

# QatarTribune Business

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2020

AAB kicks off Toyota  
Dream Car Art contest  
in Qatar **PAGE 11**



TO GET  
QATAR TRIBUNE'S  
PDF FOR FREE  
DAILY ON  
WHATSAPP



SUBSCRIBE NOW  
**+974 77322356**

## Qatar's banking sector resilient amid COVID-19: Seetharaman

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK  
DOHA

QATAR'S banking sector has shown resilience amid the COVID-19 pandemic and it is evident from the fact that the lending growth witnessed by banks in the first nine months of 2020 is close to 7 percent, Doha Bank Group CEO R Seetharaman said on Tuesday.

Speaking on the topic 'Qatar Banking Growth 2020: Reflecting on Qatari resilience' during the virtual Qatar Trade Summit, Seetharaman said,

the two-day summit, which kicked off on November 24, is being held under the theme 'Transcending into a self-reliant economy amidst COVID-19'.

Highlighting developments in Qatar during COVID-19, he said, "Qatar sold bonds worth \$10 billion in April 2020. It offered interest equivalent to 300 basis

points (bps) over US Treasuries for a \$2-billion five-year tranche, 305 bps over the same benchmark for a \$3-billion 10-year tranche and 4.4 percent for the 30-year paper of \$5 billion."

"The Qatar Central Bank launched various initiatives to combat the risk of COVID-19 pandemic. This includes emergency procedures, loans and liabilities of sectors affected due to procedures taken to combat the spread of COVID-19, guarantees for local banks and National Guarantee Program to support the private sector," he said.

"The lending growth by the end of the third quarter of 2020 in the government sector was 4.7 percent, real estate (4.1 percent), consumption sector (4.6 percent), contracting sector (10 percent), services sector (12.4 percent), trading sector (12 percent). The deposit growth was 3.6 percent. The



Doha Bank Group CEO R Seetharaman takes part in the virtual Qatar Trade Summit on Tuesday.

money supply (M1, M2 and M3) has increased during the year. The banking sector in Qatar has demonstrated its resilience to COVID-19 on account of these measures," Seetharaman said.

He said, "Qatar's economy expected to contract by 4.5 percent in 2020 and re-

cover by 2.5 percent in 2021. On the hydrocarbon sector, the first phase of the North Field expansion project will increase Qatar's LNG production capacity from 77 million tonnes per annum (Mtpa) to 110 Mtpa."

"The second phase of the expansion project, called the

North Field South Project (NFS), is set to further boost Qatar's LNG production capacity from 110 mtpa to 126 mtpa. This could contribute to both economic growth and lending in Qatar. Qatar's trade exceeded \$100 billion in 2019 with Asia contributing 80 percent of its ex-

ports," he said.

Providing insight on non-hydrocarbon developments in Qatar, he said, "The Hamad Port opened in September 2017 and has general cargo terminal with a capacity of 1.7 million tonnes annually. This has contributed to Qatar's trade and infrastructure

development. Qatar's world-class free trade zones, Umm Alhoul and Ras Bufontas, offer opportunities and benefits for businesses seeking to expand and invest globally."

He also highlighted the recent reforms to make Qatar an ideal destination for investment.

Talking about the progress made in digital technology, he said, "The Qatar FinTech Hub (QFTH), co-founded by Qatar Development Bank (QDB), aims to develop the fintech industry in Qatar, in accordance with the Qatar National Fintech Strategy created by Qatar Central Bank. TASMU SMART Qatar programme will serve as a platform for the realisation of a digital economy and a smart future. It aims to transform Qatar into a world-class smart city that has the latest digital solutions to increase the standard of living and increase Qatar's competitiveness, internationally."