

Vaccine Maitri

Coordinated efforts to fight Covid-19

India will continue to play the role of a trusted partner in meeting the healthcare challenges of the global community, says **Pavan Kapoor**, Indian Ambassador to the UAE



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On the occasion of the 72nd Republic Day of India, I would like to extend my heartiest greetings to all members of the Indian community in the UAE. The contributions made by our vibrant and talented community to the growth of both the countries are commendable. The Indian community in the UAE has played a vital role and worked in close cooperation with the embassy and the consulate in helping the most vulnerable of our people during the pandemic.

The community remains the foundation and strength of the India-UAE comprehensive strategic partnership. The ongoing vaccination drive in India, the UAE, and many other countries across the globe presents a positive outlook into the future. We are proud that many Indian nationals as responsible members of the larger UAE community, not only participated as volunteers in the vaccine trials, but have also become part of the Choose to Vaccinate campaign of the UAE. This reflects their personal

commitment in ensuring that 'no one is safe until everyone is safe'.

Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi had assured the world from the platform of the United Nations last September that India will continue to play the role of a trusted partner in meeting the healthcare needs of the global community. On January 16, as he launched India's domestic vaccination drive, he reiterated that India's vaccine production and delivery capacity will be used to help all humanity in fighting this crisis. In line with this commitment, on January 20, India announced Vaccine Maitri (Vaccine Friendship) initiative to supply vaccines to its neighbouring countries to begin with, and an expected gradual expansion to many others.

UAE-India cooperation

India's bilateral relations with the UAE are time tested and have blossomed over past hundreds of years of cultural and civilisational connections between the people of the two countries. Even during the pandemic, ►

His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, meets Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Indian Minister of External Affairs, in November, to receive a message from Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Indian Ambassador to the UAE, Pavan Kapoor is checking the medical screening process for returning Indian nationals under the Vande Bharat Mission initiative in Abu Dhabi



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Pavan Kapoor

our top leadership kept in regular touch using traditional telephonic methods as well as newer virtual technologies to consult and coordinate our positions on important bilateral, regional and global issues and of course, to enhance mutual cooperation in effectively fighting the Covid-19 pandemic.

In fact, during the pandemic we were able to work together even more closely in the critical areas of healthcare and food security. Subsequently, India's External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar visited the UAE in November last year to personally convey a message of appreciation from Prime Minister Modi to the UAE leadership for taking great care of Indians since the onset of Covid-19 pandemic. This was followed by the visit of Minister of State V. Muraleedharan last week to interact with

the Indian community and understand what further steps can be taken by the Government of India to enable the community to overcome the disruptions caused by the pandemic.

Last year was quite challenging for the members of the Indian community in the UAE. The Government of India, through the Vande Bharat Mission successfully enabled the travel of more than 3.5 million Indians from various destinations spread across the world, including the UAE. We believe that the multiple stimulus measures introduced by the UAE leadership would promote economic growth and restart business activities that would in turn generate job opportunities, including for Indian nationals, in the near future.

Covid-19 has taught us many lessons, prominent among them is the need to be more self-reliant. Uncertainty caused by the pandemic has created a global demand for shorter, more trusted and resilient supply chains and India has responded through the policy of Aatmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India), building stronger capacities at home to make a larger contribution abroad. India is consistently making it easier to do business today, both for domestic and global players. Our objective is to further strengthen our own trade, investments and services in order to become a reliable partner of the world. Considering the global economic situation as a result of the pandemic, India with greater capacities will become an additional engine of global economic growth. As Prime Minister Modi said, "In India's self-reliance, there is a concern for the whole world's happiness, cooperation and peace." ●