

Qatar ruler hands over power to son

The Emir of Qatar has transferred power to his son in an anticipated move that puts a new generation in charge of the Gulf nation's vast energy wealth and rising political influence



◀ **Sheik Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, 61**
Took power in bloodless coup in 1995. Rare decision to voluntarily cede power seen as effort to ensure smooth transition

Sheik Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, 33 ▶
British-educated crown prince became heir in 2003 after his older brother stepped aside



COUNTRY PROFILE

Full name: **State of Qatar**

Area: **11,607 sq km**

Population: **1.87 million (2011)**

Population aged 0-14 years: **14%**

Life expectancy: **76 years (men), 80 years (women)**

Background: Ruled by al-Thani family since mid-1800s. Becomes British protectorate in 1916 after partition of Ottoman Empire. From 1950s, oil revenues bring wealth and social progress. Independence declared in 1971

Economy

GDP: **\$173.0 billion (2011)**

GNI per capita: **\$80,440 (2011)**

Inflation: **2% (2011)**

Labour force: **1.4 million (2011)**

Jobless rate: **0.4% (2012 est.)**

Poverty rate: **NA**

Oil production: **1.6m barrels per day**

Oil reserves: **25.4bn barrels**



Recent events: Qatar currently enjoys highest GNI per capita in world. Country maintains close ties with U.S. and has become key regional power broker. Global profile raised by growth of Doha-based **Al Jazeera** TV network and successful soccer World Cup bid