



Minister of Economy and Trade HE Sheikh Ahmed bin Jassim bin Mohamed al-Thani speaks at the opening session of the Economic and Social Council of the Arab League in Kuwait yesterday.

## Arab region witnessing major developments, says minister

**QNA**  
Kuwait

Successive developments and fast-moving events have made the Arab region the focus of attention of the international community by virtue of their effect on the overall economic conditions and the stability, security and international peace, Minister of Economy and Trade HE Sheikh Ahmed bin Jassim bin Mohamed al-Thani said.

The minister was speaking at the opening session of the Economic and Social Council of the Arab League here.

Qatar was the president of the previous summit to prepare the economic and social agendas which will be presented to the Arab summit, due to be held in Ku-

wait next Tuesday and Wednesday.

The minister said the Economic and Social Council has done its best in dealing with matters to achieve the decisions and recommendations of the previous summits, stressing that the completion of the reform and development of the Arab League, which is still at the stage of work and study is at the forefront of the council's priorities.

He added said that the challenges and risks faced by the region were a natural result of changes that took place in some Arab countries.

The minister said the Council will consider as a priority topics on the agenda that concern the Arab countries, including the Arab Customs Union, which he hoped would be completed and start function in 2015.

He said that the Economic and So-

cial Council began working towards achieving the sustainable economic development, the project to combat poverty, reduction of unemployment in the Arab countries which will contribute to addressing the problems of qualified young people and job seekers in order to provide greater social peace.

The Economic and Social Council has implemented the initiatives on food provision pursuant to the completion of the overall programme of Arab food security, he added.

The minister said the Council had faced many obstacles in the previous session but it had managed to overcome them out of concern for the completion of tasks and realise greater achievements. He expressed the hope that more achievements would be made in the 25th session of the Arab summit.



Left: The project partners include (Front row, right) Ala Ramdan, Vice President Business Development, with left Hilton Worldwide Global Head, Rob Palleschi and (Back row): Carlos Khneisser, Vice President, Development - Middle East, Andrew Clough, Senior Vice President, Development - Middle East Asian Pacific, Christian Grage, Vice President of Arabian Peninsula and owner representatives, Tim Cook, Operations Manager, and Eva Spangenberg, Business Development Director, Right: Ala Ramdan (Vice President Business Development, right) and Rob Palleschi (Hilton Worldwide Global Head, left)

### FIRST QATAR REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY INVESTS IN HILTON'S PROJECT ON QATAR'S "THE PEARL"

4th of March 2014 - At the International Hotel Investment Forum in Berlin, the First Qatar Real Estate Development Company ("First Qatar") signed a management agreement for its property on the Pearl Island with Hilton Worldwide. In the next few years, First Qatar will be investing up to \$ 260 million in the new hotel, which will be located on the artificial island "The Pearl" Qatar. "This is the most significant investment to date in Qatar for our group," says Ala Ramdan, Vice President Business Development, emphasizing the importance of the project. "With its successful track record in attracting tourism and Major Sports events, Qatar remains a very attractive market for us. The recent increase in commitment at The Pearl, driven by the new management of the UDC, has been a decisive factor that has encouraged us to increase our investment at The Pearl Qatar", says Ala Ramdan.

Qatar Tourism Dominated by Business Travelers and MICE industry  
With a share of 65 percent, business travelers shape the structure of tourism in Qatar. The MICE industry (Meetings, Incentives, Conferencing, and Events), the second strongest sector, has a share of 8 percent. Both sectors appeal to the "Hilton Doha The Pearl Residences, Qatar". Surrounded on two sides by water and a sandy beach, and located only 12.4 miles from Doha International Airport, the Hilton Doha The Pearl Residences provides private and business travelers the ideal opportunity to garner new strength be they short-term or long-term stays.

Booming Doha International Airport as Generator for Hotel Guests  
Ala Ramdan: "In 2012, 21 million people had already passed through Doha International Airport and the trend continues uninterrupted: In 2014, Hamad International Airport will open and passenger numbers for Doha are expected to rise to 30 million."

Sporting Events with Global Significance  
The hosting of high-profile sporting events has become almost a tradition in Qatar. Ala Ramdan: "Thanks to its experienced Qatar Olympic Committee, Qatar has positioned itself to be able to host major sporting events. This commitment has most significantly culminated in hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup, which will bring an expected 3.5 million visitors." Simultaneously, Fahad K. Al-Ghunaim, Chairman Et CEO, First Qatar said: "Our alliance with Hilton Worldwide combines the property development expertise of First Qatar with the famous quality and service standards from one of the industry's best known, global hospitality company's. Together we will develop a property with the right balance of quality facilities and high service standards designed to appeal to Qatar's growing numbers of leisure and business travelers."

➔ With its 445 rooms the Hilton Doha The Pearl Residences is the largest hotel in the Hilton Group in Qatar and one of the largest in the Middle East region. First Qatar is consequently continuing its expansion strategy in Qatar and the GCC region and will consider investments in the future in mature markets such as Europe.

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# 12 killed as troops clash with rebels in Yemen

Orders given to prevent Huthis from entering Amran

**Agencies**  
Sanaa

Twelve people were killed yesterday in clashes between Yemeni forces and rebels on the outskirts of the northern city of Amran, a local official and tribal sources said.

The rebels, known as Huthis or Ansarullah, had travelled to Amran to take part in a demonstration, but shooting erupted when they insisted on crossing a checkpoint to the northern entrance to the city with their weapons, an official said.

Eight rebels were among the dead, as well as two soldiers and two civilians, a local official and tribal sources said.

A senior security official in Sanaa said orders have been given to prevent Huthis from entering Amran, as the army dispatched reinforcements from the 310nd armoured brigade.

The military also set up more checkpoints around the city as rebels attempted to enter from the east and west, local sources said.

Last week, Huthis armed with assault rifles paraded through Amran

along with vehicles fitted with rocket launchers, demanding the sacking of the "corrupt government."

The Huthis have fought the central government in Sanaa for years, complaining of marginalisation under former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, who was ousted in 2012 following a year of protests.

Last month, President Abdrabuh Mansur Hadi and party leaders in Sanaa agreed to transform Yemen into a six-region federation as part of a political transition.

The rebels, who complain that the country would be divided into rich and poor regions under the plan, have been trying to enlarge their zone of influence by pushing out from their mountain strongholds in the far north to areas closer to the capital.

In early February, they seized areas of Amran province in fighting with local tribes that left more than 150 people dead.

Military sources said last week the rebel objective was to seize Amran city and, from there, lay siege to the capital.

Mediators have been trying to persuade the warring parties to retreat from their positions, which would be taken by government soldiers, but so far without success.

Gulf states and the US are concerned about violence in the country as it is home to a wing of Al Qaeda, shares a long border with Saudi Arabia and its coast runs alongside major shipping lanes.

Also yesterday, tribesmen bombed Yemen's main crude export pipeline, forcing oil flows to be stopped, industry sources said.

Yemen's oil and gas pipelines have repeatedly been sabotaged by insurgents or angry tribesmen, causing fuel shortages and slashing export earnings for the impoverished country.

Its main export pipeline carries around 70,000-110,000 bpd of Marib light crude.

"The pipeline was attacked by tribesmen. The damage is quite big and oil flow as stopped," said an industry source, declining to be identified.

A long closure in 2011 forced Yemen's largest refinery at Aden to shut, leaving the small producer dependent on fuel donations from Saudi Arabia and imports.

The demands of the tribesmen were not known, but in the past they have wanted relatives to be released from prisons or to protest against their unemployment.



Tribesmen attend a rally, which was called to renounce violence, extremism and terrorism, in Sanaa yesterday.

## New Porsche models feature uprated engines

Porsche Centre Doha of Al Boraq Automobiles has announced that the new Boxster and Cayman GTS (Gran Turismo Sport) models are available for order, with first units being delivered in May.

Featuring uprated engines and Porsche Active Suspension Management (PASM) chassis, the Boxster GTS and Cayman GTS stand as the most powerful and fastest iteration of these mid-engine sports models from Porsche.

The six-cylinder boxer engines fitted are based on the 3.4-litre units from the Boxster S and Cayman S. Thanks to fine-tuning they deliver an additional 15hp: the Boxster GTS now has an output of 330hp, and the Cayman GTS, 340hp.

Torque increases by ten newton metres in each model. The Sport Chrono package is standard. In conjunction with the optional Porsche Doppelkupplungsgetriebe (PDK) gearbox and Sport Plus mode, this translates into sprints from 0-100 km/h in 4.7 seconds for the Boxster GTS, with the Cayman GTS a tenth of a second faster.

The Boxster GTS's top speed with the manual six-speed transmission is 281km/h - the first of the new premium roadsters to top the 280km/h mark. At 285km/h the Cayman GTS is even faster. The new top mod-



Boxster GTS



Cayman GTS

els achieve an overall New European Driving Cycle fuel consumption with PDK of 8.2l/100km.

The Boxster GTS and Cayman GTS feature the PASM as standard which offers the driver a choice of sportier or more comfortable settings at the press of a button. The tyres measuring 235/35 at the front and 265/35 at the rear on 20-inch Carrera S wheels provide the perfect setup. Like other Porsche GTS models, both two-seaters come with standard sports seats and leather interiors enhanced with Alcantara elements.

The distinctive front and modified rear end, blackened bi-xenon head-

lights - with Porsche Dynamic Light System (PDLS) - and taillights as well as silky black gloss exterior lettering are subtle yet unmistakable features of these new models.

GTS has promised outstanding Porsche performance ever since the legendary 904 Carrera back in 1963. In the 1980s and 1990s the 924 GTS and 928 GTS cultivated this principle. It was reborn in 2007 in the form of the Cayenne GTS, and was subsequently also implemented in the 911 series and the Panamera.

The basic retail prices in Qatar are as: Boxster GTS - QR253,500; Cayman GTS - QR257,000.