

## SA, Qatar strengthen relations

Infrastructure development between South Africa and Qatar is set to intensify in the future. This emerged after a meeting between President Jacob Zuma and Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani in Doha during a visit by Zuma, who stopped over in Qatar earlier this week while en route to the World Economic Forum, set to take place in Davos.



(Image: GCIS)

"The two leaders discussed a wide range of issues, including concrete projects that the two countries can engage in, as part of implementing South Africa's New Growth Path," Zuma's office said in a statement.

The two countries also agreed to intensify cooperation in other economic sectors, while it was agreed that a ministerial delegation from South Africa will visit Qatar early in February to follow up on issues raised and ensure that no time is wasted in implementing the decisions of the two heads of state.

The South African government is seeking cooperation with Qatar in areas such as water, energy, construction, agriculture and general infrastructure development.

Already the two countries maintain a strong bilateral relationship and have strong cooperation in petrochemicals.

### Major supplier of crude

One of South Africa's largest investments in the Middle East, Sasol's joint venture gas-to-liquid facility, is located in Qatar, which is currently the seventh largest supplier of crude oil to South Africa, but bilateral trade and investment have not reached their full potential.

According to the Presidency, the two leaders also discussed the situation in Libya at length and agreed that the African Union and the Arab League should work together to assist the National Transitional Council and the people of Libya to return the country to normalcy.

This comes as there are reports of fresh violence in that country. Protesters are reportedly saying that the interim National Transitional Council must deliver on promises of transparency and compensate those injured in the civil war.

Media reports also claim that the Libyan town of Bani Walid has been taken over by supporters of former Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi.

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