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Prime Minister Narendra Modi received Amir of Qatar His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad AL Thani in New Delhi on Monday.



The ceremonial welcome given to the Amir of Qatar His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad AL Thani at Rashtrapati Bhawan by President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Qatar to invest US\$10 billion in India

NEW DELHI: The Qatari delegation headed by His Highness Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani has commitment to invest US\$10 billion in India and both nations plan to double their \$14 billion bilateral trade over the next five years.

Earlier, India and Qatar upgraded their relationship to a strategic partnership through bilateral talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Qatar Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani.

The average trade exchange between the two countries has reached about \$16 billion annu-

ally in recent years, with Qatari energy exports to India constituting a significant portion of this

partnership, six other deals were signed including a revised agreement for avoidance of double

tar Bilateral Investment Treaty.

Qatar is the fifth GCC country with which In-

respective positions on the Gaza situation and emphasising the need for dialogue and diplomacy to resolve conflicts.

“They agreed to enhance co-operation in information and intelligence sharing, developing and exchanging experiences, best practices and technologies, capacity building and to strengthen co-operation in law enforcement, anti-money laundering, drug-trafficking, cyber-crime and other transnational crimes,” said the joint statement. Modi and the Amir spoke about promoting co-operation
(Cont. on page-7)

India offers e-visa for Qatari nationals

NEW DELHI: The government facility for Qatari nationals with embassy in Qatar announced The visa application can indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa. applying e-visa are available Embassy of India will continue for Qatari nationals as usual,



of India has started e-visa fa- immediate effect, the Indian on its X account.

be submitted at <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa>. The process and conditions for in detail on the portal. The to provide paper visa services the post added.

exchange. Qatar is a vital partner in India’s energy security, providing around 45pc of India’s LNG imports.

Apart from the establishment of strategic

taxation and another for **EDIT ON PAGE 2**

financial and economic collaboration. They also agreed to expedite negotiations for the India-Qa-

dia has signed a strategic partnership agreement, after UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Kuwait. Modi and Al-Thani discussed the West Asia situation, reiterating their



Prime Minister Modi the Amir of Qatar HH Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad AL-Thani witnessing the Exchange of MoUs between India and Qatar at Hyderabad House in Delhi.



President Droupadi Murmu with Amir of Qatar His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani in New Delhi .



Amir's fruitful visit

His Highness Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani's visit to India came at an ideal time aligning with his keen interest to expand Qatar's strategic relations with various active political and economic powers worldwide, particularly India. During this visit, His Highness Amir held talks with President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Foreign Minister Jaishankar and several senior government officials on bilateral relations and ways to foster them in line with both countries' mutual interests.

At the end of Amir's current visit In a joint statement on Tuesday, the Qatar side commended the steps taken by India in making a conducive environment for Foreign Direct Investment and Foreign Institutional Investment and expressed interest to explore investment opportunities in different sectors, including infrastructure, technology, manufacturing, food security, logistics, hospitality and other areas of mutual interest. In this regard, the Qatar side announced a commitment to invest US\$10 billion in India. The Indian side also appreciated Qatars efforts in enhancing its investment environment and its initiatives to attract Foreign Direct Investment. India also recognised Qatars growing role as a regional hub for goods and services, leveraging its strategic location, world-class infrastructure and business-friendly policies.



Regarding the HH Amir's current visit, Prime Minister Modi said: "I had a very productive meeting with HH Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani. Under his leadership, Qatar has scaled new heights of progress. He 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."

Economically, India is Qatar's second-largest trading partner, with more than 20,000 Indian SMEs operating in Qatar. These companies include both fully owned enterprises and joint venture companies. Trade and economic co-operation, along with mutual investments, form the cornerstone of the growing commercial ties between the two nations. The average trade exchange between the two countries has reached about \$16 billion annually in recent years, with Qatari energy exports to India constituting a significant portion of this exchange. Qatar is a vital partner in India's energy security, providing around 45pc of India's LNG imports.

Qatar and India share long strategic relations based on mutual interests, trust, respect and fruitful co-operation, with both nations keen on raising these relations to new heights that meet the two peoples' aspirations.

The Qatar-India relations have been remarkably evolving, particularly following His Highness the Amir's state visit to India in March 2015, which gave a strong impetus to bilateral ties and laid the foundation for a new phase of relations. The discussions during this visit had led to the signing of several agreements and resulted in a joint statement expressing satisfaction with the current state of bilateral relations, which are further strengthened by regular high-level visits.

Furthermore, both sides agreed to increase high-level bilateral visits in political, defence, security, trade and economic relations and to strengthen people-to-people ties. They emphasised the importance of building a strong partnership to meet their commitments toward promoting peace, stability, and security in the region and the world in the 21st century.

No doubt, the current India visit was a highly fruitful visit by HH Amir of Qatar.

LIPSYNCH

"Don't abuse the kindness of a friend."

— An Arab proverb

Official reception for Qatar Amir

NEW DELHI: An official reception ceremony was held for His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani upon his arrival at the Rashtrapati Bhawan here.

His Highness the Amir was received by President Droupadi Murmu PM Narendra Modi. The official reception ceremony began when His Highness Amir entered the palace, where His Highness's motorcade was accompanied by a number of Presidential Guard cavalrymen until arriving at the ceremony headquarters. The artillery

fired 21 rounds in celebration of His Highness the Amir's visit and in appreciation of the re-



lations between the two friendly countries.

During the ceremony, the national anthems of Qatar and India were played. Then, His Highness the Amir inspected

the guard of honour and shook hands with the official Indian delegation. His Highness went to shake hands with the members of the government, senior officials and military and security leaders.

The reception ceremony was attended by His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and their Excellencies the members of the official delegation accompanying His Highness the Amir.

India key trade partner for Qatar, says QC Chairman

NEW DELHI: Chairman of Qatar Chamber Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim bin

is one of Qatar's key trading partners, accounting for a substantial share of

able to enhance co-operation between the business sectors of both countries. He urged companies and business leaders from Qatar and India to explore new avenues of co-operation and capitalise on Qatar's attractive investment environment. He highlighted Qatar's advanced infrastructure, investor-friendly free zones and stimulating economic policies, which provide many incentives for foreign investors.



Chairman of Qatar Chamber Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim bin Mohammed Thani addressing Qatar-India business meet in New Delhi.

Mohamed Al Thani emphasised the strong relations between Qatar and India, particularly in the economic, trade and investment sectors. He highlighted the Chamber's keenness on strengthening co-operation and fostering partnerships and mutual investments between the business communities of both countries.

This came during the Qatar-India Business Meeting held in New Delhi, on the sidelines of the official visit of the Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani to India.

Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim emphasised that India

Qatar's natural gas exports. He also stressed the expanding co-operation in key sectors, including industry, infrastructure, services and technology.

Al Thani noted that bilateral trade between both countries witnessed remarkable growth over the past year, exceeding QR43.3 billion in just 11 months. He further pointed out that thousands of Indian companies are operating in Qatar in various sectors, many of them in partnership with Qatari firms.

The Chairman of Qatar Chamber highlighted the vast opportunities avail-

Al Thani added that Qatar National Vision 2030 opens a wide range of investment opportunities in key sectors such as technology, renewable energy, advanced industries and financial services, creating valuable prospects for partnerships between Qatari and Indian companies.

He expressed his aspiration to strengthen communication between the business communities of both countries, emphasising that this business meeting serves as a valuable platform to exchange ideas and explore new areas for partnership. He reaffirmed Qatar Chamber's commitment to supporting all initiatives that enhance trade and investment ties between Qatar and India.

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Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	87.04	86.14
British Pound	109.85	108.61
Euro	91.29	89.59
Japanese Yen	0.58	0.57
Swiss Franc (CHF)	96.91	95.01
Canadian Dollar	61.52	60.28
Australian Dollar	55.76	54.69
Norwegian Krone	7.88	7.73
Swedish Krona	8.17	8.01
New Zealand Dollar	50.01	49.13
Hong Kong Dollar	11.24	11.02
Kuwaiti Dinar	283.84	275.69
Singapore Dollar	65.34	64.04
Saudi Arabian Riyal	23.32	22.87
United Arab Emirates	23.81	23.34

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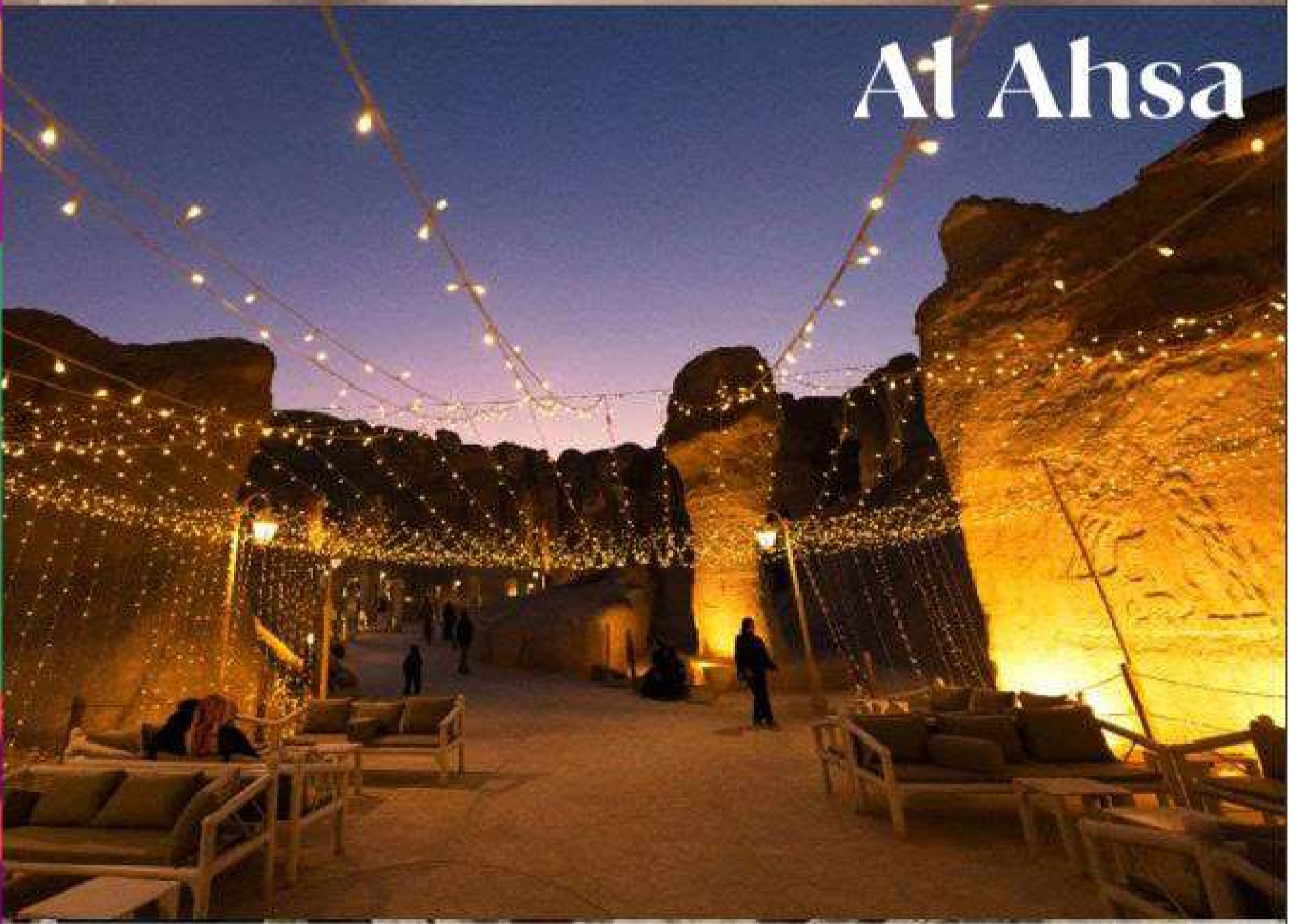
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GULF FAQs

Is working extra hours during Ramadan allowed?

During Ramadan, work hours for private sector employees are reduced by two hours, correct? Are there any exceptions to this? If my em-

ployer doesn't comply, can I file a complaint? How are overtime hours calculated during the holy month, especially for employees working in mainland companies in Dubai?



ployer doesn't comply, can I file a complaint? How are overtime hours calculated during the holy month, especially for employees working in mainland companies in Dubai?

In the UAE, employees are entitled to two hours less work per day during the holy month of Ramadan. This reduction is mandated by Article 17(4) of Federal Decree Law No. 33 of 2021 on the Employment Relations, and is further supported by Article 15(2) of Cabinet Resolution No. 1 of 2022 on the Implementation of Federal Decree Law No. 33 of 2021 Regarding the Regulations of Employment Relations.

The law specifically states: "Subject to the provisions of Article 17 of the Decree Law: The regular working hours shall be reduced by two hours during the holy month of Ramadan."

Furthermore, an employee may be entitled to overtime payment, if his/her employer calls upon an employee to work overtime. This is in accordance with Article-19 of the Employment Law, which

states: 1. The Employer may employ the employee for additional working hours, provided that they do not exceed (2) Two hours a day, and the

employee may not work more than such hours unless according to the procedures and conditions specified by the Executive Regulations of this Decree-Law. In any event, the total working hours shall not exceed 144 in three weeks.

2. If the work circumstances require that the employee be employed for hours exceeding the ordinary working hours, such extended time shall be deemed overtime for which the employee shall be paid his basic salary for his normal hours of work plus a supplement of at least 25pc of that salary.

3. If the work circumstances require that the employee be employed for extra hours between 10 PM and 4 AM, the employee shall be paid his basic salary for his normal hours of work plus a supplement of at least 50pc of that salary. This shall not apply to employees by shifts.

4. If the work circumstances require that the employee be employed on the rest day specified in the employment contract or the internal work regulations, he shall be compensated with a substitute rest day or be paid his ba-

sic salary for his normal hours of work plus a supplement of at least 50pc of the salary.

5. The employee may not be employed more than two consecutive rest days, except for the daily employees."

Moreover, if an employee is in a managerial or supervisory position, he/she may not be entitled to any overtime pay. This is in accordance with Article 15(4) (b) of Cabinet Resolution No. 1 of 2022, which states: "The following categories shall be exempted from the provisions relating to the maximum working hours".

The persons occupying supervisory positions if such positions vest in them the powers of the employer."

Based on the aforementioned provisions of law, you as an employee may be entitled to overtime payment if you work for additional hours other than the regular Ramadan period working hours. Furthermore, if you are in a managerial or supervisory position, you may not be entitled to overtime payment. If your employer does not reduce working hours during the holy month of Ramadan or does not agree to pay you for the overtime, you may file a complaint against your employer with the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization (MoHRE). Following your complaint, MoHRE may contact your employer to ensure compliance with labour regulations during the month of Ramadan.

Tips for healthy Umrah travel

Travelling for Umrah--How to get mandatory vaccine?

What are the health tips to stay safe?

As millions of Muslims flock to Makkah each year to perform the spiritual journey of Umrah, known as the lesser Haj, Saudi authorities have implemented health precautions to prevent infections from spreading among the faithful.

They have made certain vaccinations mandatory for travellers from around the world and others required from those who are coming from certain countries.

Medical experts in the UAE are also emphasising the importance of vaccinations to safeguard against potential health risks among the big crowds coming from around the world to perform Umrah. So, here's a guide on the required vaccinations to take before your

seasonal influenza fees.

Previously, Saudi Arabia required all Umrah travellers aged one and above to get the meningococcal vaccine (Quadrivalent ACYW-135) at least 10 days before travelling. They should have a vaccination certificate that is valid for three years. However, in a latest announcement, the country stated it was no longer a mandatory requirement.

However, if you still wish to take the vaccine, you will have to book a prior doctor's consultation which costs Dh150. If you have a health card issued by EHS, you will be exempted from paying the doctor's consultation fee. The card is valid for a year and costs Dh155 and can be easily issued via the EHS website.

As per the Saudi Minis-



Umrah travel. It is mandatory for UAE residents to take one jab before Umrah: seasonal influenza.

Travellers are advised to take the vaccination 10 days before travelling in order to build immunity against the disease. Getting the jab for seasonal influenza can be done via Emirates Health Services (EHS) general health centres for Dh50.

Getting a vaccination card to present at travel hubs costs Dh20. To book an appointment for vaccination, travellers can log in to the EHS website. UAE citizens, people above 50, people of determination, children less than five years old, pregnant women, university and school students, and people working in healthcare centres are all exempted from

try of Health, it is also recommended to take a SARS-COV-2 (Covid-19) vaccine before travelling to Umrah areas in the kingdom. It is worth mentioning that Umrah areas as per the ministry are not just Makkah and Madinah. They also include Jeddah and Taif.

Pilgrims with chronic conditions are advised to carry documentation detailing their medical condition, in addition to carrying sufficient quantities of their medications while ensuring that they are kept in their original packaging.

Regardless of the purpose of travel, UAE residents are advised to stay up to date with necessary vaccinations before travelling abroad.

FlyDubai may buy Go First

DUBAI: Dubai-based carrier FlyDubai is exploring the possibility of starting a domestic airline in India through a collaboration with Busy Bee Airways, which is in discussions with lenders to acquire the bankrupt Indian airline Go First.

According to sources close to the negotiations, Busy Bee has approached Go First's Committee of Creditors (CoC) to acquire its trademarks, flying licence and airport slots. Busy Bee, which first placed a bid to acquire GoFirst in March 2024, has once again expressed an interest in reviving the GoFirst brand while steering clear of the airline's tangible assets, such as its massive land parcel in Thane, near Mumbai.

Busy Bee is particu-

larly keen on securing bilateral and domestic flying rights, trademarks, and online properties, such as the website, "www.gofirst.co.in"

A senior banker involved in the discussions told a TV channel: "The bidder is primarily focused on acquiring the brand associated with Go First rather than its assets."

A senior executive involved with the talks revealed that FlyDubai, a subsidiary of Dubai Aviation Corporation, is one of the many airlines in discussions with Busy Bee to jointly operate the new domestic airline in India under the Go First brand.

It may be recalled that National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) had ordered Go First's liquidation in Jan 2025, citing the airline's failure to resume operations.

Busy Bee was originally

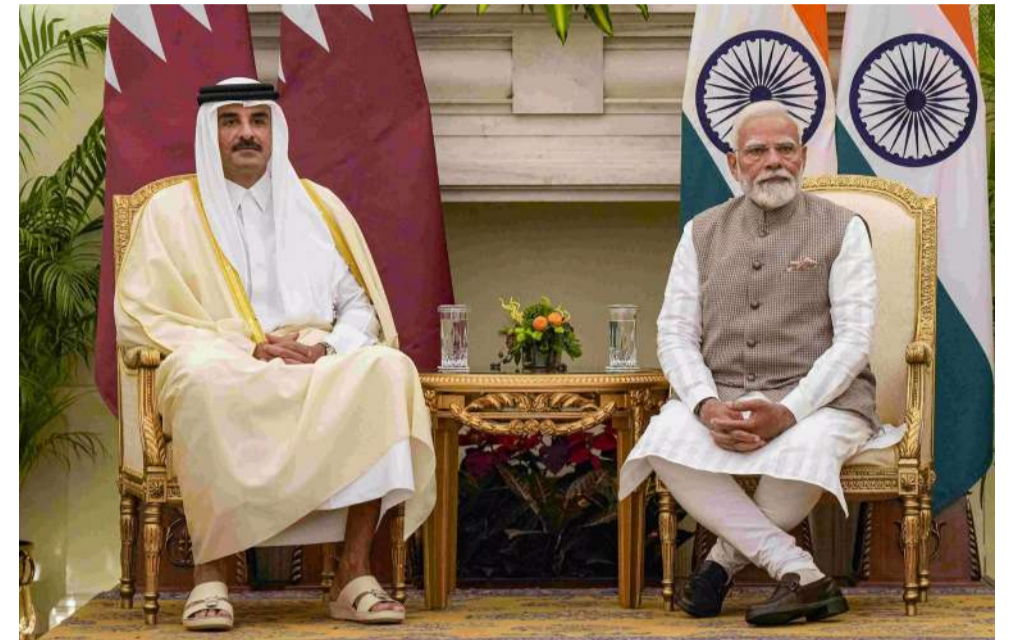
incorporated by Pran-Sathiadasan, Director of Commercial Operations for Southeast Asia at FlyDubai, in April 2017, according to documents available with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs. FlyDubai is owned by Investment Corporation of Dubai (ICD), the principal investment arm of the Government of Dubai.

Under the present Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy, 100pc FDI is allowed in Scheduled Air Transport Services and Domestic Scheduled Passenger Airlines, with up to 49pc permitted through the automatic route. Investments beyond 49pc require government approval. However, for NRIs, 100pc FDI is permitted under the automatic route in these sectors.

Modi lauds progress achieved by Qatar Amir's leadership

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Modi hailed the progress achieved by Qatar under His Highness Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani's leadership, voicing hopes to

reach new heights of progress. He 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.



boost and diversify trade ties between both countries.

Modi posted on X: "I had a very productive meeting with HH Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, earlier today. Under his leadership, Qatar has scaled

"Trade featured prominently in our talks. We want to increase and diversify India-Qatar trade linkages. Our nations can also work closely in sectors like energy, technology, healthcare, food processing, pharma and green hydrogen," Modi said.

Qatar to invest...

(Cont. from page-1)

in cyber security, including prevention of use of cyberspace for terrorism and radicalisation.

The Qatari leader had last year pardoned 85 Indian prisoners, including eight Indian navy veterans who had been sentenced to death for military espionage.

The official said that while talks are underway for an India- GCC FTA, India and Qatar at the bilateral level will look at the possibility of having an FTA in the future.

Modi and Minister of Qatar's Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani discussed the strong ties between the two countries and ways to further strengthen them, particularly in energy, trade and investment.

As part of the political co-ordination between the two nations, the fifth round of political consultations between the for-

eign ministries of Qatar and India was held in Doha in Oct 2024, with both sides having deliberated bilateral co-operation and various shared issues of interest.

On January 25, the 20th anniversary of the first Qatari LNG shipment to India's Petronet terminal was celebrated, and on last week, Minister of State for Energy Affairs and CEO of Qatar Energy Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi held talks on enhancing bilateral energy co-operation with senior executives from major Indian energy companies, on the sidelines of the India Energy Week 2025 in New Delhi.

Last year, the first meeting of the joint trade working group between Qatar and India took place in Doha, with participation from various government entities aimed at strengthening bilateral commercial and economic relations.

Over 68m international tourists visited GCC countries in 2023

KUWAIT CITY: Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassim Mohammed Al Budaiwi announced that the number of international tourists coming to the GCC countries reached 68.1 million in 2023, with a growth rate of 42.8pc compared with 2019.

During his speech at the ninth meeting of the GCC ministers of tourism, held in Kuwait, Al Budaiwi explained that the value of tourism revenues for the GCC countries amounted to \$110.4 billion for the year 2023, with a growth rate of 28.2pc compared with 2019. He pointed out that the GCC countries recorded qualitative leaps that exceeded all expectations,

by achieving 58.7pc of the 2030 target of \$188 billion, noting that the market share of the Gulf countries in global tour-



ism amounted to 5.2pc which It consolidates its position as a major hub in the global tourism scene.

At the level of added value to the GDP, Al Budaiwi stressed that the tourism sector achieved a significant economic contribution of \$223.4 billion to the GCC countries' GDP, with a remarkable annual growth rate of 29.4pc between

2022 and 2023, adding that the tourism sector provided 1.5 million jobs during 2023, with a growth rate of 17pc

compared with 2020. The Secretary-General pointed out that the approval of the implementation of projects within the Gulf Tourism Strategy (2023 - 2030) comes

to enhance the tourism status of the GCC countries regionally and internationally and in accordance with the lofty directives of Their Majesties and Highnesses, the leaders of the GCC countries, and then thanks to the efforts of the Committee of Their Excellencies and Highnesses, the Ministers Responsible for Tourism in the GCC countries.