Embassy of India
Abu Dhabi

India-UAE Bilateral Relations

India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) established diplomatic relations in 1972. While the UAE opened its Embassy in India in 1972, Indian Embassy in UAE was opened in 1973.

The traditionally strong bilateral relations enjoyed by India & UAE have received impetus with regular exchange of high-level bilateral visits from time to time. The visit of Prime Minister (PM) of India to UAE on 16-17 August 2015 marked the beginning of a new partnership between the two countries. His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, (MBZ) Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of UAE Armed Forces, visited India from 10-12 February 2016. MBZ visited India for the second time from 24-26 January 2017 as the Chief Guest at India's Republic Day celebrations. It was during this visit that the bilateral relations were upgraded to 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership'.

PM Shri Narendra Modi visited UAE for the second time in February 2018 for the 6th World Government Summit (WGS) in Dubai, where India was the Guest of Honor. He delivered the key note address at WGS and met Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum (MBR), Vice President and Prime Minister of UAE & Ruler of Dubai.

The latest visit by PM to the UAE was in August 2019 during which he received the UAE's highest award, 'Order of Zayed' conferred upon him by the UAE President in April 2019. The visit also witnessed official launch of 'RuPay Card' in UAE and release of a set of stamps commemorating the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

The momentum generated by visits at the highest level was sustained by back to back reciprocal visits at the level of Foreign Ministers too. During the period 2014-2019, then External Affairs Minister (EAM) Late Smt. Sushma Swaraj visited the UAE three times. Her last visit to the UAE was in March 2019 when she represented India at the 46th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), where India was invited as 'Guest of Honor' country by the UAE.

Current External Affairs Minister, Dr. S Jaishankar visited the UAE five times since May 2019. In November 2019, EAM visited UAE for the first time to attend the 10th Sir Bani Yas Forum. During the visit, he met with UAE Foreign Minister His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan (ABZ) as well as MBZ on the margins of the Forum. In November 2020, he came to the UAE on his first official visit when he met with the UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MOFAIC) Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed (ABZ) and had courtesy meetings with MBZ in Abu Dhabi and MBR in Dubai. In 2021, EAM first visited the UAE in April on a day long trip when he met ABZ. In the meeting, they both reviewed the COVID-19 pandemic and cooperation between India and the UAE in this regard. In November, he visited the UAE to attend Sir Bani Yas Forum in Dubai. During the visit, he also had meetings with ABZ and MBZ. In December 2021, he visited Abu Dhabi to attend the 5th Indian Ocean Conference and on the sidelines, he met with MBZ and ABZ. In the last five years, the UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah also visited India three times in June 2018, July 2019 and in February 2021. In addition, Dr. Anwar Gargash visited India on 30 August 2021 and met EAM. During the meeting, they discussed latest regional and international developments and strategic issues of mutual concern.

On 25-26 October 2021, Minister of State (MoS) for External Affairs Shri V. Muraleedharan visited UAE to attend the Sixth Ministerial Consultation of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD). On the sidelines of ADD, he also met with Saudi Arabia's Minister for Labour and Social Protection Ahmed bin Suleiman Al Rajhi.

Minister of Commerce and Industry (CIM) and Minister for Railways, Shri Piyush Goyal visited UAE from 1-4 October, 2021 for the 9th meeting of the UAE-India High Level Joint Task Force on Investments (HLTFI) on 2 October 2021. He also inaugurated the India Pavilion at the Dubai EXPO 2020 on 1st October in presence of Dr. Thani Al Zeyoudi, UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade.

In November 2021, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) and Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs Shri Hardeep Singh Puri visited UAE to attend the Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference (ADIPEC) 2021. During the visit, he had bilateral meetings with UAE Energy Minister Suhail Al Mazroui, ADNOC CEO & UAE Climate Envoy Sultan Al Jaber, Saudi Energy Minister Abdulaziz bin Salman among others besides inaugurating the India Pavilion at ADIPEC.

In December 2021, Health Minister Shri Mansukh Mandaviya visited the UAE and met with the UAE Minister of Health and Prevention Abdul Rahman Al Owais, Minister of State in MOFAIC Sheikh Shakbout Nahyan Al Nahyan and the CEO of Mubadala Health H J Al Nowais.

Economic & Commercial

India and UAE have shared trade links through the centuries. The trade, which was dominated by traditional items such as dates, pearl and fishes, underwent a sharp change after the discovery of oil in UAE (oil exports begun from Abu Dhabi in 1962). With the emergence of UAE as a unified entity in 1971, exports from India started growing gradually over the years. The real impetus, however, started after Dubai positioned itself as a regional trading hub by early 1990s and about the same time, the economic liberalization process started in India.

Growing India-UAE economic and commercial relations contribute to the stability and strength of a rapidly diversifying and deepening bilateral relationship between the two countries. Both sides are striving to further strengthen these ties for mutual benefits. India-UAE trade, valued at US $ 180 million per annum in the 1970s, is today US $ 59 billion making UAE, India's third largest trading partner for the year 2019-20 after China and US. Moreover, UAE is the third largest export destination of India (after US and China) with an amount of nearly US $ 16 billion for the year 2020-21. For UAE, India is the third largest trading partner for the year 2020 with an amount of around US $ 27.93 billion (non-oil trade).

The UAE's investment in India is estimated to be around US $ 17-18 billion of which US 11.67 billion is in the form of FDI while the remaining is portfolio investment. UAE is the 9th biggest investor in India in terms of FDI. The UAE Sovereign Wealth Funds (SWFs) invested over US $ 4.12 Billion in India during FY 2020-21. Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) is the principal Sovereign Wealth Fund of the UAE and one of the world's largest. UAE has committed to invest US $ 75 billion in India's infrastructure sector over a period of time. In 2020, GOI has announced several measures to facilitate and further ease investments by ADIA and other sovereign funds from UAE.

India's exports to the UAE are well diversified with a large basket. India's major export items to the UAE are: Petroleum Products, Precious Metals, Stones, Gems & Jewellery, Minerals, Food Items (Cereals, Sugar, Fruits & Vegetables, Tea, Meat, and Seafood), Textiles (Garments, Apparel, Synthetic

fibre, Cotton, Yarn) and Engineering & Machinery Products and Chemicals. India's major import items from the UAE are: Petroleum and Petroleum Products, Precious Metals, Stones, Gems & Jewellery, Minerals, Chemicals, Wood & Wood Products. India also imported 21.83 MMT (US $ 11 Billion) of crude oil from UAE in 2019-20.

Air connectivity: At present there is an air-bubble agreement between India and the UAE under which the airlines from India and UAE such as Air India/Air India Express, Spicejet, Indigo, Go Air, Vistara, Emirates, Etihad, Flydubai and Air Arabia, etc. operate as per the agreement.

NRI Remittances: The annual remittances made by the large Indian community in UAE (estimated to be around 3.3 million) amount to over US $ 17.06 billion in 2019 [2017 – US $ 15.78 billion; 2018 – US $ 17.57 billion; 2020 (Jan-Sep) – US $ 11.20 billion, source: UAE Central Bank].

Cultural Relations

India-UAE Agreement for Cultural Cooperation, signed on 3 January 1975, is the basis for bilateral cultural cooperation. Further, the Executive Programme for Cultural Cooperation (EPCC) 2016–2018 signed on 11 February 2016 in pursuance of the Cultural Agreement provides for a range of cultural exchange activities and is effective for a period of three years, automatically extendable for a further period of three years unless terminated by either party. UAE has over 3.4 million Indians and Emiratis are quite familiar and receptive to the Indian culture.

The Indian cinema, TV, radio channels are easily available and have good viewership; major theaters and cinema halls in the UAE screen commercial Hindi, Malayalam, Telugu and Tamil films. The Emirati community also part take in our annual International Day of Yoga events and various schools of yoga & meditation are running successfully in the UAE. The foundation stone for the first Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi was laid on 20 April 2019 and the ceremony was attended by H.E. Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, the Minister of Climate Change & Environment of the UAE along with other representatives of the Government of the UAE and the Ambassador.

The Louvre Museum in Abu Dhabi, the only branch of Louvre Museum outside Paris has a number of artifacts from India as well, including Mughal painting 'The Huntress' painted in one of the Mughal courts in South India.

The Emirates Post, United Arab Emirates issued postal stamps commemorating 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi at the Presidential Palace, Abu Dhabi during the 3rd visit of Prime Minister to the UAE. The stamps were released on 24 August 2019 jointly by PM Narendra Modi and Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi & Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces.

In a first of its kind gathering since the start of COVID-19 pandemic, 7th International Day of Yoga was celebrated on 19 June 2021 at lawns of Hotel Ritz Carlton, Abu Dhabi in the backdrop of iconic Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque. Emphasizing the theme "Yoga for Wellness', the event focused on practising holistic approach to physical and mental health in pandemic times. Sheikh Nahyan Bin Mabarak Al Nahyan, Minister of Tolerance and Co-existence of the UAE was the Guest of Honour of the event which was attended by more than 100 fully-vaccinated participants adhering to Covid protocols and social distancing. A large number of Yoga enthusiasts across the UAE also joined the the sessions online.

On 26 August 2021, a historic Agreement was signed between the New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD) and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) New Delhi to establish a Visiting Professorship in Social Science at New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD). The agreement was signed by NYUAD Vice Chancellor Mariët Westermann and Ambassador Pavan Kapoor (on behalf of the ICCR) at NYU Abu Dhabi campus. The agreement aims to promote broader engagement in academics between the two countries.

Education

There are 108 International Indian schools in the UAE following the CBSE and Kerala Board curricula with approx 215,000 students, mostly children of Indian expatriates residing in the UAE. The Embassy and CGI, Dubai also provide No-Objection Certificate to the Indian schools in the UAE for opening a new school/renewal of the affiliation from CBSE board, as a pre-condition prescribed by the CBSE.

Embassy and CGI Dubai assist in organizing the Annual and Supplementary Examinations of the Grade 10 & 12 of CBSE & Kerala Boards. Apart from the CBSE and Kerala Board examinations, the respective Education Wings coordinate the conduct of examinations for Indira Gandhi National Open University, National Institute of Open Studies and Institute of Chartered Accountants of India.

The Embassy and the Consulate also issue Genuineness Certificates after obtaining verification from the concerned University or Technical board in India to expatriate Indians to facilitate grant of Equivalency Certificate for their Indian educational degrees or certificates by the UAE Ministry of Education. The Equivalency Certificate has now become mandatory to continue or obtain skilled employment in the UAE.

Defence Cooperation

Defence cooperation between India and UAE is steered through a Joint Defence Co-operation Committee (JDCC) at the Ministry level, with the signing of Agreement on Defence Cooperation in June 2003, which came into effect since April 2004.

Both countries have frequent exchanges between defence establishments. The most recent ones being the good will visit of General Manoj Mukund Naravane, Chief of Army Staff, in December 2020 and the visit of Air Chief Marshal Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria, Chief of Air Staff from 31 July to 03 August 2021. From the UAE side a 05 member delegation led by Staff Major General Pilot Ibrahim Naser Mohamed Saif Al Alawi, Commander of the UAE Air Force and Air Defence attended the Aero India 2021 at Bengaluru from 03-07 February 2021.

The prestigious International Defence Exhibition and Conference (IDEX) and the Naval Defence and Maritime Security Exhibition (NAVDEX) held in February 2021 in Abu Dhabi was attended by the Indian Defence Industry participated through an India Pavilion. The pavilion showcased the Indian Defence industry with representation from Defence PSUs like Ordnance Factory Board, Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited, Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited and Bharat Dynamics Limited. DRDO took part in the India pavilion as did Brahmos Aerospace (BAPL), through an independent chalet in NAVDEX.

During 9-16 October 2021, a 21-member delegation from the National Defence College (NDC) of India including members from other nationalities visited UAE on a study tour during which the delegation had interaction with the UAE Defence Ministry besides having a briefing session at the Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy.

Indian Defence delegation also joined the Dubai Air Show from 15-19 November 2021. Its pavilion was structured around the products of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) and Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO). Brahmos also had an independent chalet just across the Indian Pavilion. The IAF aerobatic teams of Suryakiran and Sarang participated in the Air Display of the Dubai Air Show. Light Combat Aircraft Tejas also received wide attention.

Indian Air Force (IAF) for the first time joined personnel from UAE, Saudi Arabia, France, UK, US, Republic of Korea and Bahrain, in the multinational Exercise Desert Flag-06 in March 2021. The UAE AF&AD supported IAF in the ferry of all its batches of Rafale aircraft ferrying in from France.

Indian Community

Indian expatriate community of approximately 3.4 million is the largest ethnic community in UAE constituting roughly about 35 per cent of the country's population. 15% of the diaspora is in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and the rest in 6 Northern Emirates including Dubai.

The profile of the community has changed from the 1970s and 1980s, when majority of the Indian community was blue-collared to the extent of 85% - 90%. Today, around 35% of the Indian community is made up of professionally qualified personnel, businessmen & other white collar non-professionals. 10% of the total Indians constitute dependent family members.

The Indian community has played a major role in the economic development of the UAE and is respected for its technical competence, sense of discipline & law abiding nature.

16 eminent Indians and one Indian Community Association from the UAE have been honored with Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award. 7 Indians received Padma awards. There are various linguistic or regional associations for social and cultural activities. These associations extend support to the welfare initiatives of the Mission or Consulate and conduct cultural and welfare activities regularly including sports activities. During the Covid pandemic, the associations played a stellar role in relief and repatriation operations undertaken by the Embassy and the Consulate.

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