

MoUs signed with Doha on trade, investment, finance intelligence

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Qatar on Saturday signed three memoranda of understanding (MoUs) on trade and investment and cooperation on financial intelligence and tourism.

The MoUs were signed at the start of Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani's twoday state visit to Pakistan. The signing of the MoUs was witnessed by Prime Minister Imran Khan and Qatari Emir Al Thani.

The MoUs related to the establishment of the Pakistan and Qatar Joint Working Group on Trade and Investment, cooperation in the field of tourism and business events and cooperation in the exchange of financial intelligence related to money laundering associated offences and terrorism financing. The last MoU was signed between Qatar's Financial Information Unit and Pakistan's Financial Monitoring Unit.

Sheikh Al Thani is on his second visit to Pakistan since ascending to power in 2013. Earlier, he visited Pakistan in March 2015.

PM Khan personally received the Qatari emir at Nur Khan Airbase. A formal reception ceremony was held at Prime Minister House, where a contingent representing the army, navy and air force presented a guard of honour to the visiting leader. The Qatari emir also planted a sapling at the PM House. A JF-17 squadron of the Pakistan Air Force presented a flypast.

The Qatari emir is accompanied by a delegation comprising key ministers and senior officials of his country. Sheikh Al Thani and Mr Khan held a one-on-one meeting before holding the delegation-level talks.

Both sides also agreed to take steps to significantly expand collaboration in the agriculture and food sectors; enhance cooperation in the energy sector including the LNG and LPG fields and exploration and production of oil and gas; promote Qatar's investments in energy, tourism and hospitality industries; expand cooperation in the fields of aviation, maritime affairs, higher education, and defence and defence production. It was decided that ministers concerned would hold follow-up talks on these areas to give concrete shape to the proposals agreed upon between the two leaders.

The two sides also exchanged views on the regional situation and efforts to facilitate the Afghan peace process.

Later, the prime minister hosted a banquet dinner in honour of the Qatari emir and his entourage.

In a special gesture, the visiting leader presented the Qatar National football team jersey to Mr Khan and received a cricket bat signed by the prime minister.

The Foreign Office had earlier said: 'The two sides will discuss ways and means of building a robust and mutually beneficial economic partnership. During the visit, Pakistan and Qatar will sign MoUs/agreements for enhanced bilateral cooperation in different areas.'

`The visit of His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad AlThaniis expected to further strengthen the close fraternal ties between Pakistan and Qatar and deepen bilateral cooperation in diverse fields,` it added. PM Khan had in a post on Instagram claimed that the Qatari emir would during the trip announce an investment of around \$22 billion. This would be higher than the investment promised by Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman earlier this year. Qatar has also announced recruitment of manpower from Pakistan.

Mr Khan had visited Qatar in January this year.

By Our Staff Reporter