

# BUSINESS



## 'Qatar and Kuwait expected to witness surge in business ties'

Doha Bank recently hosted a virtual customer connect meeting under the theme 'Bilateral and Synergistic Opportunities between Qatar and Kuwait'.

According to Doha Bank CEO Dr R Seetharaman, Qatar-Kuwait trade exceeded QR7bn in 2021. He said Kuwait's economy is expected to grow by 4.3% this year.

"LNG deals have happened between Qatar and Kuwait in recent years. Qatar's economy is expected to grow by 4% in 2022. Qatar's budget this year is based on an average oil price of \$55 per barrel. Health, education, and infrastructure have been given thrust in the Qatar Budget 2022.

Qatar plans to boost LNG production to 126mn tonnes per year (MTPA) by 2027," said Seetharaman.

Ooredoo Kuwait CEO Abdulaziz Yaqoub al-Babtain said Ooredoo is a leading Qatari communications companies in Kuwait, delivering mobile, fixed, broadband Internet, and corporate managed services. "Investments between Kuwait and Qatar are a great opportunity to turn both

nations into investment hubs.

We are hoping that this will materialise in 2022 as we are working towards hybrid investment models between Kuwait and Qatar," he said.

Junaid Ansari, head of Investment Strategy and Research at Kamco Invest, said: "Despite the record performance of GCC markets last year, we don't expect a correction this year. However, gains are not expected to be as high as what we saw last year. 2022 is expected to see higher dividend announcements for FY-2021."

MR Raghu, CEO of Marmore Mena Intelligence, said: "The credit growth rebounded in Kuwait in 2021 and was driven mainly by the retail segment. The return of equity (RoE) of Kuwaiti Banks that hit a low of 5% in Q4 2020 has been recovering. Net interest margin (NIM) of Kuwait banks fell due to prevailing low interest rate environment and NPLs still remain well below 2% of the net total loans." He added that Kuwait is moving towards cashless payments, "hence digitisation is a key strategic objective for Kuwaiti banks."



Doha Bank CEO Dr R Seetharaman joins subject matter experts during a recently-held webinar.