



Doha College Grade-8 student builds corona tracking website

By Mudassir Raja
Staff Reporter

The ongoing novel coronavirus pandemic has brought many opportunities along with the challenges. The lockdowns and social distancing phenomenon have given extra time to people for doing something different than their daily routines.

People with positive outlook have been using the available free time to do something productive and constructive. A Grade-8 student from Doha College has used

his time at home to develop a website tracking coronavirus related data. Ahmed Jihad Aldeeb, a 12-year-old student, has come up with the website coronavirus-live.io

Ahmed recently spoke to *Gulf Times* about how he came across the idea of developing a new website. He said: "During the lockdown, I decided to use my passion of programming and computer science to produce a useful tool that would help people from around the world and learn more about the current pandemic. When I first started the project I did not find any websites that

provided a lot of information and data about the pandemic. I also thought that the way different websites had displayed the data might be boring for the visitors."

Explaining what technologies he has used to develop the website, Ahmed said: "Using my knowledge of Python and Node Js, I made an API (Application Programming Interface) that scraped coronavirus data off over 215 countries from all continents, gathering data like total cases, active cases, deaths, recovered cases, and more. This data is then saved onto a database as a JSON file that would provide the data to

the website. "The website is just the interface; the experience of the user. The real challenge is how you handle the data and the back-end. Aside from this, the API consists of over more than 15,000 lines of code. It is designed in a way to retrieve data from 215 countries in almost real time."

After he finished developing the API, Ahmed wanted a way to visualise the data and make it fun for the user to understand. "Using my previous knowledge of web development, I decided to use Facebook's Javascript Library React JS, and other technologies such as HTML, CSS, Firebase

and many more. This allowed me to write efficient and responsive web apps that are both secure and reliable."

His website also includes a dashboard; where users can navigate easily and see the most recent news and updates. "I also included an interactive map, providing users with a beautiful and interesting way to check the latest updates for all countries. These are just some of the features that make it more unique than existing coronavirus tracking websites."

He was fascinated with what he accomplished by watch-



Ahmed Jihad posing with his website in the background.

ing YouTube tutorials, reading documentations and teaching himself how to program. "After the major release of my website, I have decided to work on a coronavirus vaccine API which tracks how many vaccines are in development in the world. I am also trying to experiment making a mobile app that also displays Covid-19 updates, and noti-

fies the user daily and have them aware of the latest news without having to open the app or visiting a website." Discussing his other future plans, Ahmed said: "I am also thinking about releasing the API and code to the public, so I can let other developers use it and not have to worry about having to retrieve specific data from hundreds of countries."

GU-Q faculty's work sheds new light on iconic Palestinian poet

One of the greatest Arabic language poets of the 20th century, the late Palestinian author and cultural icon Mahmoud Darwish, is the focus of a recent book titled *Palestine as Metaphor* (Olive Branch Press).

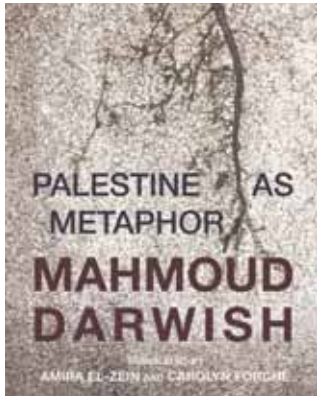
The book is a collection of interviews that have been translated into English by Dr Amira El-Zein, Arabic professor at QF partner Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q), and Dr Carolyn Forché, professor at Georgetown University in Washington, DC.

Palestine as Metaphor consists of a series of five interviews originally conducted in Arabic with Mahmoud Darwish before he passed away in 2008, and which have never appeared in English before. These interviews, explained Dr El-Zein, reveal a new understanding of the award-winning artist as both a symbol of the Palestinian experience, and as an individual.

"No matter how personal Darwish may occasionally appear in his poetry, he remains difficult to reach. These interviews, on the contrary, offer a lively picture of someone whose life was full of tribulations, joy, success, love, despair, disruptions, and hope," she said.

Dr El-Zein, an accomplished poet, has also focused academic research on the work of Darwish, a writer she has called a personal friend. The book project emerged from this friendship, and sought to provide an English language version of the interviews which had already been published in France.

"The original French copy was a personal gift from Mah-



moud who expressed his desire that I translate them into English given my knowledge and fluency in French, and based on the fact that I had already published poetry in French, and translated several works from Arabic into French at that time."

Mahmoud Darwish, she explained, is "a central figure in modern Arabic poetry. I have always strived to relay his message to the outside world because for me, every line he wrote sends a message. These translations are a humble participation in this direction."

Despite her familiarity with both the artist and his work, she added, "It is difficult sometimes to transmit into English the density of Darwish's words. His conversation in these interviews moves suddenly from the fluidity of the lyrical to the ambiguity of memory and exile."

The effort is well worth it, because "Darwish has become a very well-known figure in the West. His poetry is now taught and researched at American universities and elsewhere in the world. The number of those who

love his poetry continues to grow. Translating these interviews was a work of love."

Established in 1789 in Washington, DC, Georgetown University is one of the world's leading academic and research institutions. Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q), founded in 2005 in partnership with Qatar Foundation, seeks to build upon the world-class reputation of the university through education, research, and service.

Inspired by the university's mission of promoting intellectual, ethical, and spiritual understanding, GU-Q aims to advance knowledge and provide students and the community with a holistic educational experience that produces global citizens committed to the service of humankind.

Located in Doha's Education City, GU-Q offers the same internationally recognised Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service degree as Georgetown's Capitol Campus in Washington, DC. This unique, interdisciplinary programme prepares students to tackle the most important and pressing global issues by helping them develop critical thinking, analytic, and communication skills within an international context.

GU-Q alumni work in leading local and international organisations across industries ranging from finance to energy, education, and media.

The Qatar campus also serves as a residency and delivery location for the Executive Master's in Emergency and Disaster Management along with the Executive Master's in Leadership.

ACS Doha opens new campus at Al Kheesa

ACS International School Doha has opened its doors to its landmark new campus in Al Kheesa. Situated off Al Shamal Road, the state-of-the-art campus continues to remain well-connected to the existing ACS Doha community, while also serving the expanding Doha areas including Lusail and The Pearl.

Spanning 60,000 sqm, the new campus is designed to accommodate almost 2,500 students and has facilities designed for inside and outside-the-classroom learning.

It features a FIFA-sized football pitch, an all-weather athletic track, a large multi-purpose indoor gym and a 25-m swimming and learners' pool.

The school enjoys purpose-designed drama studios, music practice rooms, wellness and warrior studios, among other amenities. It also supplies well-equipped science laboratories and libraries dedicated to Lower, Middle and High School buildings.

The school is Covid-secure and the spacious surroundings enable students to maintain effective social distance. Kindergarten, Lower School, Middle School and High School divisions enjoy separate entrances and purpose-built facilities, keeping student groups separate. In Doha since 2011, ACS has a fine pedigree in Qatar and works closely with its three sister schools in the UK, with over 50 years' experience and expertise.

The campus has been designed by internationally-renowned architects Broadway Malyan to meet ACS's exacting curriculum and community requirements. The indoor and outdoor facilities offer extensive academic and extra-curricular choices and deliver the ACS trademarked standard of education.

Commenting on the start of the new school year, Robert Cody, Head of School at ACS, said: "We are excited to welcome back the ACS community to our new campus. The new ACS Doha campus embodies the spirit of learning and I know our community will embrace the outstanding facilities at the new school. The inspiring atmosphere and additional facilities created by our new physical environment are designed to cater to our students' various talents and creative outlets, to promote their academic growth. It has enabled us to add even more choices and options to our curriculum for new students."

Sponsor of the new school, Muhammed Sultan al-Jaber, Chairman of Al Jaber Group, whose companies are a leading provider of construction and consulting, trading, production, hospitality and other services in Qatar, said: "The new ACS Doha school is a positive development for ACS, and for education in Doha."

"This state-of-the-art campus will benefit the entire school community and I am proud to have partnered with ACS and to have delivered this exciting new development as part of its long-term vision for Qatar. I believe this new campus is a benchmark in Doha, contributing significantly to the city's education provision, and Qatar's vision."

Tim Cagney, Chief Executive, ACS International Schools, added: "I am immensely grateful to our sponsor, Al Jaber, for his commitment and unwavering support to this ambitious project. Since we opened nine years ago, ACS Doha has distinguished itself by delivering a rigorous academic education that respects



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the diversity of its student body, and the individuality of learning styles.

The move to our landmark new campus enables us to realise our vision and the future of education in Qatar. By creating environments that are innovative and nurturing, we can help our students as curious and confident learners to pursue their dreams, and get ready for what comes next."

ACS Doha offers all IB programmes and continues to devel-

op ways to enhance its students' academic experience. Currently, it is the only school in the country to be offering both College Board's Advanced Placement Programme (AP) as well as the International Baccalaureate Career Related Programme (IBCP), allowing students to select either track better-suited to their individual academic aspirations. With the establishment of the new campus, ACS Doha looks forward to enriching its students' lives.



Members of Indian Cultural Centre and guests in a group photo with Mohamad Habibun Nabi, centre in the first row holding the memento.

ICC bids farewell to long-time resident

The president and managing committee members of Indian Cultural Centre (ICC) recently bid farewell to Mohamad Habibun Nabi, a long-time resident of Qatar, who later left for his hometown Aligarh.

S Xavier Dhanaraj, First Secretary Consular & Community Affairs and Coordinating Officer of ICC, was the chief guest of the occasion.

He thanked Habib for his excellent contributions to the Indian community in Qatar and later presented him with

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a plaque of appreciation. Habibun has been in Qatar for 24 years and in total for 42 years in the Gulf region including Iraq, Oman and Qatar. He worked as an engineer with Kahramaa in Qatar.

He was the general secretary of Indian Sports Centre. He also held the position of ICC general secretary in 2008 and served as head of sports in 2006.

Habib expressed his gratitude to the Indian ambassador, staff and officers of the embassy, ICC managing committee and the community in general for their continuous support, motivation and appreciation of all his activities and efforts.

Manikantan AP, ICC president, in his welcome note, recollected the enormous contribution of Habib to the community.

Habibun Nabi receives ICBF Long Term Service Award



Indian Community Benevolent Forum (ICBF) recently honoured Mohamad Habibun Nabi, a prominent community activist, with the 'ICBF Long Term Community Service Appreciation Award'. The award was handed over to Habib by Hassan Chogule, founder member and past president of ICBF, in presence of P N Baburajan, President of ICBF, and the current ICBF committee. Nabi served in the past as vice-president of ICBF, general secretary of Indian Cultural Centre, and also as general secretary of Indian Sports Centre.