India-UAE relations: Marching ahead for a brighter tomorrow

The volume of the bilateral trade between India and the UAE is tipped to increase from $60 billion to $100 billion in the next 5-8 years in tune with the growing partnership between the two countries. Ahmed Ali Fayyaz has more details

The volume of the bilateral trade between India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is tipped to increase from $60 billion to $100 billion in the next 5-8 years in tune with the growing partnership between the two countries. Elaborating on the potential of collaboration between India and the UAE, Dr. Ahmed Abdul Rahman Al Banna, the UAE ambassador in India, said at one of the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha's Kashmir promotion events in Dubai on recently: "India is the second largest trading partner for the United Arab Emirates and UAE is the third largest trading partner for India after the United States of America and China. Our total Foreign Trade figures reached about $60 billion in 2019-2020. The Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between the United Arab Emirates and India will be crucial in deepening the ties between India and UAE. We are hoping that CEPA will increase our bilateral trade from USD 60 billion to $100 billion in the coming 5 to 8 years."

"Ever since the Government of India announced the historic administrative changes in 2019, the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has become the latest success story among Indian states as a model of economic and social development. India and UAE are each other's largest trading partners. And soon, CEPA will be signed, which certainly has the potential to catapult our economic engagement to a very different trajectory altogether," the Indian ambassador in the UAE, Sunjay Sudhir, said.

"Jammu & Kashmir has moved from a sleeping business destination to the land of opportunities and investment. The Union Territory received investment proposals worth Rs 45,000 crore and additional Rs 18,300 crore in the real estate sector and showcased the enormous opportunities and business potential in the region", LG Sinha observed.

Jammu & Kashmir has signed 5 MoUs with Al Maya Group, MATU Investments LLC, GL Employment Brokerage LLC, Century Financial and Noon E-commerce and one Letter of Interest between Magna Waves Pvt. Ltd along with Emaar Group and Lulu International. Talking about the upcoming opportunities with leading investors, Sinha said: "Jammu & Kashmir is working relentlessly to provide an investment friendly environment to the global investors. From the business point of view, J&K has the capability to provide opportunities to the industries to compete, correct and collaborate with readily available abundant resources. Archaic laws have been removed and more than 890 Central

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laws, which are the key drivers of socio-economic growth and have been made applicable."

Among the six major Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) signed during Sinha's four-day visit to the Gulf country was one about $100 million investment with the company of a non-resident Indian from Jammu & Kashmir. Sinha's entourage signed the MoU for establishment of three luxury hotels and one commercial-cum-residential complex, with estimated investment of $100 million with Century Financial which is owned by Bal Krishen, a resident of Doda district settled in the Gulf.

The MoU was signed by Principal Secretary, Industries, J&K, Ranjan Prakash Thakur and Bal Krishen in presence of Consul General of India in Dubai Aman Puri and several distinguished UAE-based business owners, investors, and entrepreneurs. Speaking at the event at the Oberoi Dubai Business Bay, Bal Krishen said: "I have always believed that Jammu & Kashmir has tremendous investment potential and there cannot be a better time than now. Making a significant contribution to my home region has always been my dream and today as I see this dream getting realised, it's immensely gratifying."

In his address at the signature ceremony, Sinha said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was committed to J&K's development. "We are happy to see the interest shown by UAE's big business houses and leaders in supporting this vision of our honourable Prime Minister. Global business and industry are waking up to the vistas of opportunity in J&K", Sinha asserted.

"Despite challenges of global pandemic, neither the pace of economic and policy reforms nor the implementation of key infrastructure projects has slowed in any way in UT and us, as responsive administration will continue to respond to business's concerns", Sinha added.

Principal Secretary, Industries and Commerce, Ranjan Thakur said that Jammu & Kashmir was one of the safest places in India to do business, offering the most attractive incentive schemes for investments in the union territory compared to all other states and UTs.

Even as one son of the soil from Jammu's Doda has offered an investment worth Rs 700 crore ($100 million) for strengthening of the hospitality and tourism infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir, most of the Kashmir-based tycoons, who have grabbed massive loans from the Jammu and Kashmir Bank and surreptitiously shifted their businesses to the UAE, have been conspicuously absent at the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha's promotion events in Dubai.

A group of not-so-distinguished Kashmiri businessmen was part of Sinha's investment promotion show but all the celebrated tycoons, running their multi-crore businesses in the Gulf country, were conspicuously hiding from the LG's engagements. They include some big business groups who have reportedly grabbed huge loans on account of establishing industry in Jammu and Kashmir but silently shifted much of the wealth and businesses to Dubai in the last 10-15 years.

Officials said that the erstwhile political governments had showered unlimited favours on the same business groups who are known for tax evasion and money laundering. Hundreds of acres of the State land had been allotted to these groups virtually for free on long leases and nominal royalties on mineral extracts. According to senior officials, subsidies and other incentives worth hundreds of crores of Rupees had also been distributed among the same groups who got prime tourism land for a song at the world-famous resorts of Gulmarg and Pahalgam.

Sinha also visited the India Pavilion at EXPO2020 Dubai during the Jammu & Kashmir Week (03-13 January) and toured the J&K Pavilion. Talking about the importance of EXPO2020 Dubai to J&K, he said: "India's participation at the Expo is a testament to the fact that the country values UAE as an esteemed partner. Various States and sectors in India have understood the importance of the Expo and the global exposure provided by the event. Jammu & Kashmir is privileged to participate at this global event and strengthen its footprint in the UAE".

A two-day Buyer-Seller Meet was also hosted by the Consulate General of India in collaboration with Invest India. It is being organised between sellers from J&K and the potential buyers from the UAE under One District One Product initiative. Agriculture products, food processing, handicrafts and textile are the event's key features.

Indo-Asian News Service

India Republic Day

India-UAE bonding: Poised to climb to new heights

Your achievements make India shine and thrive on the global stage. Your sincerity in giving back to the motherland is a vital cog in the wheel of our nation building, Indian Ambassador to the UAE Sunjay Sudhir talks to the Indian community on the occasion of 73rd Republic Day

On the occasion of the **73rd Republic Day of India**, I convey my warm greetings and good wishes to all Indian nationals and friends of India in the UAE.

This day in 1950, the Constitution of India entered into force and India became a Sovereign, Secular and Democratic Republic. Our Constitution encapsulated our values and beliefs of equality, justice, freedom of thought, speech and expression, rule of law and secularism. India has stood the test of time and has blossomed into a thriving and caring democracy. As envisioned by our founding fathers, India has also stood for peace and harmony around the world. Besides being the world's largest democracy, India is also one of the most diverse cultures where many different faiths, languages, ethnicities and cultures coexist peacefully.

Once again, we are celebrating this Republic Day under the shadow of another wave of the COVID 19 pandemic. However, this time we stand better prepared, stronger with our experiences and armed with effective vaccines, to minimize the impact of this wave. India has contributed to the global fight against COVID 19, with the indigenously developed COVAXIN, recently approved by the WHO, COVISHIELD, in association with Oxford University and AstraZeneca and the recently launched needle-less Zydus Cov-D vaccines. With about 1.6 billion vaccinations being administered, the vaccination drive had covered more than 90% of all adults with atleast one dose and close to 70% with two doses by mid-January 2022, and continues at a rapid pace across the country.

With a plan in place for economic recovery from the pandemic, India is seeing signs of getting back on track with the World Bank projecting an economic growth rate of 8.3% for 2021-22, faster than any other major economy in the world. Industrial activity, which has a direct impact on employment across sectors, in all 8 core sectors is already higher than pre-Covid levels.

India is also engaging with the world with a re-invigorated spirit and is playing a key role as a current member of the UN Security Council. It is also well placed to harness the new realities of international supply chains post the disruption caused by the pandemic.

India and the UAE are also undergoing a rapid and positive transformation in the bilateral relations, strengthened by the mutual support extended by either side during the pandemic. The mutual trust and reliability has encouraged broadening of our ties and exploring new areas of cooperation such as health, food security, clean energy and advanced technologies. A further testimony is fast-tracked negotiations for the India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Strategic Partnership (CEPA) Agreement which is expected to be signed soon. CEPA, when concluded, will boost investments, trade, technological partnership and create employment opportunities across sectors.

To the vibrant community in the UAE, I would like to sincerely re-affirm that you are widely recognised as one of the most critical pillars of strength for this country. Your contributions, even during the most difficult of times, have been exemplary and will act as an inspiration to Indians around the world. Your achievements make India shine and thrive on the global stage. Your sincerity in giving back to the motherland is a vital cog in the wheel of our nation building.

Once again, on behalf of the Embassy of India in Abu Dhabi and the Consulate General of India in Dubai, I wish everyone a very Happy 73rd Republic Day. Jai Hind.

India and the UAE are also undergoing a rapid and positive transformation in the bilateral relations, strengthened by the mutual support extended by either side during the pandemic. The mutual trust and reliability has encouraged broadening of our ties and exploring new areas of cooperation such as health, food security, clean energy and advanced technologies. A further testimony is fast-tracked negotiations for the India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Strategic Partnership (CEPA) Agreement which is expected to be signed soon. CEPA, when concluded, will boost investments, trade, technological partnership and create employment opportunities across sectors.

India Pavilion: A lasting legacy in the UAE

The India Pavilion at Expo Dubai 2020 is an absolute representation of India. It stands tall and draws visitors to come and see what India stands for. **Raghib Hassan** visits the pavilion to get a feel of it

Far from India, a glimpse and feel of India and indianess is palpable in Dubai these days. Indians living in the UAE are feeling nostalgic about it. Every Indians living here have already visited to this place a number of times to get a feel of their motherland. The India Pavilion at Expo Dubai 2020 is an absolute representation of India. It stands tall and gravitates visitors to come and see what India stands for.

It makes Indians living in the UAE nostalgic, at the same time it offers an amazing journey to visitors who wants to know and feel how India looks like and why it is called incredible. The moment you step inside the India Pavilion, a soothing sense of centuries-old civilisation can be easily noticed. A calmness of monk, spirituality of a saint, love for sustainability and nature, a glimpse of innovation, India's achievements in the health, wellness sector and Ayurveda can be easily sensed.

The country has centuries-old culture and civilization and has always attracted people from all across the globe for many interesting reasons. India is one of the few countries in the world, which is highly diverse in its nature. A visit to the pavilion will help you to explore more about India.

If you look at the India Pavilion, you can see that the external facade of the pavilion is made of 600 colourful blocks and is capable of kinetic movements symbolising the theme — India on the move. The visitors also get to experience the immersive AI and VR technology at the pavilion which transports them to a virtual India. While the traditional Indian elements showcase the rich cultural and traditional heritage of the country, its modern architectural concepts, economic and scientific capabilities. Built across a 1.2-acre plot with a state-of-the-art building, it is set to be a permanent structure and will become a part of District 2020 and India's lasting legacy in the UAE.

Talking about the uniqueness of the India Pavilion, Dr Aman Puri, Consulate General of India in Dubai said, "We are delighted to see the response towards the India Pavilion and the work done by CP Kukreja Architects led by Dikshu Kukreja. We would like to thank AIA for choosing the India Pavilion as one of the most iconic pavilions at Expo 2020 Dubai. We believe the theme of 'Connecting minds, creating a future' has been translated through the pavilion structure."

"As India represents a rich blend of cultures and influences, the same is also represented in our architectural heritage. India is home to 1/6th of the humanity and is an enormously diverse nation, the India Pavilion beautifully captures this diversity and tells the story of India. Every day, we see thousands of excited visitors who are mesmerised by the interactive nature of the Pavilion. We are looking forward to hosting many such visitors and sustaining the momentum," Dr Puri added.

Nestled at the Al Forsan Park, adjacent to the "Opportunity District" of the Expo 2020, Dubai, India Pavilion is created on the theme of "Openness. Opportunity. Growth." Consisting of four floors, the India Pavilion is one of the largest pavilions at the Expo 2020 Dubai.

The India Pavilion had crossed 6 lakh footfalls on Dec.22, 2021 shows its popularity. As we ushered into New Year, the footfalls crossed 7 lakh. India Pavilion has also been named "one of the Most Iconic" pavilions by the American Institute of Architects among the 192 participating countries. The Pavilion has made its mark among the 192 participating nations by being recognized as one of the largest, most visited and most iconic (by American Institute of Architects) pavilions at EXPO2020 Dubai. The Pavilion has also played a key role in showcasing the Indian start-up ecosystem amongst global audience through initiatives like 'Elevate', that aims to display unconventional solutions created by 500 Indian start-ups from across the country.

Meanwhile, the India Pavilion also hosted Jammu and Kashmir Week and Tourism week, which was successfully inaugurated by Manoj Sinha, Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of J and K. The event turned out to be hugely successful as it witnessed lots of investment agreements with global investors.

States such as Gujarat, Karnataka, Telangana, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and UT of Ladakh among others have successfully showcased their business ecosystem along with rich cultural heritage

and sourced investment opportunities from leading global investors. Additionally, sectors such as New and Renewable Energy, Space, Urban and Rural Development, Oil & Gas, Textile, Knowledge and Learning have held respective weeks to highlight the growth and investment opportunities in these areas.

To attract the visitors, the Pavilion has also hosted various renowned Bollywood celebrities including Deepika Padukone, Janhvi Kapoor, Jaaved Jaaferi; singers such as Salim-Sulaiman, Hariharan, Benny Dayal, Jonita Gandhi; Indian tennis star, Sania Mirza and the famous fashion designer, entrepreneur and film maker, Manish Malhotra to name a few. Additionally, the Pavilion has showcased the cultural diversity of the various participating states by displaying their products, hosting cultural performances, etc. Key Indian festivals such as Navratri, Dusshera and Diwali were celebrated with great enthusiasm by both Indian and global visitors.

The upcoming weeks at the India Pavilion will witness participation from states such as Goa, Jharkhand, Kerala, Tamil Nadu among others and sectors such as Steel, Healthcare, Electronics and Information Technology, Energy Conservation, Environment & Sustainability, Tribal Affairs to name a few.

The high-profile visitors to the pavilion since its inauguration include Hardeep Singh Puri, Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas & Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs, Dr S Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs, Shri V Muraleedharan, Minister of State for External Affairs and Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, Dr Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Chemicals and Fertilizers, Bhupendra Patel, Chief Minister of Gujarat, Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Union Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology and Minister of State for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, B.S. Yediyurappa, Former Chief Minister of Karnataka, and India's Foreign Secretary, Harsh V Shringla, Dr K. Sivan, Chairman, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) & Secretary, Department of Space among others. Shri R.K. Singh, Union Minister of Power, New and Renewable Energy, Shri Satish Mahana, Minister for Industrial Development, Government of Uttar Pradesh (UP), Smt. Darshana V Jardosh, Union Minister of State for Textile & Railways, and various others joined virtually.

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