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## Thai Embassy donates precious 200 year-old Holy Quran to QNL



Qatar National Library (QNL) has received a precious and valuable 200 year-old Holy Qur'an as a gift from Thailand.

His Excellency Mr. Panyarak Poolthup, Ambassador of Thailand to the State of Qatar, recently visited QNL's Heritage Collection Building and donated the Holy book on behalf of his country, as part of the Thai Embassy's efforts to promote cultural relations with Qatar.

The Holy Qur'an was previously owned by Ustaz Yusuf bin Harun

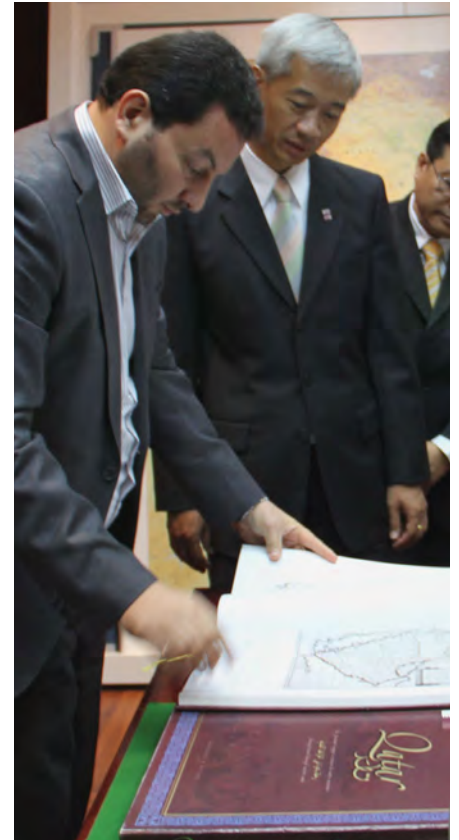
from the Southern Pattani Province of Thailand. It was hand-written in Makkah by Al Sheik Al Khatib Hud bin Mahmoud in 1236 of the Islamic Hijriyah calendar.

Dr. Claudia Lux, Project Director of Qatar National Library welcomed His Excellency Mr. Panyarak Poolthup and expressed her appreciation and gratitude to the Ambassador for the generous donation, the latest addition to the library's renowned and growing collection. "We deeply appreciate this generous donation, as it symbolises the



important historical and cultural relationship between Thailand and Qatar," Dr. Lux, Project Director of Qatar National Library said. "It also supports our vision of bridging Qatar's Heritage and Future with knowledge. This donation will not only enrich the Library's collection, but will further enhance researchers' opportunities and provide library members with access to a valuable, rare, and historical materials."

His Excellency Mr. Panyarak Poolthup, Ambassador of Thailand to the State of Qatar said "Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand visited Qatar National Library's Heritage Collection Building in January 2012 and was shown a number of ancient copies of the Holy Qur'an. Her Royal High-



ness then deemed it appropriate to link the past to the present by donating a historical Qur'an to the vast collection; bridging the cultural and academic ties between the Arab and Islamic world," His Excellency Mr. Panyarak Poolthup, Ambassador of Thailand to the State of Qatar added. "Since Muslims make up 10% of Thailand's already diverse and multicultural population, we hope that Qatar and Thailand build on a firm cultural relationship by establishing more contact with one another, increasing familiarity and enhancing our understanding of one another."

Following the presentation of the donation, His Excellency Ambassador Mr. Panyarak Poolthup toured QNL's Heritage Collection Building, which contains a rare trove of manuscripts, books, and artefacts; all documenting a wealth of Arab-Islamic civilisation and human thought.

The donated Holy Qur'an will reside in QNL's Heritage Collection Building and families, students, researchers, and tourists can see, explore, and enjoy it, along with thousands of other books. It is an unparalleled showcase of historical sources about Qatar and the Arab World and includes writings by travellers and explorers who visited the Arabian Gulf region. Amongst more than 100,000 works, the collection contains an edition of Ptolemy's Geographia, which was printed in Rome in 1478 and is the oldest printed map showing the name of Qatar, referred to in Latin as 'Catara'.

QNL's Heritage Collection Building is open for public tours every Sunday and Tuesday from 10.00am - 11.30am. For information about registering for a tour, visit [www.qnl.qa/visit-request-form](http://www.qnl.qa/visit-request-form).



## QNL celebrates Ramadan with a special “Garangao” event



In celebration of the traditional Ramadan children’s festival “Garangao,” Qatar National Library (QNL) and Qatar Foundation’s Community Services hosted a wonderful event for children. QNL, a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, rejoiced in the spirit of Ramadan with fellow employees and their families at the Qatar Foundation recreation centre.

The joyous event, which is aimed at promoting local traditions and customs, was organised in conjunction with the Supreme Education Council (SEC), under the patronage of Her Excellency Sheikha Hind bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani’s office, as part of a Ramadan reading programme.

During the fun-filled event, 800 children participated in a variety of traditional activities that have been passed down throughout the generations. Apart from receiving the traditional Garangao gifts and sweets, the children were also given complimentary books provided by the SEC as part of the proposed National Reading Campaign.

The event also featured a number of entertaining activities, including arts and crafts, storytelling, time-honoured folk songs, and amusing shows for children.

Commenting on this event, Dr Claudia Lux, Project Director of Qatar National Library, said, “We are glad to partner with the Supreme Education Council and Qatar Foundation Community Services in organising this significant event that reinforces the social bonds within members of the local community. This initiative comes as part of the National Library’s efforts to keep alive local traditions and encourage the younger generation to preserve this



form of folk heritage. The event was a memorable one for children and elders alike and QNL is planning to organise several festivities in a traditional atmosphere in the future.”

“Garangao” is a middle-of-Ramadan tradition that is widely celebrated by children across the Gulf region. On this night, children walk around their neighbourhoods singing traditional songs that mark the occasion and receive gifts and bags of sweets from their elders. This year, the QNL event was a great success and the National Library enjoyed bringing families together in a festive atmosphere to celebrate Ramadan and Garangao day.



## QNL's presence at IFLA World Library and Information Congress in Singapore raises global profile



Qatar National Library (QNL) continued to raise its global profile by taking part in the 2013 World Library and Information Congress (WLIC) in Singapore - an annual event that attracts library and information professionals from around the world to explore a wide range of library products, new technologies, books and innovative online services. QNL's participation in the 79th IFLA General Conference and Assembly comes within an active year to share the library's vision, exchange innovative ideas and learn how the most creative libraries in the world serve their communities.

The IFLA World Library and Information Congress is a kaleidoscope of activities and events aimed at offering an opportunity for all WLIC delegates to learn from each other, share best practice for global libraries and find experts from the international library sector to interact and exchange useful tips.

"Participating in the World Library and Information Congress is integral to our learning, networking and professional development," said Dr. Claudia Lux, Project Director at the

Qatar National Library. "This year, we highlighted what Qatar National Library has to offer to WLIC global delegates as well as sharing with them our implemented strategies to engage readers more effectively and bring the information service excellence to a higher level," she added.

There were a number of sessions which focused on key areas. These included, the e-book future and the e-lending models, Copyright & other Legal Matters (CLM), Management of Library Associations (MLAS) and Public Libraries and Metropolitan Libraries, where principles and innovative e-lending models and advocacy initiatives around the world were shared and presented. "The all-day session discussing the e-book future is vital for all to start developing and implanting a global digital roadmap so that even after many years down the road, the information we may need to retrieve for research analysis purposes will be as complete as it can be and easily accessible," said Dr. Lux.

Jooza Al-Marri, Qatar National Library's Head of Reference Library



Services took WLIC delegates on a virtual tour through QNL's integrated concept and iconic new building and highlighted current projects being undertaken.

Jooza Al Marri, Head of Reference Library Services, said "QNL's presentation was met with excitement as delegates from around the world learned about QNL's innovative concept integrating three core functions: the National Library, University and Research Library, and Metropolitan Public Library - each serving specific members of the community with a dedicated set of cutting-edge tools and technologies".

The event included discussions about significant and diverse topics for libraries and librarians around the world, including opportunities for modern public libraries to help advance economic and social development goals, and sessions discussing the importance of long-term preservation for the cultural heritage sector, which provided an update on the World Digital Library programme.



## QNL celebrates International Literacy Day by hosting its first book discussion event



Qatar National Library (QNL) organised its first ever book discussion event to mark International Literacy Day. Members of Qatar Foundation, the general public, QNL registered members and librarians in Qatar attended the gathering at Qatar Foundation's Clubhouse to discuss 'The Corsair' novel. Those present were given an overview of the book and then were invited to participate in a Q&A session with the author, Abdulaziz Al Mahmoud, a local Qatari engineer and journalist who previously worked as editor-in-chief of Alsharq and The Peninsula newspapers and also Aljazeera.net.

For more than 40 years, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been celebrating International Literacy Day by reminding the international community that literacy is a human right and the foundation of all learning.



Abdulaziz Al Mahmoud's book is a thrilling and engaging novel set in the early nineteenth century during one of the most important periods of history in the Arabian Gulf. The groundbreaking story unfolds against the backdrop of the brutal struggle between the British Empire and the Arab tribes of the Gulf for control of the area. It is based on the tale of Erhama bin Jaber, a historical character feared and hunted as a brigand by the British, and yet remembered today in the Gulf as a

folk hero.

The year has been an active one for QNL as it has taken a local, regional and international leadership role by hosting community events in Qatar, conducting regional workshops, and forging high-level international partnerships.

Dr. Claudia Lux, Project Director of Qatar National Library, said, "Qatar National Library is an active member of the community and a vital part of the infrastructure in Qatar's knowledge economy, empowering people to unlock their potential by providing tools for lifelong learning. Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, said the modern reader's role is not only to receive data, but to interact and produce knowledge. Events like this exemplify Qatar National Library's commitment to fulfilling that role for the modern library."

## **Qatar National Library offers country-wide access to online global bank of knowledge**

### **- ASTM Standards & Engineering Digital Library (SEDL)**



Qatar National Library (QNL) has teamed up with ASTM International in a unique and ground-breaking agreement to provide online access to ASTM standards and technical information across the whole State of Qatar.

Running since May 2013, this is the first countrywide license agreement between QNL and ASTM International, the globally recognised leader in the development and delivery of international voluntary consensus standards.

Now that QNL has integrated and migrated previous ASTM paying subscribers into the new Qatar

National Library's national licence, access is freely provided to the ASTM Standards & Engineering Digital Library (SEDL) for employees of all government departments, to the students and teaching staff of all academic institutions, and to the staff of all State-owned and private corporations working in Qatar.

There is no limit to the number of simultaneous users or to the number of documents that can be downloaded. Anyone who lives in Qatar and has a valid Qatari ID/Residence Permit is eligible for a free library registration and can then access the ASTM standards.

Access to ASTM's vast collection of technical information will help meet the commitments of Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Qatar Foundation's dedicated mission of 'Unlocking Human Potential' through education, science and research.

Dr. Claudia Lux, Project Director of Qatar National Library, said, "QNL is supporting Qatar on its journey from a carbon-based economy to a knowledge-based economy by providing diversified resources and online databases free of charge to students, researchers, and the entire community in Qatar. We are glad to expand our service offerings by partnering with ASTM to offer



everyone in Qatar full access to their digital library. This partnership comes as part of the Qatar National Library's efforts to reinforce and facilitate the development of skills that will enable residents to participate in the global knowledge economy."

James A. Thomas, President of ASTM International, said, "ASTM International is pleased to embark on this relationship with the State of Qatar. ASTM standards, and other technical information available from ASTM International, represent a collective, global bank of knowledge."

This agreement facilitates the transfer of that knowledge to government departments, corpora-

tions of all sizes, and to universities throughout the State of Qatar in a convenient and efficient way."

Available online and updated weekly, the ASTM Standards & Engineering Digital Library (SEDL), contains all 13,000+ ASTM standards, 114,000 pages of peer-reviewed journal papers, over 1,500 ebooks (STP's) and other technical information such as manuals and videos. So far, more than 160 companies in Qatar have registered, gaining access to the technical information.

ASTM standards are used extensively in Qatar within the carbon industry, widely cited in the Qatar Construction Specification (QCS), and commonly referred to in academic institutions.

ASTM is also helping to develop national standards in Qatar following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Laboratories and Standardization Affairs (QS), part of the Qatar Ministry of Environment. The ASTM MOU program supports open dialogue with national standards bodies worldwide, facilitates standards development, and, where possible, it helps to avoid duplication of work.

QNL, a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, is currently offering free online access to a vast collection of online resources, including the latest bestsellers, classical works, concerts, top academic journals and documentaries.

## Qatar Happening Magazine

### Qatar National Library Heritage collection



The QNL's remarkable Heritage Collection is a rare trove of manuscripts, books, and artefacts documenting a wealth of Arab-Islamic civilization and human thought. Among its more than 100,000 works, the collection contains an edition of Ptolemy's Geographia, which was printed in Rome in 1478 and is the oldest printed map showing the name of Qatar, referred to in Latin as 'Catara'. Entry is free with public tours every Sunday & Tuesday from 10:00 am and 11:30 a.m.

## RACING PASTS

**Jessica Davey-Quantick, Editor of Time Out Doha Magazine goes to her happy place at the Heritage Collection Building, the first physical part of the upcoming QNL**



The Heritage Collection is exactly what a library should be. It's cool with dark wooden spiral staircases, and shelves of books. Each room is slightly different, but they all have one thing in common: they're holding a massive collection of books that shine a light on Qatar's heritage. A heritage that Qatar National Library Director Dr. Claudia Lux says many people have yet to discover.

'I think what we want to show is that there is more in the culture here and it is based on the collection over years.' When Dr. Lux first started exploring the history she says she was surprised by the collections they found and they're still looking for more. She explains how, over the years, families in Qatar have accumulated great private collections and this is how the Heritage Collection came into being.

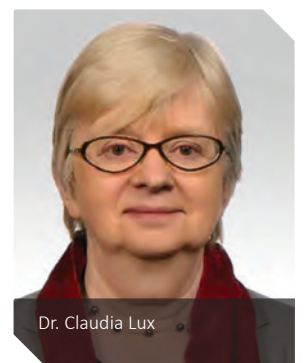
'Everyone can go there, everyone can see it. It's not just for the elite; it's for everybody. It's for Qataris and also for expats.'

The Qatar National Library is set to fully open in 2015 with plans to have more than 450,000 volumes in everything from fiction to research materials, in English and Arabic. Dr. Lux says "there will be a special emphasis on children's books so parents can read to their kids in every language".

Currently, users can access the National Library online, and get access to their materials there, including music, films, audio books and more. They can also visit the Heritage Collection.

'The Heritage Collection is a very important part of the new national library. It's something like the heart because it collects everything that is related to the history of Qatar and to the history of the region,' Dr. Lux says.

The collection has around 500 maps, including the oldest ones where 'Catara' was first mentioned, from the 15th century.



Dr. Claudia Lux



Other highlights are diaries, books and reports by people who travelled through the region, old photographs, and even travellers' medical kits. Plus, among its more than 100,000 works, it contains an edition of Ptolemy's *Geographia*, which was printed in Rome in 1478.

But in the end, it's all about the books. They have them of all ages, in many languages, and all sizes – even a miniature Qur'an that requires a magnifying glass to read.

On top of all that, Dr. Lux says, 'We have a wonderful big collection of thousands of books of how the Arab printing was developed. We also we have more than 2,000 manuscripts in the Heritage Library'.

These manuscripts, she tells us, are split into two elements: one related to the holy Qur'an and the other on Islamic studies. 'But we also have manuscripts on the Islamic sciences, such as the breeding of horses and books on science and medicine.' The library is home to a manuscript written by Ibn Sina, an Arabic philosopher and scientist, who wrote the book on Middle Eastern medicine in the 1st century.

The greatest thing about this collection in our opinion is that you can actually touch the artefacts; with-in reason and often with gloves of course. Dr. Lux says they're making it more like an interactive exhibition. 'We want to involve people,' she says. 'We want to give them training in how to write a story or do their own poems or develop a mixture of reading and creativity... So we are looking for the content. A library, as I always say, is not about books – it's about the content,' Dr. Lux added.

'Content can be in different forms. It may be that all the people who are 16 years old today don't want to

open the books but they still want the content and they'll look at it on their gadgets.' With that in mind, Dr. Lux tells us that they're making an effort to 'digitise' heritage content. They've even got some big projects with the British Library based around online concepts.

We admire all of their efforts to make this project accessible to everyone, as having a library is always important, but never more so than in Qatar, where many residents – whether nationals or expats – are unaware of the history here. 'Heritage is something that you have to preserve,' believes Dr. Lux. 'And the National Library preserves material for more than 110 years. We were supplying regional libraries and we have a very small preservation lab here. It's a very scientific activity!

'We have a prized Heritage Collection on paper, in pictures and we have it collected here in one place and we keep it for the future because, you know, maybe in 200 years, somebody wants to know what was written in Time Out, who will collect it? Who will have it? And that is what a national library is for;

we are the ones, we have to collect it.'

While Qatar has opened many other cultural icons, the literary landscape hasn't been highlighted, until now at least.

'Why will the National Library play a significant role in Qatar? the Country wants to develop especially to achieve Qatar mission 2030 and become a knowledge-based society. I think there is no way Qatar can become a knowledge society without the library,' Dr. Lux says.

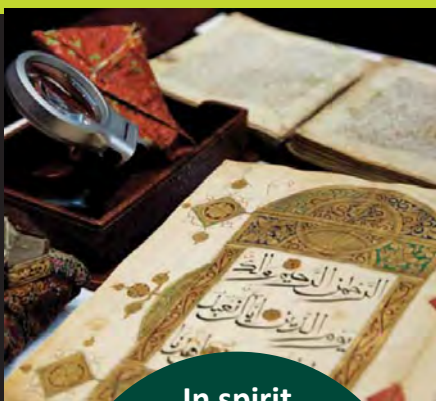
'Parents are very interested in the project as well,' says Dr. Claudia Lux, 'particularly as it revolves around books even if these books are sometimes provided electronically.'





## Finding Inspiration From the Past

**Qatar National Library preserves Qatari and Islamic heritage for the education and pride of future generations.**



**In spirit and in content, the Heritage Collection embodies our mission to bridge Qatar's past and its future with knowledge.**

A tiny copy of the Holy Qur'an, hand-written in miniscule script, is one of the items that make the Qatar National Library's (QNL's) Heritage Collection a great place to stop at.

The little copy, of which the origin is unknown, is no more than two centimetres wide, and was intricately decorated and bound in an act of dedication about 300 years ago.

It is one of many rare and beautiful copies of the Holy Qur'an which feature in the QNL's spectacular Heritage Collection.

The collection will become the heart of the new Qatar National Library, announced by Qatar Foundation in 2012, which is expected to open in the Education City in 2015. Until then the collection, based in its own building on Al Maha Street, Doha, is open to the public two mornings a week.



Mr. Saadi Al Said





Among the 100,000 documents forming the collection, are 2,500 manuscripts from the Holy Qur'an, kept in a darkened room, lined with glass cabinets.

A larger 300-year old copy of the Holy Qur'an is placed by gloved hands onto a white cushion for display. Its pages are printed like none of the others in Oriental style and decorated with gold. This rare specimen shows the journey of the message of Islam throughout the Far East.

Saadi Al Said, Associate Director for Administration and Planning at QNL, says: "The Holy Qur'an segment of the collection is important because it captures the character and values of the rich heritage and history we seek to preserve. What's notable, however, is the geographic diversity of this collection, as it contains copies of the

**The Holy Qur'an segment of the collection is important because it captures the character and values of the rich heritage and history we seek to preserve**

Holy Qur'an from Morocco, China, Egypt, India, and many other nations.

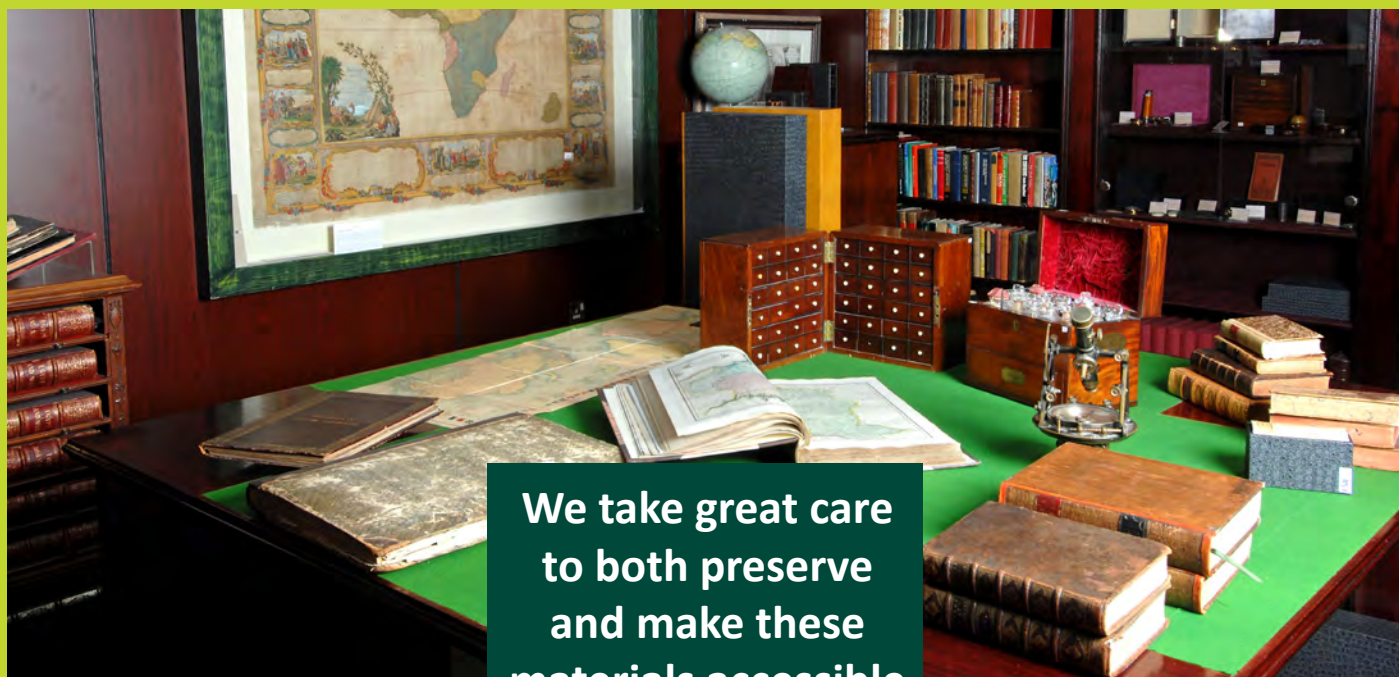
"Each design uniquely reflects its country of origin; some contain floral or geometric designs while others are written in some of the oldest Arabic calligraphy known, such as Kufic and Alenstaliq. Though Qatar National Library is an active member of the international library community, engaging regularly with our peers and other libraries around the

world, I can think of few more compelling examples of how knowledge can truly bridge cultures than this particular segment of our collection."

This bridge also becomes apparent in the early translations of the Holy Qur'an by foreign travellers, firstly into Latin, and then directly translated from Arabic into modern European languages in the 1600s.







**We take great care  
to both preserve  
and make these  
materials accessible  
to people in Qatar  
and around the  
world.**

There are also vibrant illustrations of the Procession of the Sacred Camel from Egypt for the Haaj, which show Islam through the eyes of early western travellers.

The collection also includes the first Arabic Bible printed in an Arab country, newspapers, literature, and scientific journals, as well as tools left behind by early travellers from all over the world.

Al Said's own favourite though, is the collection's oldest printed map containing the name of Qatar, referred to as 'Catara' in Latin, from 1478. Other maps up to the present day show the development of the country's cities.

Al Said explains: "The contribution of Arab and Islamic civilization, not only to Qatar and the region but to the entire world, is immense and this collection documents a large portion of that impressive, sometimes unfathomable, contribution. "Locally, many of these items instill pride in the people who visit the collection. Many of the books, maps, and manuscripts people explore are not available anywhere else and so in that sense it's an opportunity to discover knowledge you cannot discover elsewhere." The collection began several decades ago with His Excellency Sheikh Hassan Bin Mohammed Al Thani.

Now managed by the QNL, it continues to increase, with books about Saudi Arabia and the Gulf region recently added to the collection following an auction in London. The library has also recently received a donation from the Spanish Embassy in Qatar, as part of a collaboration with the Casa Árabe, which houses the International Institute of Arab and Muslim World Studies in Madrid, Spain.

Al Said says: "This collection and the larger Qatar National Library are therefore critical pieces of Qatar's knowledge infrastructure and we take great care to both preserve and make these materials accessible to people in Qatar and around the world."

The library has an important job to do in balancing the technical maintenance of the collection with its duty to make it accessible and educational for the public.

All items undergo a thorough preservation process at the facility's own on-site restoration lab.

"Depending on the status of the item – factoring in its age, condi-

tion, material, ink used, and publication date – we assess what needs to be done," he adds. "Some items just need a careful cleaning while others, usually rare pieces, need to be placed into special boxes."

Methods include fumigating books, cleaning them page-by-page with a mechanical cleaning process or even washing the pages with a special chemical solution, as well as regulating temperature and humidity.

The delicate documents at the same time are being made more accessible to the public, through digitization, and thousands of items are already featured on the World Digital Library, an initiative by the Library of Congress and Unesco, to collect and preserve heritage materials from all over the world.

Al Said says: "In spirit and in content, the Heritage Collection embodies our mission to bridge Qatar's heritage and its future with Knowledge. Libraries are very different than they used to be and people are interacting with technology and information in new ways – often using libraries to create new knowledge.

"I am hopeful that something like the Heritage Collection will be a source of inspiration, pride and information for knowledge creation."



## Qatar National Library offered training sessions on 'SpringerLink' online database last September



On September 18th, Qatar National Library offered two training sessions on 'SpringerLink' online database. SpringerLink is an eBook and journal database that specializes in science, technology, and medicine. Both training sessions were conducted in English.

## The Thanaa Award



The Thanaa Award is given to employees of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development and its centres to reward and recognize praiseworthy performance. The Qatar National Library, a member of Qatar Foundation, honoured three of its dedicated employees for their exemplary performance throughout the last year. "Thanaa" is an Arabic word which means 'praise' and Dr. Claudia Lux, Project Director of Qatar National Library, awarded certificates of appreciation to Usman Ahmed, Rowena Gerente and Hany Hanafi, praising them for their contributions to the development of Qatar National Library.

# Princess P. Saucedo

### **Tell us a bit about your self.**

My passion in life is giving to people in need; helping someone who needs a hand. Life is so short and we must make good of it every minute of the day.

### **What do you do as an Acquisitions Officer?**

Library Acquisitions broadly cover the process of fulfilling the objectives of making resources available to meet the information needs. Though often considered “back-room” function, we are part of the broad technical services in the Library, together with Cataloguing, Serials, Electronic Resources Management, etc...

My work is essentially both administrative / clerical as well as technical in orientation. I make sure to interpret the needs of staff clients and external suppliers; communicate with library suppliers on resources and prices as well as problem solving. The tasks are as broad and varied requiring attention to details and varied skills.

### **Describe your experience working in the library sector.**

I have been working as a library support staff for the last eleven years. I have worked in different departments such as Technical Services, Computer and Multimedia Services, Health & Sciences Library, and Circulation Section. I have done varied tasks such as receiving the library resources, processing the payments, processing library resources to make them ready for clients use, copy cataloguing of books, making sure that computers

are running for students and faculty to use, circulating library resources, registering patrons and supporting librarians when giving training and presentations to patrons.

### **What inspires you and why?**

What inspires me is being one of the pioneers and becoming a part of the establishment of the Qatar National Library.

Being a part of the Qatar National Library team is a great opportunity for me to share knowledge and contribute to the achievement of the Qatar National Library mission “To spread knowledge, nurture imagination, cultivate creativity, and preserve the nations heritage for the future”.

I am also inspired by being part

of the pioneers, part of whose responsibilities is putting together the heritage resources of Qatar and the Arab and Islamic World.

On a personal note, my family and friends inspire me if not because of their love and support, it's because of the values they instilled in me. People who have started from nothing and had big dreams and worked hard to fulfil their dreams, that inspires me as well.

### **What is your favourite book?**

My favourite are Reference Books such as books about health, travel, cooking, organizing and books about everyday life. So I have a very broad taste when it comes to reading.

