

# Qatar's economic model is sustainable, says Doha Bank CEO

**Q**atar's economic model is sustainable because of non-hydrocarbon diversification, Doha Bank Group CEO Dr R Seetharaman has said.

Seetharaman made the statement during a business meeting hosted by Doha Bank in New Delhi where he discussed "Bilateral opportunities among India, Qatar, and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)."

The event, held recently at the ITC Maurya Hotel, was supported by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and witnessed the participation of key dignitaries from various corporates from the National Capital Region (NCR).

According to Seetharaman, Qatar's economy is expected to grow by 4.7% in 2015. He said Qatar's GDP rose to 4.8% in the second quarter of 2015 on the back of robust growth in the construction, financial services, and hospitality sectors.

Other economic achievements have placed Qatar in the 14th spot of the World Economic Forum competitiveness index, Seetharaman stressed.

He said Qatar has established the economic zones company, Manateq, to develop and operate three special economic zones that provide infrastructure in accordance with the highest international standards to reach new levels of economic diversity and promote the growth of the small and medium-sized companies (SME) and private sector.

Seetharaman said Um Al Houl Special Economic Zone's first phase of development will start in 2016.

"Qatar's construction, transport, and water sectors will witness significant activity in the upcoming years to support its non-hydrocarbon di-



Seetharaman with Doha Bank and CII officials, among others, in New Delhi.

versification. Indian companies can look forward to explore opportunities in this segment," he emphasised.

He added: "The industrial sector of Delhi-NCR holds great prominence in the Indian SME landscape. Indian SME Companies in the NCR region in segments such as apparels manufacturing, fabrication, food processing, IT/ITES, and suppliers for manufacturing can explore Qatar market."

On Qatar and India's trade relationship, Seetharaman said bilateral trade between the two countries was around \$16bn in 2014-2015. He also said overall trade between GCC and India in 2014-2015 was more than

\$133bn. "Qatar is the largest supplier of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to India. There is a large market for Qatar's LNG, oil, and petrochemical sectors in India. In May 2013, Qatar bought a 5% stake in Indian telecom company, Bharti Airtel, for \$1.26bn. Many Indian companies such as L&T, Tata Projects, Voltas, and Punj Llyod have been actively participating in the various projects Qatar," Seetharaman explained.

Citing forecast by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Seetharaman said India's economy is expected to grow by 7.3% in 2015-2016, and added that the 7.4% growth recorded

in July - September 2015 was backed by strong growth in manufacturing, trade, hotels, transport, and communication services.

"India is working on measures to make its foreign direct investment (FDI) policy more progressive and increase India's attractiveness as an investment destination.

"The NCR is home to major companies in manufacturing, service, IT and IT-enabled services, and has one of India's leading automotive clusters. It is also India's retail capital with the largest number of shopping malls and favoured destination for luxury retailers," Seetharaman said.