Indian economy is the fastest growing large economy in the world and offers important opportunity for Tunisia

Till few years back, India was among the countries suffering because of huge population and vast area. However, it succeeded in overcoming all those hurdles to achieve remarkable economic growth making it eligible to look forward to becoming world power.

To know the secret of this progress and Indian-Tunisia relations, AlCourouk held this interview with HE Ambassador of India to our country Ms Nagma Mallick.

1. How would you describe in figures India’s trade relations with Tunisia?

The bilateral trade turnover between India and Tunisia is currently above 400 million US $. In past years, their trade turnover used to be between 500-600 million US $ since India purchased a lot of phosphate from Tunisia then. Currently, Tunisia buys from India a diverse range of products ranging from black tea, rice and tobacco to kits and auto spares, yarn, electrical equipment, chemicals and cotton textiles. Tunisia exports to India phosphate, electrical equipments, leather and some textiles. There is great scope for improved trade relations between our two countries and our business communities are deeply interested to establish business partnerships with each other. I am working towards deepening the trade and economic ties to the mutual benefit of our two peoples and propose to establish a bilateral Chamber of Commerce to promote this objective this year.

I would like to mention here that the Embassy of India, in collaboration with UTICA, will host a Catalogue Show in UTICA premises on 17th March 2015 in which the catalogues and capabilities of hundreds of Indian companies in diverse fields will be on display for interested Tunisian entrepreneurs to consider for trade opportunities and business partnerships.
2. **What are ongoing important projects/schemes between India and Tunisia (i.e. training courses)?**

Under various training and scientific research schemes of Government of India, Tunisian candidates are deputed to India every year for training and research in various fields. The major programmes are: Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation (ITEC), CV Raman Fellowship Programme (CVRFP) and India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS). During the current financial year (April 2014-March 2015) 60 Tunisian candidates got training under ITEC, 16 under IAFS and 3 under CVRFP. All these programmes were sponsored by Government of India.

3. **What are other fields on which relations between the two countries are focussed?**

There is a new government in Tunisia and a relatively new government in India and naturally both sides are interested to exchange high level political visits. Accordingly, we have a schedule of high level exchanges for the year ahead. In my view, we must also have exchanges between the legislatures of our two countries, one a new and successful democracy and the other the largest democracy in the world. I am working towards this end.

We have an ongoing exchange of visits and training programmes between the scientific communities of our two countries. The Pasteur Institute of Tunis has entered into collaborative ties with the International Centre for Genetic Biotechnology and Engineering of New Delhi. Many Tunisian scientists avail of doctoral and post-doctoral fellowships in advanced scientific areas under the CV Raman Fellowship Programme of the Government of India.

4. **How would you identify future relations between the two countries?**

India is currently the fastest-growing large economy in the world with a growth rate of GDP of 7.4% in the current fiscal year. We are anticipating a growth rate of between 8 and 8.5% in the fiscal year 2015-16 (India counts its fiscal year beginning from 1st April). Thus, India is an extremely attractive investment destination and economic partner whose macro-economic indicators have improved dramatically since Prime Minister Modi’s government took power in May 2014. India, thus, represents a growth opportunity to every country that wishes to partner
it. I would like to see Tunisia and Tunisian entrepreneurs also take advantage of the growth opportunity that India represents.

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I would like to see Tunisia and Tunisian entrepreneurs also take advantage of the growth opportunity that India represents.
ما هي المشاريع والبرامج الجارية بين الهند وتونس حالياً؟

بموجب مشاريع البحث العلمي والبرامج التدريبية المختلفة لحكومة الهند، يتم إيفاد المرشحين التونسيين إلى الهند كل عام للتدريب والبحث في مختلف المجالات. البرامج الرئيسية هي: التعاون الاقتصادي الفني الهندي (ITEC)، برنامج زمالة سي رامان (CVRFP) وقمة المنتدى الهندي الأفريقي (IAFS). خلال السنة المالية الحالية (أبريل 2014 إلى مارس 2015)، حصل 01 مرشحاً تونسيًا على تلك التدريبات بموجب برنامج ITEC، و16 مرشحاً بموجب IAFS، و3 مرشحاً بموجب CVRFP. وهذه البرامج مدعومة من حكومة الهند بـ 100%.

ما هي المجالات الأخرى التي تركز عليها العلاقات بين البلدين؟

هناك حكومة جديدة في تونس وحكومة جديدة نسبياً في الهند، وطبعاً الحال كلا الجانبين مهتمين بتلادل الزيارات السياسية، وفقاً لذلك، لدينا جدول زمني للزيارات الرفيعة المستوى في السنة المقبلة. كما لدينا الندال المستمر للزيارات وبرامج التدريب بين الأوساط العلمية في بلدينا. وقد دخل معهد باستور بتونس في علاقات تعاونية مع المركز الدولي للجينات البيولوجية والهندسة في نيودلهي، والعدد من العلماء التونسيين استفادوا من المنح الدراسية للدكتوراه وما بعد الدكتوراه في المجالات العلمية المتقدمة في إطار برنامج زمالة CVRFP من حكومة الهند.

كيف تحدد الاتصالات المستقبلية بين البلدين؟

تعتبر الهند حالياً الاقتصاد الأكبر والأسريع نمواً في العالم مع معدل نمو للناتج المحلي الإجمالي بـ 4.0% في العام الماضي، ونحن نتوقع معدل نمو بين 8 و8.5% في السنة المالية 2016-2017 (في الهند تبدأ السنة المالية من 1 أفريل). فالهند تمنح فرصة للنمو لكل بلد يريد ان يكون شريكاً له، وأود أن أرى تونس ورجال الأعمال التونسيين يستفيدون من فرص النمو التي تمثلها الهند.

حاورها: عادل الطياري