

# India's \$60bn energy infra development plan opens investment opportunities for Qatar, says envoy

By Peter Alagos  
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Investment opportunities are available for Qatar as India aims to develop as a gas-based economy, Indian ambassador Dr Deepak Mittal said, citing the Indian government's "\$60bn" energy infrastructure development plan. Mittal made the statement during a Doha Bank-hosted webinar on 'Bilateral & Synergistic Opportunities between Qatar and India'. The event, which was moderated by Doha Bank CEO Dr R Seetharaman, also included former Foreign Secretary of India Ranjan Mathai, Shaliesh Haribhakti & Associates chairman Shaliesh Haribhakti, and Doha Bank country manager Manish Mathur. On the continuous development of Qatar-India ties, Mittal said the growth of direct shipping lines between the two countries has brought down the cost of logistics. The ambassador also said there has been an increase in co-ordination at the government-to-government levels, citing efforts to set up commerce groups and joint business councils. "The effort is to look partnerships, such as Invest India and Invest Qatar on



Dignitaries during Doha Bank-hosted webinar titled 'Bilateral & Synergistic Opportunities between Qatar and India'.

building investment opportunities. They have decided to set two task forces between countries, one on investment and another on energy. The success is seen through Qatar Investment Authority's (QIA) investments in electricity, renewables, and startups. QIA is looking towards the east," Mittal said. He added: "Qatar's efforts to develop ports and public-private partnership, and 2022 FIFA World Cup will give opportunities for the Indian economy.

Hospitality is also an area to look at because of the World Cup next year. "The Northfield project of Qatar provides trade and technology opportunities for India. Qatar has successfully won the bid to host the 2030 Asian Games. This also provides opportunities to India. India has the third-largest startup ecosystem and it provides opportunities for Qatar." Mathai said, "Qatar can emerge as one of our critical partners through the LNG trade, complementarities in supply

chains, and investments. India and Qatar are both practitioners of multi-alignment with the autonomy of decision making." Haribhakti said India and Qatar can work on digital technology. "A digital twin needs to be imagined helping in crafting a strategy, requiring a change of mindset, ability, and willingness to invest," he said. "Capturing the financial footprint company-wise by using Artificial

Intelligence, algorithms, and machine learning, as well as building blockchain technology will help in trade automation and avoid delays. Rather than 'Public-Private Partnerships', it will be 'Private-Public Partnerships', and this will enable a tight handshake between India-Qatar," Haribhakti said.

Chandrakant Salunkhe, founder and president of SME Chamber of India, said, "It is a right time to encourage SMEs, given targets for exports. We have to focus more on various activities. Banking has given proper support to SMEs, which have become digital-savvy. "How can we connect with Qatar and its nearby countries for SMEs? Where we can focus on manufacturing and inviting manufacturing in India? SMEs in India are becoming big; this is the right time to target the global economy. We are given a level playing field." Seetharaman said the 2022 FIFA World Cup will provide opportunities for Indian companies in infrastructure, trade, and services. "Direct shipping lines between Qatar and India have increased to strengthen logistics for trade co-operation between countries. The Indian startup segment provides great investment opportunities for Qatar," he added.