and highways and other infrastructural projects will definitely boost tourism.

No-one can overlook the efforts of the authorities in offering visa facilitation that allowed the visitors’ entry to Qatar. I can say that the Ecuadorian Government is extremely interested to open more channels between Qatar and Ecuador and has great plans for co-operation to bring more Ecuadorian tourists to Qatar.”

Ambassador Ivonne, who has been in Qatar for two years, believes the life style here has made her active and energetic. “If I would speak or recommend some landmarks to visit in Qatar, I would mention Souq Waqif – a place where you can view Qatar’s identity and traditions with its beautiful ancient-style buildings and alleys, mud-rendered shops that sell traditional garments, food and spices, and restaurants of different types of cuisines.

“I have to also mention the museums, one of the best is the new National Museum of Qatar, which is a distinctive architectural masterpiece, telling the unique story of the Qatari people from earliest era to the present day. Katara - the Cultural Village is also one of the venues that gathers Arab heritage, art and music. There are many other places that deserve to be viewed such as Qatar National Library, Banana Island, the Pearl and Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani Museum.”

Faizel Moosa, Ambassador of South Africa to Qatar, also speaks highly about the diversity at Souq Waqif – blending traditional and contemporary trends. “I have been here for two years and try to visit as many places as possible. The souq is one of my favourite destinations. You get a chance to see traditional and modern Qatar besides meeting people from diverse backgrounds. I always take my guests there for dinner. They get a chance to see the multiculturalism of Qatar.

“I also love being to Banana Island. I spend wonderful family time there. I enjoy desert safari and dune bashing with my family.”

The ambassador has been putting all his efforts to increase bilateral tourism with Qatar. “I have been at the forefront of the efforts to further the cause of tourism in both countries. As Qatar offers excellent infrastructure and modern facilities, I view it as a potential destination for African tourists. On the other hand, my country offers exciting tourist attractions – mainly wildlife safari. We have made the visa process very easy for Qatari nationals and will also make it easier for residents of Qatar.”

Though Kithsiri Athulathmudali, Ambassador of Sri Lanka, is new to Qatar, he sees a lot of attraction for visitors in the country. “I have been here only for eight days and I have visited different places and have been truly amazed by the kind of tourist attractions Qatar offers. I would like to recommend Souq Waqif for its traditional offerings and the variety of dining options. I was happy to see people from different cultures converging at one place.”

He added: “I see a lot of tourism potential in the country that offers excellent modern structures and traditional ways of life.”

Noelia Paolo Romero, wife of the Ambassador of Argentina and an active member of the international diplomatic community in Qatar, is all praise for QNL.

“The best place I have visited in Doha is the Qatar National Library. It is simply one of the most beautiful libraries I’ve seen in my life, and believe me, I know about libraries, since I’m a proud bookworm. All the facilities are incredible: the study rooms, the computer labs, and the amazing innovation stations. She added: “There are simply so many amazing places to visit in so many areas! Besides all the sports events taking place, now that winter is coming, we can all go out and enjoy those beautiful and huge parks, and walking through Katara and Souq Waqif.”