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The resilient Indian community is the bedrock of India-UAE relations

Modern India that emerged after a long freedom struggle has achieved many milestones in its eventful journey. Let us collectively celebrate these achievements while remembering the struggle and sacrifices of our forefathers, says **Indian Ambassador to the UAE Pavan Kapoor**

On the occasion of the 75th Independence Day of India, I extend my warmest greetings to all members of the Indian community in the UAE. The historical people-to-people contacts enhanced by trade connections between India and the Emirates laid the strong foundation for special and friendly relations. The hardworking and dedicated Indian community has earned recognition for their significant contribution to the growth and development of the UAE. We are proud of our vibrant community and would like to reassure them that the Embassy in Abu Dhabi and the Consulate in Dubai will continue to extend all required services and assistance for their safety, well-being and progress, including in a post-pandemic scenario.

We have witnessed the collective unity, strength and empathy exhibited by the Indian community many times in the past, especially during difficult times. The support extended by individuals, community associations, business groups, religious organizations, etc amid the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic to the needy and vulnerable members of the society, both within UAE and back home in India, is particularly commendable.

The exemplary resilience of the Indian community was the key to ameliorating the adverse impact of the pandemic. Indian doctors, nurses and other frontline workers rendered selfless service and played a crucial role in fighting the pandemic worldwide, including in the UAE. The willing support extended in various forms, including donation of food kits and provisions, air tickets, tele-consultations by doctors, etc was inspiring and helped many people overcome the challenges posed by the pandemic to their lives and livelihoods. The world once again witnessed the true spirit of India's ancient ideology of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' or 'the world is one family'. More recently, the 'Vaccine Maitri' initiative of the Government of India, also supported the supply of Covid-19 vaccines to 95 countries across all continents.

The UAE Government, led by its visionary leadership, has shown remarkable perseverance in handling the pandemic, including extending full support to all the residents of the UAE. The provision of free tests, quarantine facilities and other medical facilities, and even Covid-19 vaccines to all those in need is an extraordinary achievement. There is no doubt that the large Indian community is a major ben-

eficiary of all this support. We are aware of the difficulties being faced by many fellow Indians due to the negative impact of the pandemic. This includes in particular who lost their jobs in the UAE, as well as those who are unable to return to the UAE due to restricted air connectivity. We are constantly working with the UAE authorities to urge them to the best possible solutions for the country and our people.

At the same time, we are confident that successful vaccination drive and strict Covid safety protocols enforced by the UAE government will help in gradual easing of the situation. The process of easing travel restrictions on residents that began on 5 August was a very welcome first step in this regard. We are hopeful that this will be followed by greater easing up for return of all other residents too in the near future. We also anticipate that both the Indian community residing in the UAE and also Indians looking forward to travel to the UAE for the EXPO2020 would further contribute to boost economic activities and business opportunities in the UAE. The world has changed a lot since the onset of the pandemic. While we are optimistic with ongoing vaccination programmes and resumption of economic activities, it is also a fact that Covid-19 is here to stay and all of us need to adapt in various ways to stay competitive and survive in the new world. Technology, no doubt, would play an increasingly important role in allowing business continuity.

Most visible of all has been the use of online platforms



for education, corporate and business meetings, training sessions, seminars and even cultural activities, which is quite effective and will continue in the foreseeable future as well. In this regard, the Indian workforce, must also adapt to the new requirements of the business and will need appropriate re-skilling and upskilling to remain the most favoured work force. We have already launched few initiatives for blue collared workers in the UAE in collaboration with partners from the educational and industrial sector, and intend to enhance such collaborations in the coming months.

The Embassy in Abu Dhabi and our Consulate in Dubai are undertaking various initiatives for the welfare of the Indian community. These include providing free advisory and legal assistance and running awareness campaigns through the Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendra (PBSK) for distressed blue collar workers. PBSK also organizes dedicated financial awareness camps for the benefit of Indian workers. A PBSK App has been launched to bring delivery of better services

closer to the people. The success of welfare measures is not possible without the support of various Indian community associations, Indian businesses and religious groups in the UAE and we appreciate the crucial support provided by all of them.

As you all know, this year, we are celebrating our 75th Independence Day. To mark 75 glorious years of modern India, the Government of India has launched a campaign called India@75 or 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav'. Modern India that emerged after a long freedom struggle has achieved many milestones in its eventful journey. Let us collectively celebrate these achievements while remembering the struggle and sacrifices of our forefathers. The India@75 celebrations will be a Jan Utsav or people's festival. I urge all members of the Indian community to take the lead and volunteer for various forthcoming initiatives in celebrating 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' in the UAE and make it a true celebration of the people.

Jai Hind!

