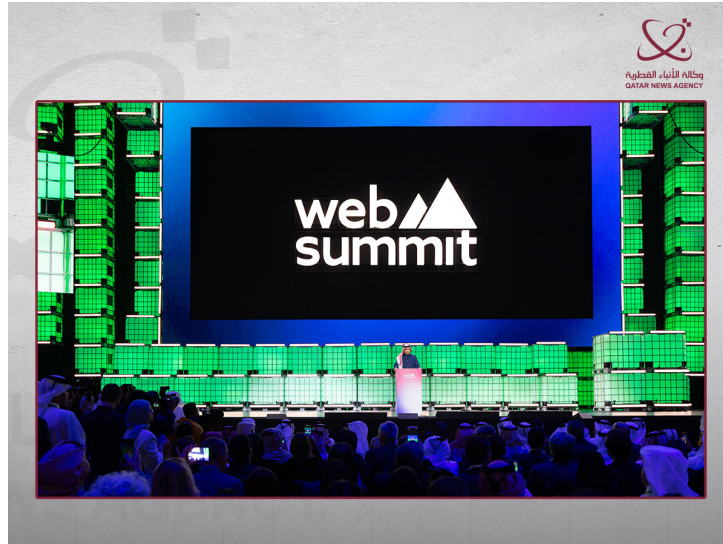

Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Opens Web Summit Qatar 2026



Published on February 1, 2026

Document Date: Mon, Feb 02 2026 11:15:08 am

Category: ,English,Qatar - ,Snippets

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DOHA, February 01 (QNA)— HE Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh

Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani inaugurated the third edition of Web Summit

Qatar at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Center (DECC), with the event running until

February 4. Recognized as the fastest-growing technology gathering in the Middle East and North

Africa, the summit brings together ministers, senior officials, global innovators, investors, and

technology leaders from around the world.

In his keynote address, HE the Prime Minister emphasized Qatar's determination to shape the future of global innovation through strong international partnerships and sustained support for startups and the broader technology ecosystem. He described innovation as "the world's most valuable currency" and affirmed that Qatar aims not merely to witness the future but to actively build it alongside global partners.

Highlighting the summit's rapid rise, he noted that within two years Web Summit Qatar has become a key platform influencing global technology conversations, partnerships, and investment trends. He pointed to accelerating global research and development spending—approaching USD 3 trillion annually—and observed that artificial intelligence startups accounted for nearly one-third of global venture capital investment in 2024. With almost six billion people now online, including 1.2 billion youth aged 15–24, he stressed the importance of equipping future generations with skills in coding, finance, and digital innovation.

A major announcement during the ceremony was the launch of 'QAI', Qatar's national artificial intelligence company. The initiative will provide sovereign AI infrastructure and advanced software systems to strengthen national capabilities and support international partners, ensuring sustainable and secure innovation.

HE the Prime Minister outlined Qatar's competitive advantages, citing exceptional global connectivity through its award-winning airline and airport, as well as advanced digital infrastructure supported by subsea cables and high-performance computing that meet the low-latency demands of AI technologies. Financially, he described Qatar as a secure and tax-efficient environment for scaling capital.

He also unveiled a significant expansion of the Qatar Investment Authority's Fund of Funds program. Following the initial USD 1 billion commitment that anchored 12 major venture capital firms in Doha, the program will be expanded by an additional USD 2 billion. To complement financial backing, Qatar will provide dedicated computing credits to startups based in the country. Startup incentives have been increased eightfold after registrations doubled over the past year, with applications surpassing 6,000.

Further reinforcing support for entrepreneurs, HE announced the extension of Qatar Development Bank's "Start from Qatar" program through 2026, alongside the introduction of a 10-year residency program for entrepreneurs, founders, investors, and senior executives. He added that company formation, banking, and residency procedures for founders registering during the summit can now be completed within days, reflecting improvements in operational efficiency.

Concluding, HE the Prime Minister invited global innovators to “put down roots and grow” in Qatar, emphasizing openness, trust, and long-term partnership.

Web Summit Founder and CEO Paddy Cosgrave described the event as one of the world’s most influential technology platforms, noting a marked shift toward a multipolar global technology landscape over the past three years. He revealed that participants from more than 120 countries are attending, including official trade delegations seeking new alliances.

The summit features approximately 1,600 startups, 85 percent of which come from outside Qatar, underscoring the country’s growing global role. Despite challenges in venture capital markets, investor participation has increased by 27 percent this year, reaching nearly 1,000 investors.

This year’s edition hosts more than 30,000 participants from 124 countries, over 1,600 startups, 800+ investors, 400+ speakers, and 180+ partners, with coverage by more than 600 journalists.

Over three days, the program spans 14 thematic tracks covering artificial intelligence, fintech, digital economy, energy, digital health, e-government, media technologies, entrepreneurship, and startup growth—reinforcing Qatar’s ambition to position itself as a global hub for innovation and cross-border collaboration.

