

# 'Unprecedented Times, Unprecedented Partnership'



The ties that the UAE and India share have grown stronger and deeper as the years go by. **Pavan Kapoor, Ambassador of India to the UAE**, talks about the multi-layer support both countries provide each other

India and the UAE, natural partners under the comprehensive strategic partnership, have benefited from each other's support in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic. Without this strong cooperation, it would not have been possible to safely repatriate over 300,000 Indians from UAE in the last three months. India deeply appreciates the care extended by the UAE to over three million nationals still residing in the UAE.

During the current Covid-19 crisis, India has extended medical assistance including testing kits, protective gear and Hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) and other medicines to more than 90 countries across the globe and its role as a reliable supplier of pharmaceuticals and medicines is globally recognised and appreciated. We were also pleased to supply adequate quantities of HCQ tablets to the UAE on a priority basis. India also contributed to the UAE's fight against Covid-19 by facilitating the arrival of the 400 plus nurses and doctors from India to add to the workforce of front-line health care service providers in the UAE. Indians resident in the UAE, especially doctors and front-line health workers have also provided their valuable services to the UAE authorities, including through effective participation in the "UAE Volunteers" campaign. India also gratefully received 7 tonnes of medical supplies from the UAE. We have always emphasised the strength of collective efforts in fighting this pandemic, and India and the UAE have set new standards in implementing this cooperation.

We, of course, have deeper engagements in energy security, food security, science and technology, and defense, and space too.

The UAE is India's third largest trading partner with a diversified trade basket. Bilateral trade stands at around \$60 billion and both countries continue to strengthen ties through further diversification in non-oil trade. At the same time, the UAE has been a reliable energy partner for India. The UAE accounts for eight per cent of India's oil imports and is the fourth largest supplier of crude to India. We greatly value this cooperation.

Many would be surprised to know that India and UAE have strong cooperation in the space sector. The UAE's nano satellite Nayif-1 was launched by the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) in February 2017. The space agencies of both countries continue to work for stronger cooperation in areas, including satellite navigation, joint experiments using earth observation satellites and inter-planetary missions. We congratulate the UAE on the successful launch of the Hope (Al Amal) Mars Probe and wish the mission continued success. Data from this mission could provide useful inputs for India's next Mars Mission and we look forward to greater avenues of cooperation in this field.

India and the UAE believe in the vision of a future dominated by clean energy options. India has an ambitious target of installing 175 GW renewable energy



His Highness Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, with India Prime Minister Narendra Modi

capacity by 2022 and 500 GW renewable energy capacity by 2030. We commend the UAE leadership for guiding their national quest for peaceful nuclear energy through the recent operationalisation of Unit 1 Barakah Nuclear Power Plant.

A key focus area of the Embassy of India in the UAE has been and will continue to remain the welfare of its community members. In the initial weeks of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Embassy in Abu Dhabi and our Consulate in Dubai made considerable efforts to arrange for medicines, testing and isolation facilities for those affected in the community. We also set up dedicated 24x7 helplines for emergencies and medical and psychological counselling, provided food and gave accommodation or rent assistance to our people with the help of a number of Indian community groups and charitable organisations. Under the Vande Bharat Mission, the largest ever peacetime repatriation exercise, the Embassy and the Consulate have already arranged for the safe return to India of more than 300,000 people. In the initial weeks, priority was given to those most in need of returning to India from among senior citizens, pregnant women, people with medical and other emergencies for self or their family, and blue-collared workers who lost their jobs. We are continuing to help those who need help while living in the UAE as well as those still wanting to return back to India.

The Government of India is fully aware of the social and economic impact of the Covid-19 in addition to the burden on India's health care infrastructure. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, it is time for all Indians to try to convert the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic into opportunities.

To generate the required stimulus for the economy, the Government of India in May 2020 announced a special economic package amounting to over \$270 billion, equivalent to 10 per cent of India's GDP. As part of welfare measures, India launched the world's largest food security programme, Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), covering 800 million Indians, which is now extended until November 2020. The Government of India has launched an application called SWADES (Skilled Workers Arrival Database for Employment Support) to generate a structured mapping mechanism for future employment opportunities for all returning Indian workers. It is known to everyone that Indian manufacturers are moving forward with impressive results in developing a vaccine for Covid-19 and vaccine trials have entered their third and final phase. India is committed to ensuring that any Covid-19 vaccine that is



Celebrations on the occasion of the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev in Dubai

developed is manufactured in large enough quantities to reach the maximum number of people, not only in India but in all countries across the world.

These are difficult times for people all over the world. We hope that most of the stranded Indians have reached home safely. Many of these Indians were part of the workforce here in the UAE and were contributing actively to the economy of the UAE and of India. We are also hopeful that with improvement in the Covid-19 situation, economic activities will pick up steam soon and so will the movement of people back to the UAE from India. The fact that such a large number of Indians choose to live and work in the UAE is a reflection of the closeness and comfort level that Indians have in the UAE.

On the occasion of the 74th India Independence Day, the Embassy of India extends its warmest greetings to all members of the Indian community in the UAE. Our community is the foundation of enduring India-UAE ties and we are proud of our community. The Embassy, as a home away from home, will continue to focus on the welfare of all Indians and will work closely with community associations to address their concerns, especially in the post Covid-19 scenario.

*Jai Hind!*



Vishwa Hindi Divas 2020 celebrations at the Indian Embassy in Abu Dhabi