

HBKU College of Islamic Studies discusses progress of major project on Covenants of Prophet Muhammad



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THE College of Islamic Studies (CIS) at Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) recently hosted a closed online discussion on one of its most groundbreaking projects to date.

In his opening statement, Prof. Emad Shahin, interim provost and dean of CIS, explained how the college is leveraging partnerships with different religious communities and academic institutions to build a portal at the Qatar Digital Library on the Covenant of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Featuring a panel of prom-

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inent faith actors and ethics consultancies, 'The Covenants of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)' webinar summarised and debated the main findings of research conducted by CIS' Prof Ibrahim Zein, professor of Islamic Studies and

project leader.

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Co-researcher Ahmed El-Wakil presented the research journey to date in collating copies of the Covenants from a wide range of eclectic libraries, including from Armenia, Turkey, Greece, Lebanon and Italy, essentially forming the largest collection of the Covenants in a university to date.

Participants engaged in an enriching discussion, which

saw the involvement of members of various religious, research and ethics institutions, including the Queen's Counsel, Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies, Greek Orthodox Community of Qatar, Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch, St. Joseph Manuscript Conservation Centre, Muslim American Society of Minnesota, Caux Round Table for Moral Capitalism, Centre for Ethical Orientation, ehir University, and Griffith University.

CIS serves as a hub for contemporary Islamic studies that promotes critical dialogue on topical issues of global relevance.

GU-Q student volunteers hold virtual summer camp for children of staff

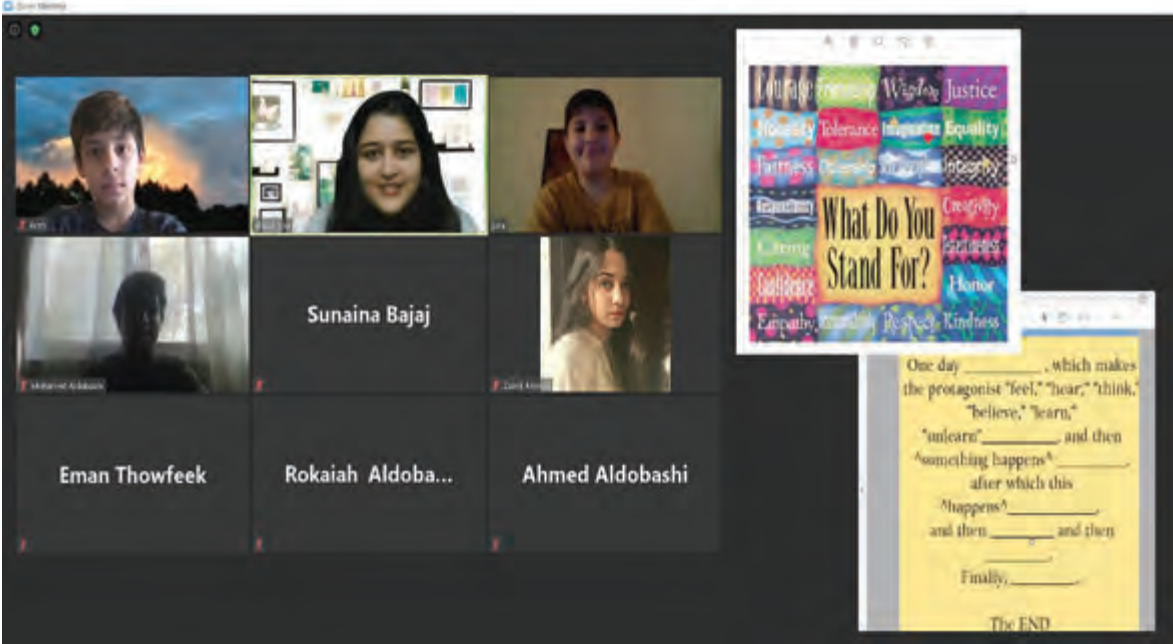
The 'Hoyacation' offered a variety of enrichment opportunities for the children staying home

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WITH classes in diplomacy, creative writing, photography and more, a virtual summer camp run by Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q) student volunteers called Hoyacation, offered a variety of enrichment opportunities to the children of faculty and staff facing a long and isolated summer at home.

More than 40 participants aged six to 16 have enrolled in the 12 different workshops that are being held over six weeks in June and July. The programme, which combines the word Hoya, meaning a Georgetown student, and vacation, gave participants the option of mixing and matching a combination of interactive live courses for a tailor-made virtual summer camp experience.

Programme organiser Afsha Kohli, the associate director for student development at Qatar Foundation partner institution GU-Q, said: "This programme has been such a surprise hit, and our eight GU-Q student volunteers and many young participants have all gained so much from the experience. This programme is just



Students attend a class on creative writing during the summer camp.

one of the many ways our community has come together to uphold our education and service mission during this crisis."

In international politics major Khushboo Shah's (GU-Q'22) creative writing course, aspiring writers are inspired by idea prompts, finding ways to connect by sharing

their work digitally. "It's important for each individual to develop their creative voice", she said, because young people "can use writing as a way to understand the world around them better."

Managing three courses aimed at older students, Model United Nations, Event Planning, and

Graphic Design; Fiza Shahzad (GU-Q'21) said she took on the teaching challenge because "I am a big believer of Georgetown values, particularly 'People for Others'. The International History major encourages creativity and interaction to be engaging and to create a real classroom experi-

ence.

Iman Ismail (GU-Q'22) was already interning virtually with the US Department of State's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) with their EcoLearn programme since last year, where she taught local classes on environmental awareness and sustainability to kids aged 4 to 15. Now she's finding new ways to share what she's learned. "The Hoyacation programme gave me the chance to continue teaching throughout summer, and with my internship advisors permission, I jumped on this opportunity."

For participating high school student Aya, the crisis meant an end to summer plans.

"I was worried, because this is the last summer before I graduate next year, and I really wanted to spend this time brushing up my skills and working on my college applications. I love that I can now add introduction to Persian, graphic design and event planning to my experiences. This summer wasn't a loss after all."

The GU-Q Pandemic Panels including a full list of the participating scholars are available for viewing on www.qatar.georgetown.edu/pandemicpanels.

CMU-Q launches digital showcase of research works done by students

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CARNEGIE Mellon University in Qatar, a partner university of Qatar Foundation, transformed its annual research symposium, Meeting of the Minds, into a digital showcase of student work.

Meeting of the Minds was started on Carnegie Mellon's main campus 25 years ago as an opportunity for students to present their work to the community, and it has been an annual event at the Qatar campus since 2007. While the pandemic restrictions prevented an in-person event, it was critical that CMU-Q found a new mode for students to share their projects.

Michael Trick, dean of CMU-Q, notes the importance of sharing re-

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search with the community: "At Carnegie Mellon, our research is driven by challenges and questions in the real world. We encourage our students to communicate their complex, sometimes very technical, projects to a general audience. It is the connection between research and people that makes our approach to research distinctive."

There are 27 student projects showcased on the Meeting of the Minds website, including project abstracts, posters and faculty advisors.

In past years, judging panels of both external and CMU-Q experts have critiqued the projects and determined award winners. This year, CMU-Q opted for a more collaborative approach.

"While awards have their place, this year our students have overcome the obstacle of a pandemic to finish their projects and present their work beautifully", said Trick. "At its essence, research is about collaboration, and the Meeting of the Minds website reflects the Carnegie Mellon culture of mentoring, teamwork and innovation, especially in challenging times."

The Meeting of the Minds 2020 showcase can be found at www.meetingminds.qatar.cmu.edu.

MES principal shares tips for competency-based learning

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HAMEEDA Kadar, principal of MES Indian School and convener of CBSE Principals' Forum Qatar Chapter, presented her views on effective remote learning through visual thinking for competency-based learning, at a webinar organised by the forum for CBSE teachers, in cooperation with Gulf Sahodaya recently.

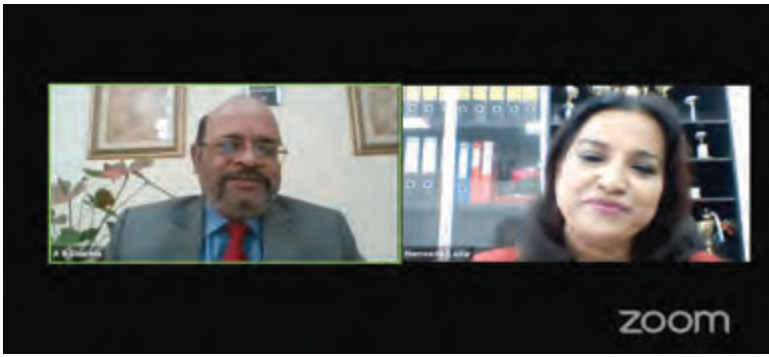
The webinar, titled 'The Influence of Remote Teaching Tools in Competency-Based Education', was moderated by A P Sharma, princi-

pal of Birla Public School.

Dr Subash B Nair, principal of Shantiniketan Indian School, welcomed the participants and gave the introductory note.

Hameeda Kadar, in her presentation, dealt with how visual learning drives motivation and makes learning interesting and joyful; the effective use of appropriate visuals and the impact they have on the learners; and the significance of visuals and the importance of encouraging visual thinking in early childhood classrooms.

The panellists of the webinar, Hameeda Kadar, Asna Nafees



(principal of DPS Modern Indian School), Shifa P Shaikh, (principal of Loyola International School) and Meenal Bakshi (principal of DPS Monarch International School), detailed their views on 'Effective

Remote Learning Through Visual Thinking for Competency-Based Learning', 'Remote Learning Tools and Inclusive Competency-Based Education', 'Effective Use of Appropriate Tools for Competency Building in Remote Learning' and 'How to Design a Competency-Based Assessment in Remote Learning', respectively.

The attendees of the webinar included principals, vice-principals and teachers of CBSE schools. The programme also included a question-answer session, where the panellists answered the queries of teachers.

Doha College secondary school secures its third Green Flag

One of the oldest international schools in Qatar, Doha College was the first in the country to be awarded the Green Flag status by FEE

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THE Qatar Green Building Council (QGBC), who act as national operator for the Eco Schools Programme in Qatar, has confirmed last week that Doha College secondary school has been successfully accredited with their third Green Flag award.

Doha College, one of the oldest international schools in Qatar, was the first in the country – back in 2016 – to be

awarded the Green Flag status by FEE (the Foundation for Environment Education, the world's largest organisation of this kind). Since then, Doha College has had its Green Flag renewed in 2018 and secured one for its primary school in the same year.

To hold onto the Green Flag this year was a particular challenge, not only because of the school closure due to COVID-19, but also because of the move to Doha College's new campus in Al



(File Photo) To hold onto the Green Flag this year was a particular challenge, not only because of the school closure due to COVID-19, but also because of the move to Doha College's new campus in Al Wajba, which the assessors could not yet visit

Wajba, which the assessors could not yet visit. So the fate of the Green Flag rested on the persuasion power of Doha College's Eco Prefects, who made an exceptionally well-prepared presentation based on their work --carried out in the past and planned for the

future -- on waste minimisation, marine and coast, food sustainability and climate change.

In his congratulatory letter to the school, QGBC Director Meshal Al Shamari stated: "Your third Green Flag reflects your continuous commitment to teaching next generations the sustainable habits to make a difference and increase the awareness to global issues and literacy on environmental education."

Dr Steffen Sommer, principal of Doha College, shared his delight at the good news: "Having been invited to attend the evaluation of the Green Flag assessors, I was absolutely elated to hear the very detailed and well thought out presentation by our stu-

dents, who have taken responsibility for various areas of the Green Flag requirements. The depth of thought, the leadership of students from across year groups that went into the work completed in the last year in readiness for the application for the Green Flag was absolutely phenomenal.

"It proved that our students are indeed high performance learners who think for themselves, make decisions and work towards a common goal, and motivate the younger students. They also presented their findings in a cogent and precise manner. It is great to have yet another Green Flag, but it is even greater to be the Principal of a school that has students of that calibre."