

The great leap forward

Doha

Increasingly under the international spotlight after earning the right to host the 2022 World Cup, Qatar is leaving no stone unturned in its quest to become a sporting super-power.

The oil and gas-rich Arab emirate has set itself lofty goals for such a tiny country.

With a population of around two million people, of which only 300,000 are Qatari nationals, outnumbered approximately six-to-one by foreign workers, Qatar certainly does not have the kind of wide pool from which to pick and choose talent that countries such as China or the US enjoy.

Yet just as Qatar has proved keen to recruit foreign nationals to boost its sporting teams, so too has the emirate scouted the world to find the best people in a raft of pursuits outside the direct sporting sphere but related to it that could help enhance its competitive ambitions.

Whether doctors, coaches, strategists or specialists in any number of walks of life, Qatar has attracted them to the blazing heat of the desert to take part in

the most ambitious of sporting projects.

One such project is Aspetar, a clinic for top-level sportsmen.

According to its director of the National Programme of Sports Medicine, Hakim Chalabi, clubs such as Chelsea, Arsenal, Liverpool and Paris Saint-Germain, as well as the Algerian national team, send their footballers to be treated at the clinic.

"This is the Silicon Valley of sports medicine," said the Frenchman, a former doctor at both Paris Saint-Germain football club and Stade Francais rugby club.

"When you want to move towards excellence you have to try to find the best wherever you can."

"Their strategy has been defined here, now they need ... the human resources."

"And we're going to look for them where they are the best, in Qatar or elsewhere."

According to Al-Ahly's Iranian international footballer Ferydoon Zandi, the clinic has also attracted top sportsmen from the United States.

"Many athletes come from



A computer generated image hand out, released by the Organising Committee of Qatar 2022 shows people outside the stadium to be built in Al-Wakrah for the Qatar's 2022 World Cup.

abroad for treatment because they know that the infrastructure and physiotherapy is good," he said.

"The other day, Shaquille O'Neal was in front of me. He wanted to see the equipment."

Never accept second best

Nearby, the anti-doping laboratory of Doha is aiming to earn World Anti-Doping Agency (Wada) accreditation within a year and become a reference point within the Gulf area.

We have managers who

never accept being second best," Dr. Mohammed Alsayrafi, the centre's head, told AFP.

"Every time I'm given a project I assume that if I can't be number one, then I shouldn't exist."

More than \$150 million has

been invested in machines and the building, but the human investment has no price."

Yet in a country where the majority of the population consists of foreign male labourers and where the scorching hot summer climate

Bahraini students to participate in international event

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Four Bahraini students are gearing up to take part in the international debate and negotiation competition which would be held in France next month.

Students Marwa Alawi,

Reem Altahoo, Ali Faeq Ali and Seddiqa Al Busahail became the first students in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to be selected for the competition titled 'International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Mediation Competition,' which would be held on Feb. 7. The contest

will test the contestants' negotiation and debating skills in forms of scenarios and role play. The decade old competition, which is held annually at the ICC headquarters in Paris, will bring together 500 participants from universities of more than 40 countries.

Speaking to *DT News*, Bahrain Polytechnic lecturer Yasmin Sebah said, "Competitive debate is a challenging and highly rewarding activity for students who involve in it. It develops student's analytical skills, research skills, public speaking skills and a great

way to build friendships through team work."

Ms. Sebah said that the competition like this in Bahrain on a national level would certainly boost the talents and further help them shine on international platforms.

Bahrain Polytechnic's

acting Chief Executive Officer Dr. Mohamed Al Aseeri said that the Polytechnic will be proud to participate in the event. "I'm excited as our students would be the first ones to represent the Kingdom in this competition," said Dr. Al Aseeri.