

India, Qatar to double trade to \$28bn in next five years

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NEW DELHI: India and Qatar on Tuesday agreed to double bilateral trade to about \$28 billion in the next five years and the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) proposed to increase its investments in Indian infrastructure projects, smart cities, food parks, start-ups, and new technologies such as artificial intelligence, robotics, and machine learning.

Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal said that India and Qatar share a long history of successful energy trade, but the future of this partnership would extend beyond hydrocarbons to cutting-edge sectors.

Goyal said India-Qatar future partnership will rest on the pillars of sustainability, technology and entrepreneurship, and energy. He was speaking at the inaugural session of the India-Qatar Business Forum in New Delhi on Tuesday in the presence of his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Faisal bin Thani bin Faisal Al Thani, who was the Guest of Honour at the session.

Later, citing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's personal welcome to Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani at the airport as a sign of strong partnership ahead in lines with the changing global priorities, he said: "I think, in coming days there would be significant growth in both trade or investments between India and Qatar." The Amir of Qatar is on his second state visit to India from 17-18 February 2025.

Goyal said India and Qatar are in a position to complement each other's strengths and can be partners in driving innovation and shape the industries of tomorrow. As both nations embark on a transformational transition, this partnership will

Boost for bilateral ties

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held wide-ranging talks with Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, and the two sides announced elevation of their relationship to the level of strategic partnership



Two agreements signed

- 1 On establishing strategic partnership
- 2 On Revised Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement

Five memoranda of understanding to strengthen economic partnership, step up ties in areas such as management of archives, and cooperation in youth affairs and sports

"Amir of Qatar HH Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani... is also committed to a strong India-Qatar friendship. This visit is even more special because we have elevated our ties to a Strategic Partnership"
— NARENDRA MODI, Prime Minister

rest on the pillars of entrepreneurship, technology, and sustainability, he added.

Goyal invited Qatar to explore opportunities in India's dynamic and resilient economy and suggested to create a joint working group on sectors of mutual interest. The joint business forum was jointly organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), an arm of the Union commerce and industry ministry.

Speaking on the occasion, Qatari commerce and industry minister Sheikh Faisal bin Thani

bin Faisal Al Thani highlighted that the relationship between the two countries and said it is a tradition built on mutual respect, shared interests and a commitment to bolster economic cooperation.

According to government data, the bilateral trade between the two countries was over \$14 billion in 2023-24. India mainly imports energy such as liquefied natural gas (LNG), liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), petrochemicals, plastics, and aluminium articles from Qatar.

It exports cereals, copper, iron and steel, vegetables, fruits, spices, and processed food prod-

Highlights of discussions

Trade The two countries have decided to set a target to double bilateral trade from the current \$14 billion to \$28 billion over the next five years.



Energy The two leaders discussed ways to strengthen energy partnership including "exploring mutual investments". In Feb 2024, Qatar Energy and Petronet LNG Limited signed an agreement for supply of 7.5 million metric tonnes per annum of LNG from Qatar to India for 20 years starting 2028



Investment The PM and the Qatari Amir identified a number of areas in which the Qatar Investment Authority can increase investments, including infrastructure, ports, shipbuilding, energy including renewable energy, smart cities, food parks, start-ups, and new technologies such as artificial intelligence, robotics, and machine learning



Retail Ventures Limited (RRVL) in August 2023, \$393 million in IndoSpace Logistics Parks in September 2023, \$50 million in Global Dental Services in November 2023, and \$140 million into Shriram Housing Finance Ltd in January 2025, he said. QIA also invested \$450 million for 25.1% stake in a unit of Adani Transmission Ltd in February 2020, he added.

Indian companies such as Larsen & Toubro, Voltas, Shapoorji Pallonji, Wipro, TCS, and Tech Mahindra are invested in Qatar. Indian companies have invested \$356 million in the country between 2017 and 2025.

"The India-Qatar business delegation will serve as a catalyst for stronger partnerships," said DPIIT joint secretary Sanjiv.

Qatar's participation in Startup India Mahakumbh 2025, which is scheduled on April 3-5, 2025, will serve as a landmark initiative fostering deeper startup collaborations and attracting Qatari investments into India's technology and innovation ecosystem, he added.

Qatar is the largest supplier of LNG and LPG to India. In 2023-24, it supplied 10.91 million metric tonnes (MMT) of LNG and 4.92 MMT of LPG, which was about 46% and 26% of India's LNG and LPG imports, respectively. In 1999, then Qatar-Gas and Petronet LNG signed a long-term contract for LNG sale and purchase agreement for supply of 7.5 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA) of LNG to India up to 2028. In February 2024, a new deal was signed between Qatar Energy and Petronet LNG to extend the deal up to 2048 with total value estimated at about \$78 billion. In December 2024, GAIL signed an agreement with Qatar Energy for purchase of 60 cargoes over the next five years.

India, Qatar aim to double trade to \$28 bn in 5 years

FE BUREAU

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INDIA AND QATAR are exploring the possibility of signing a free trade agreement (FTA) in future and the two nations have set an aim of doubling bilateral trade to \$28 billion in the next five years.

“While there are talks going on for the India-Gulf Cooperation FTA, India at a bilateral level with Qatar has decided that we will look at the possibility of an FTA in future,” secretary (CPV and OIA) in the external affairs ministry Arun Kumar Chatterjee said at a briefing on Tuesday.

The announcement came after Prime Minister Narendra Modi held talks with the Amir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani during his ongoing visit here.

Qatar is also a member of the six-nation GCC, with which India has been in discussions for the FTA since 2004.

Apart from the FTA, Qatar's commerce and industry minister Sheikh Faisal bin Thani bin Faisal Al Thani said his country is also

ready to take steps to speed up negotiations for a new bilateral investment promotion and investment agreement.

After the bilateral and delegation-level talks between the two leaders, both sides also signed the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement and a pact to elevate the relations between the two countries to the strategic partnership.

Total trade between India and Qatar in 2023-24 stood at \$14.08 billion, with India's imports at \$1.7 billion and exports at \$12.3 billion. India's imports from Qatar include LNG, LPG, chemicals, petrochemicals, plastics and aluminium articles. India's exports to Qatar include cereals, cop-

per, iron and steel, vegetables, fruits, spices, and processed food products, electrical and other machinery, plastic products, construction material, textiles and garments, chemicals, precious stones, and rubber.

Qatar is the largest supplier of LNG and LPG to India. In February last year, a new \$78-billion deal was signed between QatarEnergy

and PetronetLNG. The agreement extends the LNG supply deal, which is expiring in 2028 to another 20 years.

In December 2024, GAIL signed an agreement with Qatar Energy for the purchase of 60 cargoes over the next five years. Haldia Petrochemicals (HPL) and QatarEnergy signed an agreement for supply of two million tonne Naphtha.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) from Qatar in India stood at \$1.5 billion, while Indian companies have invested \$3,356 million in Qatar. Apart from FDI, the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) has made substantial investments in Indian companies such as Reliance Retail Ventures, Adani Transmission, Sriram Housing Finance and Swiggy, among others.

The discussions between India and Qatar focussed largely on trade, investment and energy.

The Amir arrived here on Monday evening, his visit coming almost a year after Modi had visited the Gulf nation in February 2024. Extending a rare gesture of hospitality, Modi received him at the Delhi airport on Monday evening. He welcomed him with a warm handshake and hug, displaying the bonhomie between the two leaders.

The two nations are also exploring the possibility of signing a free trade agreement

