



## India-Qatar Strategic Partnership

**For Prelims:** [Gulf Cooperation Council](#), [Liquefied Natural Gas](#), [Gulf](#), [Za'ir-Al-Bahr](#)

**For Mains:** India-Qatar Bilateral Relations, Mutual significance of India and Qatar, India's Role in West Asia

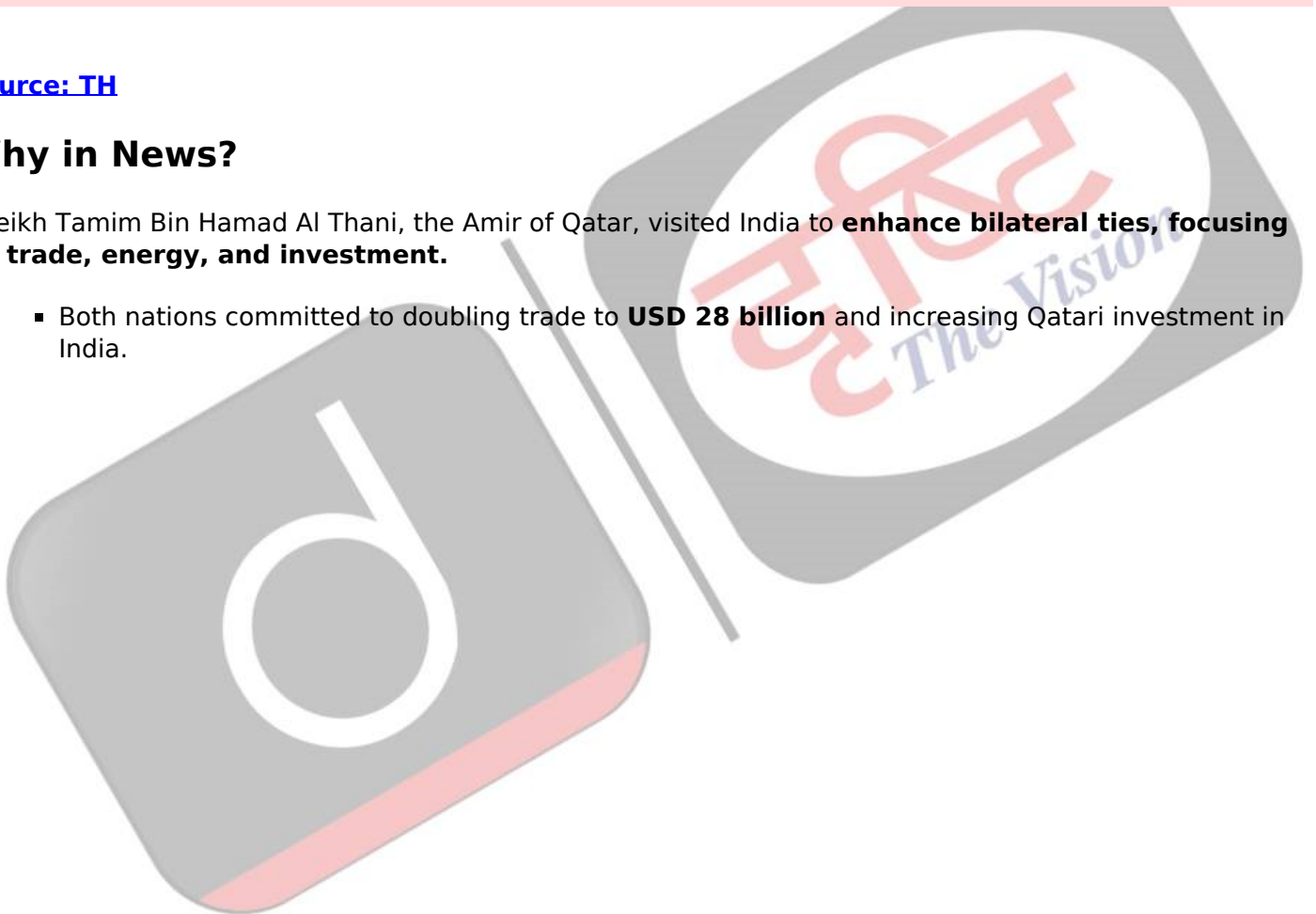
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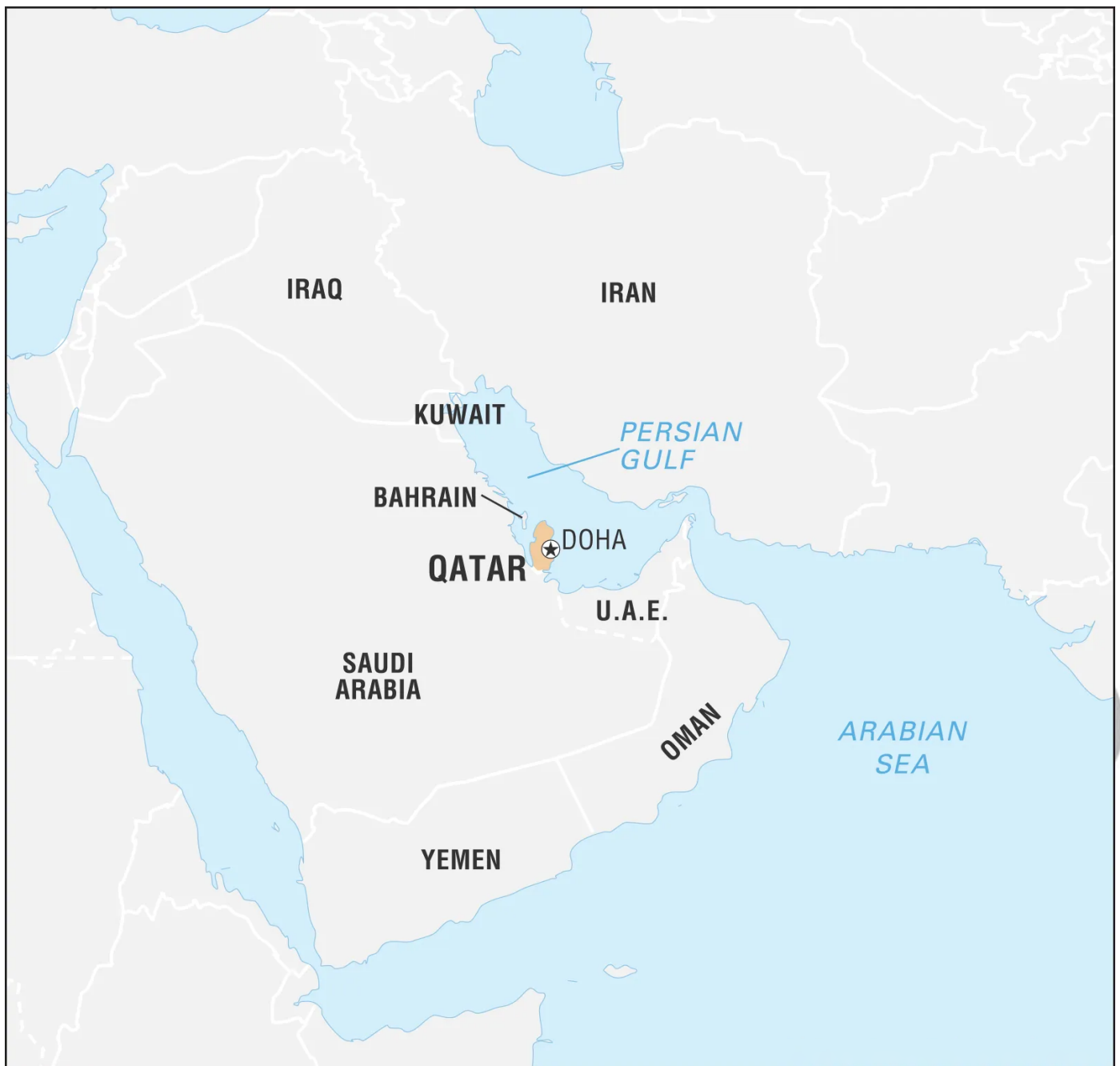
### Why in News?

Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, the Amir of Qatar, visited India to **enhance bilateral ties, focusing on trade, energy, and investment.**

- Both nations committed to doubling trade to **USD 28 billion** and increasing Qatari investment in India.

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## What are the Key Highlights of the Visit?

- **Elevation to Strategic Partnership:** Qatar and India have upgraded their bilateral relations to a **strategic partnership**, aiming to deepen cooperation in various sectors, including trade, investment, energy, and security.
- **Target for Bilateral Trade:** India and Qatar have set an ambitious target to double bilateral trade from **USD 14 billion to USD 28 billion by 2030**.
- **Qatar's Investment Commitment:** Qatar's [sovereign wealth fund](#) has invested USD 1.5 billion in India and committed an additional USD 10 billion in sectors like infrastructure, renewable energy, and emerging technologies such as [artificial intelligence \(AI\)](#) and [machine learning](#).
- **Avoidance of Double Taxation:** A **Revised Agreement for Avoidance of Double Taxation** was also exchanged, which will foster economic and financial collaboration.
- **Status of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA):** Both nations discussed the **possibility of a FTA**.
  - Negotiations are ongoing for an FTA between India and the [Gulf Cooperation Council \(GCC\)](#), which includes Qatar.
- **Infrastructure:** Discussed the operationalization of **India's Unified Payment Interface (UPI)** in Qatar and the expansion of Qatar National Bank's presence in India through [GIFT \(Gujarat](#)

## International Finance Tec-City) City.

- **Israel-Palestinian Conflict:** India reaffirmed its support for a **two-state solution**.

## Why is Qatar Important for India?

- **Energy Cooperation:** In FY 2022-23, Qatar was India's largest **Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)** supplier, providing over 48% of total LNG imports, and the top **liquefied petroleum gas (LPG)** supplier, accounting for 29% of LPG imports.
  - This stable and uninterrupted energy partnership is vital as **India transitions to cleaner energy** sources and reduces reliance on **coal**, helping meet both climate goals and growing energy demands.
- **Strategic Cooperation:** Qatar is a key partner in **India's Look West policy** (converted to "Link and ACT West"), strengthening ties with the **GCC countries**, including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Kuwait, to enhance **energy security and trade**.
- **Geopolitical Significance:** Qatar's role as a **mediator** in key geopolitical issues, like **Afghanistan** and the **Israel-Palestine conflict**, allows India to engage in regional matters indirectly.
  - Qatar's close ties with the **US on Middle East peace efforts**, also offer India a platform for engagement with the US on regional issues.
- **Counterterrorism Cooperation:** India and Qatar share common interests in **combating terrorism and extremism**, with Qatar's strategic location enabling India's collaboration on **counterterrorism and maritime security** in the **Gulf** (as the Gulf region fulfilled 55.3% of India's total crude oil demand in 2022-23).

## India-Qatar Bilateral Relations

- **Defense Cooperation:** India-Qatar defense ties include training, naval visits, biennial **Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference (DIMDEX)** participation, and the bilateral maritime exercise **Za'ir-Al-Bahr** (Roar of the Sea).
- **Trade:** Bilateral trade between India and Qatar in 2023-24 stood at USD 14.08 billion, with India's exports at USD 1.7 billion and imports at USD 12.3 billion.
  - India is among the **top three largest export destinations** for Qatar (along with China and Japan) and among the top three sources of Qatar's imports (along with China and the US).
  - Qatar primarily exports **LPG, LNG, chemicals, petrochemicals, and aluminium to India**, while India exports a variety of goods, including cereals, iron, steel, textiles, and machinery.
- **Investment:** Over **15,000 Indian companies operate in Qatar**, with USD 450 million invested by Indian firms.
- **Cultural Cooperation:** Regular cultural exchanges occur under the **2012 Cultural Cooperation Agreement**, with Qataris admiring India's diversity. The year 2019 was celebrated as **India-Qatar Year of Culture**.
- **Indian Community:** Over 835,000 Indians reside in Qatar, forming the largest expatriate community (27% of the population).

### **Drishti Mains Question:**

How do India's engagements with Qatar and other Gulf countries align with its "Link and Act West" policy? Evaluate the role of West Asia in India's economic and strategic interests.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question

### **Prelims**

**Q. Which of the following is not a member of 'Gulf Cooperation Council'? (2016)**

- (a) Iran
- (c) Oman
- (b) Saudi Arabia
- (d) Kuwait

**Ans: (a)**

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**Mains**

**Q.** The question of India's Energy Security constitutes the most important part of India's economic progress. Analyse India's energy policy cooperation with West Asian countries. **(2017)**

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/india-qatar-strategic-partnership>

