

## **Brief Embassy Report on Bilateral Relations – ITJ Division, DGCI&S, Kolkata.**

### **India-Qatar Bilateral Relations**

#### **A. Introduction**

1. Indian Trade Journal (ITJ) division of the Director General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIS) brings out weekly publication on Embassy Profile Report providing information on recent policy changes and happenings in other countries that may be of interest to the Indian trading community. This is the Embassy Profile Report for 01.04.2026 depicting the Embassy of Qatar.

2. India-Qatar cooperation in diverse sectors has been steadily growing in an excellent framework provided by historically close ties and regular and substantive engagement, including at the highest levels of the two Governments. The large, diverse, accomplished and highly regarded Indian community is making an important contribution to Qatar's progress and in nurturing the bonds of deep-rooted friendship and multi-faceted cooperation between the two countries.

#### **B. Political Relations :**

3. There have been regular high-level bilateral exchanges. Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi paid an official visit to Qatar on 14-15 February, 2024. This was his second visit to Qatar. During the visit, he met H.H. Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, the Amir of Qatar, H.H. Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father of Amir, and H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdul rahman bin Jassim Al Thani. Prime Minister Modi's visit provided an excellent opportunity for both sides to engage at the highest level, and impart fresh momentum to the bilateral ties. Earlier, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi had paid a state visit to Doha from 4- 5 June, 2016 at the invitation of H.H. Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, the Amir. This was the highest-level visit from India to Qatar since the visit of former PM Dr. Manmohan Singh in November 2008.

4. During the visit in 2016, PM Modi held extensive talks with H.H. the Amir and exchanged views on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of mutual concern. Seven MoUs/ Agreements between the two sides were signed during PM's visit, which includes (1) MoU for investment in National Investment and Infrastructure Fund of India; (2) MoU between Financial Intelligence Unit – India (FIU-IND) and the Qatar Financial Information Unit (QFIU); (3) MoU for Cooperation in Skill Development and Recognition of Qualifications; (4) MoU for Cooperation in the field of Health; (5) Agreement on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Custom Matters; (6) MoU on Tourism Cooperation; and (7) First Executive Program for MoU in the field of Youth and Sports.

5. Prime Minister Modi also met the Amir on the sidelines of the COP28 Summit in Dubai on 01 December 2023 and discussed the potential of India-Qatar bilateral partnership and well-being of the Indian community in Qatar. The two leaders had also met on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly on 23 September 2019 in New York where they discussed bilateral relations and regional and international issues of mutual interest. On June 10, 2024 the Amir had a telephonic conversation with

Prime Minister Modi and congratulated him on the election victory. They had also spoken on 29 October 2022 and discussed bilateral relations, and agreed to jointly celebrate the 50 years of India-Qatar diplomatic relations.

6. Hon'ble Vice President of India (HVPI) Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu paid an official visit to Qatar in June 2022. He met Prime Minister of Qatar H.E. Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdulaziz Al Thani, and Father Amir of Qatar H.H. Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani. Speaker of Shura Council of Qatar, called on HVPI. During the meetings both sides emphasized the historical relations between both the peoples, and ways to take bilateral relations to further heights. HVPI chaired an India-Qatar Business Forum in association with Qatari Businessmen Association & Qatar Chamber of Commerce & Industry during the visit. Hon'ble Vice President of India, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar also visited Doha in November 2022 and attended the inauguration ceremony of FIFA World Cup 2022. On the sidelines, HVPI met H.H. Amir Sheikh Tamim as well as a number of other world leaders.

7. Then Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of Qatar, H.H. Sheikh Abdullah Bin Nasser Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, undertook an official visit to India on 2-3 December 2016. During the visit, various Agreements/MOUs were signed, including the Agreement for Exemption of Visa Requirement for Holders of Diplomatic, Special and Official Passport Holders, and MoUs on Technical Cooperation in Cyber Space and Combating Cyber Crime; and between the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy of Qatar and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in addition to a Letter of Intent for e-visas for tourists and businessmen. Separately, an MoU between Qatar Ports Management Company ("Mwani Qatar") and Indian Ports Global Private Limited was concluded.

8. There have been several other high-level visits and interactions between the two sides in the recent years:

a. EAM, Dr. S. Jaishankar paid a visit to Qatar on December 30, 2024-January 1, 2025 and met Qatar's Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammad bin Ibrahim Al-Thani. Earlier, he had visited Doha on 7 December 2024 for participating in the Doha Forum and met Qatar's Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Commerce and Industry and MoS for Foreign Trade Affairs on the same day. EAM, Dr. S. Jaishankar also visited Doha on 30 June 2024 and met PM/FM Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani. The two leaders also held a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of India- GCC Foreign Ministers meeting in Riyadh on 9 September 2024. Earlier during his visit to Doha on 9 February 2022, EAM, Dr. S. Jaishankar had met then DPM and FM Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani. They jointly laid the foundation stone for new Chancery building in the land allocated in the diplomatic enclave. EAM had also visited Doha in August 2021, June 2021, and December 2020.

b. MOS for External Affairs Shri Kirti Vardhan Singh visited Doha from 1-4 October 2024 and participated in the 3rd Asia Cooperation Dialogue Summit and the 2nd ACD Business Forum. On the sidelines, he met with Qatar's MOS for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi and ACD Secretary General Ambassador Nasser Thamer Al Mutairi. Earlier, Rajkumar

Ranjan Singh, MOS for External Affairs and Education of India attended the 5th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5), in Doha from 4-8 March 2023. Shri V Muraleedharan, MoS for External Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs visited Qatar from 8- 10 May 2022 and held discussion with Minister of State for Foreign Affairs HE Soltan bin Saad Al Muraikhi. They reviewed bilateral relations in addition to discussion on global and regional developments.

c. Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister for Railways, Communications and Electronics & Information Technology visited Qatar on 26-27 February 2024 and held meetings with Qatar's Minister for Communications and Information Technology, H.E. Mr. Mohammed bin Ali bin Mohammed Al Mannai, Minister for Transport H.E. Mr. Jassim bin Saif bin Ahmed Al Sulaiti and the Chairman of Qatar Investment Authority and Governor of Qatar Central Bank, Sheikh Bandar bin Mohamed bin Saoud Al-Thani. Minister Shri Vaishnaw also interacted with Qatari and Indian businessmen during a luncheon meeting organized by the Indian Business and Professionals Council, Qatar in addition to addressing an afternoon session at the Web Summit Qatar 2024. The visit gave an opportunity to both sides to exchange ideas on further broadening of India-Qatar partnership in various areas including in areas like digital payments, 5G, start-ups, ports, railways and telecom infrastructure.

d. From Qatar, Minister of State for Foreign Trade Dr. Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Sayed visited India on December 2-3, 2024 and participated in the CII Partnership Summit. He also met Minister of Commerce and Industry Shri Piyush Goyal on the sidelines. Earlier, Qatar's Minister of State for Energy Affairs Engineer Saad bin Sherida Al Kaabi visited India on 5-6 February 2024. During the visit, he met India's Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Shri Hardeep Singh Puri in addition to participating in the India Energy Week 2024. During the visit, Qatar Energy and Petronet LNG signed a SPA contract for supply of 7.5 MMTPA LNG for 20 years starting from 2028.

**C. Commercial Relations (Trade and Foreign Investment) – Recent facts & figures :**

9. As per India's foreign trade classification, Qatar is in Region 11 i.e. West Asia Gulf Co-operation Council and as a trading country partner of India, and as per latest compiled and available statistics with DGCI&S, India's exports to Qatar during April'25-January'26 have been recorded at 1.44 billion US Dollar and India's imports from Qatar during the same reference period stands at 10.63 billion US Dollar with a resultant trade balance deficit of 9.19 billion US Dollar.

10. India's bilateral trade with Qatar in 2024-25 was USD 14.14 billion. India's export to Qatar during the period was USD 1.68 billion and India's import from Qatar was USD 12.46 billion. Qatar's key exports to India include LNG, LPG, chemicals and petrochemicals, fertilisers, plastics, and aluminium articles, while India's key exports to Qatar include cereals, copper articles, iron and

steel articles, vegetables, fruits, spices, processed food products, electrical and other machinery, plastic products, construction materials, textiles & garments, chemicals, precious stones and rubber. In 2023, India was among the top three largest export destinations for Qatar (China and South Korea being the other two) and is also among the top four sources of Qatar’s imports, along with USA, China and Italy. An account of Bilateral commodities trade in goods from 2021-22 to 2025-26 (up to January 2026) are as under:

**Export-Import statistics as per India’s Ministry of Commerce data bank from 2021-22 to 2025-26(Up to January 2026) are as follows :**

**Export-Import statistics from 2021-22 to 2025-26 (up to January 2026)**

(Values in US\$ billion)

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total trade</b>	<b>Import</b>	<b>Export</b>
2021-22	15.20	13.33	1.87
2022-23	18.78	16.81	1.97
2023-24	14.04	12.34	1.70
2024-25	14.14	12.46	1.68
2025-26 (Up to Jan’26)	12.07	10.63	1.44

(Source: Department of Commerce, India)

11. Qatar is the largest supplier of LNG to India, accounting for over 40% of India's global LNG imports. Besides LNG, India also imports ethylene, propylene, ammonia, urea and polyethylene from Qatar. Therefore, the balance of trade continues to be heavily in Qatar’s favour. However, there has been a substantial growth in India’s exports to Qatar in the last few years. In February 2024, Petronet LNG Ltd signed a long-term deal with Qatar Energy for supply of 7.5 million tonnes of liquefied natural gas (LNG) per annum starting from 2028 until 2048.

12. The Embassy has been organizing several meetings, including Virtual Buyer Seller Meets (VBSM) to promote Indian exports to Qatar. The focused sectors are engineering goods; gems & jewellery; food products; pharmaceutical, electronic goods; construction materials; tourism. Embassy has also been participating in high profile exhibitions like Agriteq exhibition (focused on agri, food, veterinary & environment industries), Project Qatar (focused on construction), Hospitality Qatar (focused on hospitality, food & beverage) and Qatar Travel Mart (focused on tourism) to highlight Indian expertise in these sectors. These exhibitions are held annually and there has been active participation of companies from India. Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) has also organized an Indian Pavilion annually at the Doha Jewellery & Gems Exhibition (DJWE). Embassy has been organizing other events, like celebrating National Tourism

Day of India and State formation days to promote tourism to India.

13. Qatar Financial Centre (QFC), a leading onshore financial and business centre, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) to create more opportunities for accountants, promote entrepreneurship, and facilitate the setup of Indian firms in Qatar through collaborative initiatives. International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA), and Qatar Financial Centre Authority (QFCA) formally exchanged a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in relation to cooperation in the presence of Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi at GIFT City in Gandhinagar, Gujarat in July 2022. The MoU sets forth a statement of intent of the Authorities to establish a framework for mutual assistance and to facilitate the exchange of information between the Authorities for development, regulation and enforcing or ensuring compliance with their respective law or regulatory requirements.

#### **D. DEFENCE CO-OPERATION**

14. Qatar offers training slots in its defence institutions to a number of partner countries, including India. India also regularly participates in the biennial Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference (DIMDEX) in Qatar. Indian Naval and Coast Guard ships have regularly visited Qatar as part of bilateral cooperation and interaction. India-Qatar Defence Cooperation Agreement, signed during the PM's visit to Qatar.

#### **E. Institutional Mechanisms**

➤ India and Qatar held 5th round of Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs) on 27 October 2024 in Doha. The FOCs were co-Chaired by Secretary (CPV & OIA) on the Indian side and Secretary General in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the Qatari side. During the meeting, the whole gamut of bilateral relations was reviewed including political, energy, trade, investments, food security, health security, science and technology, consular, community and cultural aspects.

➤ India and Qatar held the first meeting of the Joint Task Force on Investment on June 6, 2024 in New Delhi. The meeting was co-chaired by the Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs on the Indian side and Undersecretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry on the Qatar side. The two sides held comprehensive discussions on boosting India-Qatar Investment partnership and required steps for the same.

➤ India and Qatar held the first meeting of the Joint Working Group on Trade and

Commerce on July 10, 2024 in Doha. The two sides comprehensively reviewed the bilateral trade relations between India and Qatar and agreed to take measures for further growth in coming years.

## **F. Cultural Relations**

- Cultural ties between India and Qatar are deep-rooted and actively nurtured by both sides. There are regular cultural exchanges between the two sides, under the provisions of the Agreement on Cultural Cooperation signed between the two sides in 2012. Qataris admire India's cultural diversity. The year 2019 was celebrated as India-Qatar Year of Culture. India was also one of the partner countries for Qatar-MENASA year of culture 2022. A three-days cultural festival, 'Passage to India' 2024 was held from 7-9 March 2024 and saw enthusiastic participation of the community in various events and activities. The festival was also organized in 2022 as well.
- "Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav" in Qatar was held between 2021-2023. Over 75 cultural events including exhibitions, fashion shows, art displays, dance performances, musical concerts, etc. were organized in Qatar by the Embassy during 2023 with the cooperation of Ministry of Culture & Sports of Qatar, Qatar Museums, Katara Cultural Village, Qatar Posts, and Qatar Foundation.
- International year of Millets was celebrated in Qatar and the Embassy in collaboration with various community organizations organized events with special focus on millet.
- Qatar, as a co-sponsor, supported Resolution at the UNGA, adopted unanimously with a record 177 co-sponsors, declaring 21 June as the International Day of Yoga (IDY). A commemorative stamp to mark the occasion was also released by Qatar Post in June 2015. International Day of Yoga is being celebrated every year attended by large number of yoga enthusiasts. In March 2022, Indian Sports Centre (working under the aegis of Indian Embassy) made it to Guinness World Record for conducting a Yoga lesson for maximum number of nationalities (114). More than 3000 people participated in IDY celebrations in 2024.

## **G. Indian Community**

- Over 830,000 strong and vibrant Indian community in Qatar is testament to the close people-to-people ties that continue to nurture the cultural bonds between the two countries. Qatar is second home to these Indians and the closeness of both countries was clearly visible in the celebration by the community of Qatar's victory in AFC 2023 as well as the pride in the community on Qatar's great success in hosting FIFA 2022. Indians comprise the largest expatriate community in Qatar and are engaged in a wide spectrum of professions including medicine, engineering, education, finance, banking, business, and media apart from a large

number of blue-collared workers. They are highly regarded for their honesty, hard work, qualifications and contribution to the development and progress of Qatar.

➤ There are over 20,000 big and small Indian companies operating in Qatar, either wholly owned or joint ventures, in sectors like infrastructure, communications and information technology, energy etc. As per Invest Qatar, Indian companies have invested over USD 350 million in Qatar for the period 2017-2025. Indian companies from across sectors have been present in Qatar for over several years. Some of these include L&T, Shapoorji Pallonji, Wipro, TCS, Tech Mahindra, Lulu Group, Malabar and Tanishq. In January 2024, L&T was awarded an EPC contract-package amounting USD 1.3 billion by Qatar Energy for further off-shore development of its Al-Shaheen fields.

➤ Currently there are over 60,000 Indian students studying in 19 Indian schools and a few in international schools all over Qatar. There are approx. 4500 faculty and non-faculty in the Indian Schools itself. There are some students of Indian nationality studying in universities in Qatar. Milestone International Education (MIE) - Savitribai Phule Pune University (MIE-SPPU) started started functioning in Qatar since September 2021. MIE-SPPU is offering graduate level and post-graduate level courses.

➤ The Indian Cultural Centre (ICC), an umbrella community organisation of Indian socio-cultural associations in Qatar, functioning under the aegis of Embassy of India, Doha, undertakes a number of cultural and other activities with Mission's guidance, support and cooperation.

➤ The Indian Sports Centre (ISC) is a community based organization working under the aegis of the Embassy of India, formed exclusively to focus on all aspects relating to the promotion of various sports and games, not only amongst the Indian community, but also amongst other expatriate communities.

➤ The Indian Community Benevolent Forum (ICBF) is another community based forum working under the aegis of Embassy of India which undertakes various welfare measures to provide assistance to the workforce of the community. Indian Embassy organises consular camps at different places in Qatar with the assistance of ICBF.

**Source:** [www.mea.gov.in](http://www.mea.gov.in)