

## India-UAE Bilateral Relations

India and United Arab Emirates (UAE) enjoy strong bonds of friendship based on age-old cultural, religious and economic ties between the two nations. The relationship flourished after the accession of H.H. Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan as the Ruler of Abu Dhabi in 1966 and subsequently with the creation of the UAE Federation in 1971. Since then, both sides have made sincere efforts to improve relations in all fields.

### Political Relations

2. India-UAE bilateral relations have received impetus from time-to-time with exchange of high-level visits from both sides. The historic visit of Hon'ble Prime Minister of India to UAE on 16-17 August 2015 marked the beginning of a new and comprehensive and strategic partnership. In the Joint Statement issued after the visit, both leaders agreed to work together not only to consolidate achievements in the existing domains but also to explore newer areas of cooperation. H.H. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of UAE Armed Forces, visited India from February 10 – 12, 2016 on a State visit and had wide-ranging discussions on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest and reached a broad consensus and signed MoUs/agreements pertaining to (i) facilitation of Institutional Investors in infrastructure, (ii) cooperation in Renewable energy, (iii) cooperation in combating Cyber-crimes, (iv) Cultural exchange, (v) Space, (vi) Skill Development, (vii) Insurance and (viii) Currency swaps.

### **3. Highlights of India- UAE Joint Statement during the State Visit of Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi on February 12, 2016 are as follows:**

- i) India and UAE look forward to the early signing of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement.
- ii) They reaffirmed their resolve to work together to substantially increase trade by 60 percent over the next five years.
- iii) UAE is invited to be a partner in India's growth story, and to participate in projects creating mega industrial manufacturing corridors, including the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor as well as the Digital India and Start up India programs.
- iv) UAE noted its interest in investing in infrastructure development in India, especially in priority areas such as railways, roads, ports, and shipping. They reiterated USD 75 billion target for UAE investments in India's infrastructure development plans.
- v) The two sides agreed to further business-to-business cooperation in Information Technology (IT), Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES), and Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM). Both sides agreed to cooperate for investment opportunities in the health care industry, including in pharmaceuticals and biotechnology sectors and resolved to urge its private sector to explore early participation in these sectors.
- vi) The two sides agreed to enhance cooperation in space science and space technology.

- vii) The two sides agreed to cooperate in establishing joint investment projects in the UAE and India, as well as joint investment projects in third countries.
- viii) Both sides agreed to cooperate to sign an MOU on establishment of Establishment of a Strategic Petroleum Reserve in India. Both sides also agreed to increase cooperation in the crude oil sector, including through training, and human resources development.
- ix) They agreed to expand their collaboration in renewable energy and in international negotiations on climate change. They acknowledged the importance of ensuring synergies between the ISA and IRENA.
- x) They agreed to work closely together on a range of security issues, particularly on counter-terrorism, maritime security, and cyber-security.
- xi) In the area of defence cooperation, the two sides renewed their commitment to strengthening the existing cooperation in training, joint exercises, and participation in defence exhibitions, as well as in identifying opportunities to cooperate on the production of defence equipment in India.
- xii) They strongly condemned extremism and terrorism in all of their forms and manifestations, irrespective of who the perpetrators are and of their motivations. UAE condemned the terrorist attack on the Indian Air Force Base in Pathankot.
- xiii) The two leaders also agreed to establish an annual Policy Dialogue to discuss issues related to peace in security in their region, and to strengthen their dialogue on regional security issues of mutual interest.

**4. Key Commitments of the Joint Statement issued during PM's visit in August 2015 are as follows:**

- i)** Both sides to coordinate efforts to counter radicalization and misuse of religion by groups and countries. The two sides will facilitate regular exchanges of religious scholars and intellectuals and organize conferences and seminars to promote the values of peace, tolerance, Inclusiveness and welfare that is inherent in all religions.
- ii)** Both sides to denounce and oppose terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Enhance cooperation in counter terrorism, intelligence sharing and capacity building.
- iii)** Promote cooperation in cyber security.
- iv)** Establish a dialogue between the national Security Advisors and the national Security councils.
- v)** Cooperate in maritime security and strengthen defence relations
- vi)** Establish a strategic security dialogue
- vii)** Further promote trade between the two countries, with the target of increasing trade by 60% in the next five years.
- viii)** Agreed to the establishment of UAE-India Infrastructure Investment Fund, with the aim of reaching a target of USD 75 billion to support investment in India's plans for rapid expansion of next generation infrastructure, especially in railways, ports, roads, airports and industrial corridors and parks.
- ix)** Promote strategic partnership in the energy sector, including through UAE's participation in India in the development of strategic petroleum

reserves, upstream and downstream petroleum sectors, and collaboration in third countries.

- x) Promote cooperation in Space, including in joint development and launch of satellites, ground-based infrastructure and space application. Hon'ble PM welcomed UAE's plan to set up the West Asia's first Space Research Centre at Al Ain and plans to launch a Mars Mission in 2021.
- xi) Cooperate in peaceful uses of nuclear energy including in areas like safety, health, agriculture and science and technology.
- xii) Cooperate in manufacture of defence equipment in India.

5. The visit of UAE Foreign Minister to India for the 11<sup>th</sup> session of the Joint Committee meeting within a fortnight of the PM's visit and subsequently by Hon'ble Minister of State (IC) for Commerce and Industry to UAE on 12-13 October, 2015 for 3<sup>rd</sup> HLTFI (High Level Task Force on Investment) have added further momentum to our bilateral partnership and helped to formulate a detailed road map for implementing the cooperation programme.

6. Hon'ble Finance Minister of India visited UAE on November 15-17, 2015. He met Sheikh Hamed, Chairman and MD of ADIA (Abu Dhabi Investment Authority) and Sheikh Hamdan, Finance Minister of UAE. He was also a keynote speaker at the UAE India Economic forum held in Dubai on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2015. Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs of India, General (Retd.) V.K. Singh was received by Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Ras al-Khaimah, on March 11, 2016. He welcomed the Minister to UAE and stressed his country's interest in boosting co-operation and friendship with India in all spheres to serve the common interests of peoples of both countries and create more opportunities for growth and progress. Also, Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs interacted with Indian community and organizations and met senior Indian businesspersons at India Club, Dubai.

7. Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon'ble Minister of State (I/C), Petroleum and Natural Gas, made an official visit to U.A.E. on April 11 - 12, 2016. He had meeting with Mr. Suhail Mohammed Al Mazroui, Minister of Energy and Mr. Sultan Jaber, MOS and Director General of ADNOC and discussed UAE's participation in India's Strategic Petroleum Reserves and possibilities of UAE's investment in Indian hydrocarbon sector. Shri Kalraj Mishra, Hon'ble Minister of Micro. Small & Medium Enterprises visited UAE from 11th to 13th April, 2016 to attend the Second Ministerial Economic and Business Conference (EBC) of the Indian Ocean Rim Association held in Dubai. The theme of the conference was SMEs and Innovation: Investing in a Sustainable Future. Shri Manohar Parrikar, Hon'ble Minister of Defence, visited UAE on 22-23 May 2016. He had meetings with Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of UAE Armed Forces, Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Defence and discussed bilateral defence cooperation and regional and international issues of mutual interest.

8. Dr. Amal Abdullah Al Qubaisi, Speaker of Federal National Council (FNC), met Shri T.P Seetharam, Ambassador of India to the UAE, at the FNC's headquarters in Abu Dhabi on June 18, 2016 to discuss ways of promoting parliamentary cooperation between UAE and India as part of the distinguished and

growing strategic partnership the two countries. The two sides stressed the importance of seeking consultation and coordination between the FNC and Indian Parliament delegations during their participation in the Inter-Parliamentary Union in order to unify positions and views on various issues of interest to both countries and peoples. The two sides also agreed to prepare a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the establishment of a friendly Emirati-Indian Parliamentary Committee.

9. Important visits that have taken place so far are as follows;

Presidential visits:

- Indian President visited UAE in November 1976, October 2003 and November 2010.
- UAE's President, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, visited India in 1975 and 1992.

Prime Ministerial visits:

- Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi visited UAE on 16-17 August, 2015.
- Prime Minister of India, Smt. Indira Gandhi, visited UAE in May 1981.
- UAE's Prime Minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, visited India in March 2007 and March 2010.
- UAE's Deputy Prime Minister, Sheikh Saif Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, visited India in November 2011.

Foreign Ministers' visits:

- UAE FM Sheikh Abdullah visited India on 2-3 September 2015 for the 11<sup>th</sup> session of the Joint Commission meeting. He had earlier visited India June 2007, June 2011, May 2012 and December 2013.
- Minister of External Affairs & Overseas Indian Affairs, Smt Sushma Swaraj, visited UAE on 10-13 Nov, 2014.
- EAM Shri Salman Khurshid visited UAE on March 13, 2013 and held a telephonic conversation with the UAE Foreign Minister on February 5, 2014 on his transit visit. MoS Shri E. Ahmad visited UAE from 30 April to 03 May, 2014.

Other important Ministerial level visits:

*From the Indian side, visits include*

- Minister of State for External Affairs, Sh. MJ Akbar visited UAE during 17 to 19<sup>th</sup> November 2016 to attend the annual Sir Bani Yas Forum, organized by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

- 2<sup>nd</sup> India-UAE Economic Forum was held on 19-20 October 2016 in Dubai. Shri Nitin Gadkari, Minister of Road Transport and Highways and Shri MJ Akbar, MOS for External Affairs participated in the Forum.
- A high-level delegation led by the Defence Minister visited UAE from 22-23 May 2016 and had meetings with the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs and UAE Minister of State for Defence.
- Shri. Kalraj Mishra, Minister of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, visited UAE from 11 – 13 April 2016 to attend the Second Ministerial Economic and Business Conference (EBC) of the Indian Ocean Rim Association held in Dubai.
- Minister of State (Independent charge) for Petroleum & Natural Gas, Shri. Dharmendra Pradhan visited UAE from 10th to 13th April, 2016
- Minister of State for External Affairs of India, General (Retd.) V.K. Singh visited UAE on March 11, 2016
- Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, Shri Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore visited UAE on 8-10 February 2016.
- Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley visited UAE on 15-17 November 2015.
- Minister of State (IC) for Commerce and Industry, Mrs. Nirmala Sitharaman visited UAE on 12-13 October for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the High Level Task Force on Investment.
- Minister of State for Finance, Shri Jayant Sinha, visited UAE in April, 2015.
- Minister of New & Renewable Energy visited UAE in 2011, 2012 and 2014 (for IRENA General Assembly meetings).
- Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs visited UAE in November, 2012 and April, 2013.
- Minister of Commerce and Industry led an Indian delegation to the first High level Task Force on Investment in Abu Dhabi on February 18, 2013.
- Minister of Finance paid a visit on March 23, 2013 for inauguration of Bank of Baroda branch in Dubai. He visited again on May 26, 2013 during which he held meetings with UAE Finance Minister and Deputy Supreme Commander among others.
- Minister of Civil Aviation visited Dubai from April 28 to May 2, 2013 to participate in Dubai Global Convention on Business Excellence.

*From the UAE side, visits include*

- Minister of Economy led the UAE delegation to the Partnership Summit 2014 held in Bengaluru in January, 2014.
- Minister of Energy attended Petrotech 2014 held in Noida (NCR) on January, 2014
- UAE's Minister of Foreign Trade visited India in 2009 and later in January 2012 to participate in the CII partnership Summit.
- The Managing Director of ADIA – largest Sovereign Wealth Fund in the world – visited India on 16-20 January, 2012 to promote investments.
- Minister of State for Financial Affairs visited India on April 3, 2012. MOS Ministry of Finance accompanied UAE Foreign Minister to Delhi on December 12, 2013.

- Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Force will visit India as Chief Guest of the Republic Day 2017.

10. India and UAE have institutional mechanisms in place for addressing the sector-specific issues. This is in the form of Joint Commission for Economic and Technical Cooperation (JCM); Foreign Office Consultations (FOC); High Level Task Force on Investment (HLTFI); Joint Committee on Security Matters (JCSM); Joint Committee on Consular Matters (JCCM); Joint Defense Cooperation Committee (JDCC); Joint Working Group (JWG) on Renewable Energy and Joint Committee on Manpower Resources (JCMR). JCM, FOC and HLTFI are held at the Ministerial/Assistant Ministerial levels. JCSM, JCCM, JDCC and JSMR are held at senior official (Secretary/Additional Secretary) levels. In addition to above a Local Coordination and Grievance Redressal Mechanism to redress grievances of the Indian community is also in place in the form of a Local Coordination Committee (LCC). LCC, comprising of officers from the Embassy and their UAE counterparts meets on a regular basis to follow-up on consular, manpower and community related issues.

### **Commercial Relations:**

11. The traditionally close and friendly India- UAE bilateral relationship has evolved into a significant partnership in the economic and commercial sphere. India-UAE trade, valued at US\$ 180 billion per annum in the 1970s, is today around US\$50 billion making UAE, India's third largest trading partner for the year 2015-16 after China and US. Moreover, UAE is the second largest export destination of India with an amount of over US\$ 30 billion for the year 2015-16. For UAE, India is the largest trading partner for the year 2015 with an amount of over US\$ 28 billion (non-oil trade).

12. India's exports to the UAE are well diversified with a large basket. India's major export items to the UAE are: Petroleum Products, Precious Metals, Stones, Gems & Jewellery, Minerals, Food Items (Cereals, Sugar, Fruits & Vegetables, Tea, Meat, and Seafood), Textiles (Garments, Apparel, Synthetic fibre, Cotton, Yarn) and Engineering & Machinery Products and Chemicals. India's major import items from the UAE are: Petroleum and Petroleum Products, Precious Metals, Stones, Gems & Jewellery, Minerals, Chemicals, Wood & Wood Products. There are 900 direct flights per week between various destinations of India and the UAE. On April 23, 2013 Jet and Etihad Airways signed an US\$ 8 billion agreement. Etihad airlines agreed to invest US\$379 million in Jet Airways for a 24% stake in the shareholding.

13. There is an estimated US\$8 billion UAE investment in India of which around US\$4.03 billion (Mar. 2016) is in the form of foreign direct investment, while the remaining is portfolio investment. UAE is the tenth biggest investor in India in terms of FDI. UAE's investments in India are concentrated mainly in five sectors: Construction Development (12%), Power (11%), Air Transport (9%), Hotel & Tourism (9%), Metallurgical Industries (8%). Prominent UAE companies such as DP World, EMAAR, RAKIA etc. have invested significantly in various sectors of the Indian

economy. Several prominent private and public sector Indian companies and banks are also operating in the UAE. Major Indian companies such as L&T, ESSAR, Dodsal, Punj Lloyd, Engineers India Ltd., TCIL etc. have been able to obtain significant number of contracts in UAE. At the first meeting of India-UAE High Level Task Force on Investment (HLTFI) held on February 18, 2013 in Abu Dhabi, Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) announced its plans of investing US\$ 2 billion in Indian Infrastructure sector. It was decided to establish six sub committees in the areas of infrastructure, trade and investment, aviation, energy, manufacturing & technology; and Information and communications. The second meeting of HLTFI was held in Mumbai on March 3, 2014 and the third meeting was held on October 12-13, 2015 in Abu Dhabi. Indian delegation for the third meeting was led by Minister of State of Commerce & Industry. Both sides agreed to explore ways to expand the participation of the UAE's investment institutions in appropriate infrastructure projects in India and increase trade by 60% over the next five years. The fourth meeting of HLTFI was held on February 2-3, 2016 in New Delhi. The discussions focused on enhancing bilateral investment relations and further exploring ways of increasing trade between the two countries.

14. As part of the Make in India programme being driven by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion under the aegis of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) partnered with Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas show cased India's Make in India programme through an exhibition and conference during the ADIPEC in Abu Dhabi during 7-10 November 2016. UAE Participated in the 13<sup>th</sup> edition of SME World Summit, the biggest entrepreneurship conference, which was held in New Delhi on 22 November 2016, in the presence of more than 1,000 participants represented over 20 countries. UAE took part in the summit's opening session as a partner in a panel discussion on key partnership opportunities in small and medium-sized enterprise sector in the UAE.

### **Cultural Relations:**

13. The two nations share historical ties and have maintained regular cultural exchanges both at official and popular levels. India and UAE signed a Cultural Agreement in 1975 Embassy continues to organize various cultural activities at its own as well as by collaborating with Indian Associations/Cultural Organisations based in UAE. Some of the events organized in the recent past were:

An interactive session with Dr G. Madhvan Nair was organized in the Embassy premises in April, 2015. In April-May, 2015, ICCR-sponsored Bhangra and Gidda Group and Puppetry Group performed in UAE. The First International Day of Yoga was organized on June 21, 2015. Bharatnatyam dance by the group Tripura Divine was organized in July 2015. On the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti on 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct. 2015 a programme was organized by Gandhi Sahitya Vedi in the Embassy Auditorium. A book release and painting demonstration was held on 13<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2015 by eminent artistes Shri A.V. Ilango and Srivi Kalyan. On November 30, 2015, an art exhibition at India House was organized.

An ICCR sponsored Qawali Group led by Mr. Imran Khan performed in UAE on 4 – 5 March, 2016. A book on Art and Paintings by renowned Artist and Painter Mr. P. Gnana was launched at the Auditorium of Embassy of India in Abu Dhabi on 8 April 2016. Ms. Vidhya Gnana Gouresan, a curator and a writer spoke of her experiences about this book. Art work by Mr Gnana was also display at the India House.

The second International Day of Yoga was celebrated on 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2016. His Highness *Sheikh Nahyan* bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of *Culture* and Knowledge Development and Her Excellency Sheikha Lubna bint Khalid bin Sultan Al Qasimi, Minister of State for Tolerance graced the event in which about 4,000 people from all walks of life participated. 11 members Manipur dance group came to UAE on 28 November 2016 to participate in the celebrations on the occasion of UAE's 45<sup>th</sup> Independence Day. The UAE Ministry of Culture hosted the dance group and they performed in the following emirates: Ras Al Khaimah, Sharjah, Fujairah and Dubai.

### **Indian Community:**

14. UAE is home to Indian expatriate community of more than 2.6 million – the largest expatriate community in the UAE. Professionally qualified personnel constitute about 15 & 20 percent of the community, followed by 20 percent white-collar non-professionals (clerical staff, shop assistants, sales men, accountants, etc) and the remainder 65% comprises blue-collar workers. There is a significant business community from India. The Indian community has played a major role in the economic development of the UAE. The annual remittances made by the large Indian community in UAE amount to over US\$15 billion (2013).

15. With a large number of blue-collared Indian workers, focus of bilateral relations is also on developing efficient grievance-redressal mechanisms for the Indian workers in the UAE. India and UAE signed a MoU in the field of Manpower Sourcing in December 2006 and a Protocol to streamline the admission of Indian contract workers by way of an electronic contract registration and validation system was signed on April 4, 2012. Two-day International employers' conference was organized by the MOIA on October 27-28 2014 in Dubai, which dealt with the situation of Indian workers in the Gulf and steps to be taken to further improve them. The Embassy of India organized a States' Conference on 13 September, 2014 in Abu Dhabi to bring representatives of various State Governments from India in direct interaction with the representatives of Indian community in UAE. The Embassy brought out "Guidelines for Indian" for benefits of Indian Community in UAE. A comprehensive online web-based 'NRI registration system' has been developed for Indians resident in UAE to register themselves on the system by filling in the requested details. An online web based portal called E-migrate system has been put in place for recruitment of Indian workers including Indian nurses from 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2015.

16. Shri A. K. Agarwal, the then Secretary, Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs visited UAE from 14-17 October 2015. He called on Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of Culture, Youth and Community Development of UAE and also met Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Labour of UAE and discussed issues pertaining to recruitment and employment of Indian workers. He also interacted with

representatives of Indian Associations and briefed them about MOIA's initiatives and schemes for engagement with the Indian diaspora.

17. The Embassy has Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) for providing short term economic assistance (food, shelter, passage expenses etc.) to destitute workers/housemaids in distress. Indian Workers Resource Centre (IWRC) with a 24-hour helpline is operating in Dubai since November 2010. Regular visits to jails and labour camps by the officers of the Embassy and Consulate and Open house held every working day of the week at the Embassy and Consulate for the Indian Community members, are some of other mechanisms to ensure regular communication between the Embassy & and Consulate with the Indian community.