

India - Qatar Relations

India-Qatar cooperation in diverse sectors has been steadily growing in an excellent framework provided by historically close ties and regular and substantive engagement, including at the highest levels of the two Governments. The large, diverse, accomplished and highly regarded Indian community is making an important contribution to Qatar's progress and in nurturing the bonds of deep-rooted friendship and multi-faceted cooperation between the two countries.

Political Relations

When the results of the last General Elections in India were announced on 16 May, 2014, Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser Al Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of Qatar (QPM) made a congratulatory phone call to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. In his tweet to thank QPM, Prime Minister stated: "We will take India-Qatar ties to newer heights". Qatari leadership fully shares this vision of PM.

The State Visit of HH Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, the Emir of Qatar, to India at the invitation of Hon'ble President Shri Pranab Mukherjee, provided an excellent opportunity to both sides to engage at the highest level, and imparted fresh momentum to our bilateral ties. The former Emir (now the Father Emir) HH Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani had paid three State Visits to India - in April 1999, April 2005 and April 2012. Former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh had visited Qatar in November, 2008. HH the Emir & HE the PM and Minister of Interior of Qatar have most graciously invited Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi to visit Qatar. Both sides are in active contact in this regard. As recently as on 2 November, 2015, HH the Emir and Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi reviewed bilateral cooperation during their phone conversation. HH the Emir renewed his invitation to Prime Minister Modi who conveyed his thanks and reiterated his keenness to visit Qatar on mutually convenient dates.

HH the Emir's visit in March, 2015 was highly significant in many ways. This was the Emir's first visit to India, a country with whom Qatar's relations are steeped in history. This was also the first visit of the Head of State of an Arab country after India's current Government led by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi assumed office in May, 2014.

During the Emir's visit, the two sides discussed ways and means to build a forward-looking partnership by further broadening and deepening the bilateral engagement and by better leveraging the existing complementarities between the two countries in key areas of mutual interest including inter alia, energy, power, petrochemicals, investments, infrastructure, development, project exports, education, culture, health, human resource, media and information technology. Six Agreements/MOUs were signed during the visit, in the following areas: (i) Transfer of sentenced Persons; (ii) Mutual Cooperation between Foreign Service Institute, MEA and Diplomatic Institute, MFA; (iii) Cooperation in Information and Communication Technology; (iv) Cooperation in Atmospheric and Ocean Sciences; (v) Cooperation in

Radio and Television; and (vi) Mutual Cooperation and Exchange of News between Qatar News Agency and United New Agency.

Before his visit to India, the Emir deeply appreciated Prime Minister's gesture of writing a letter to him on the deep-rooted relations and multi-faceted cooperation between India and Qatar, and sending National Security Adviser Shri Ajit Doval to Doha on 11-12 February, 2015 to present the letter. NSA's visit was the first high level visit from our side after the current Government in India assumed office. Warmly reciprocating the sentiments expressed in Prime Minister's letter, the Emir emphasized the importance of Qatar-India partnership, appreciated the contribution of the Indian community in Qatar, and conveyed that he was greatly looking forward to his first visit to India. NSA also met with Qatar's Prime Minister & Minister of Interior and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj and Dr. Khalid bin Mohammad Al Attiyah former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar (QFM), spoke on phone a few times and also met at the India-GCC Ministerial meetings on the sidelines of the 69th and 70th UNGA in New York in September, 2014 and September, 2015; the meeting on 30 September, 2015 was co-chaired by EAM and QFM, as Qatar was then the GCC Chair. External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj participated in the first Ministerial Meeting of "India-Arab Forum" held in Bahrain in January 2016.

Ahead of the 70th UNGA Session, the Emir had received a letter from PM on UN reform and other multilateral issues, and conveying India's thanks for Qatar's support for the First International Day of Yoga (IDY).

There have also been other high level contacts between the two countries since the current Government of India assumed office. Mr. Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Rumaihi, the then Assistant Foreign Minister (AFM) visited Delhi on 5 June, 2014 and held Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) with Shri Anil Wadhwa, the then Secretary(East), and called on EAM. EAM received a call by Al Rumaihi on 5 June, 2014. Former Secretary (East) visited Doha during the holy month of Ramadan on 9 July, 2014. He met with AFM Al Rumaihi and the Emir's Political Adviser, and called on QPM. Law and Justice Minister Shri D.V. Sadananda Gowda met with Qatar's Justice Minister Dr. Hassan bin Lahdnan Al Hassan Al Mohannadi during his visit to Doha as the leader of the Indian delegation to the 13th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (UNCCPCJ) in April, 2015. Qatar's Transport Minister and Commander of Qatar Emiri Air Force visited the Aero Indian Exhibition in Bengaluru in February, 2015. Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Petroleum & Natural Gas [MOPNG] Shri Dharmendra Pradhan had a fruitful visit to Doha on 8-10 November 2015, leading a high level delegation to the 6th Asian Ministerial Energy Roundtable.

Defence

India-Qatar Defence Cooperation Agreement, signed during the visit of former PM to Qatar in November 2008 and extended till 2018, is implemented through the Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC), which had its fourth meeting in Delhi on 6-7 January, 2015. Govt posted a Resident Defence Attaché in Embassy of India, Doha in January 2014. Our defence cooperation with Qatar has so far been limited to training, participation in each other's conferences/events and visits by ships of Indian Navy and Coast Guard - it is heartening that as part of the Western Fleet's Overseas Deployment Programme (OSD) to the Arabian Gulf, Indian Naval Ships 'Delhi' and 'Trishul' paid a goodwill visit to the port of Doha from 14- 17 September 2015. Indian Coast Guard Ship ICGS Sankalp visited Doha Port from 24-28 January, 2016 in conjunction with the celebrations of India's 67th Republic Day. As a follow up of the 4th JDCC, a scoping delegation of Qatar Coast Guard visited India from 21-25 February, 2015 followed by two high-level delegations, one each from Ministry of Transportation, Government of Qatar and Qatar Emiri Air Forces at the AERO INDIA EXPO 2015, held at Bengaluru from 19-23 Feb 15. A three-member delegation from Joaan Bin Jassim Joint Command and Staff College, visited India from 13 to 18 Apr 15. The fourth edition of Exercise Ferocious Falcon (4) 2015, a biennial multi-national crisis management exercise organized by Qatar Armed Forces was held from 10 May 2015 to 26 May 2015. A two-member delegation from HQIDS participated as observers during Field Training Exercise (FTX) phase from 18-21 May 2015. A delegation from Qatar Emiri Naval Forces [QENF] attended the International Fleet Review 2016 [IFR 2016] at Visakhapatnam from 04 to 08 Feb 2016. A high level delegation from the Qatar Emiri Land Forces participated at the Ninth International Land, Naval, Internal Homeland Security and Defence System Exposition - 'DEFEXPO INDIA-2016', held in Goa from 28 to 31 March, 2016.

A high level delegation from India participated at the Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference (DIMDEX 2016) held at Doha, Qatar from 29-31 March 2016. The delegation was led by Vice Admiral Sunil Lanba PVSM, AVSM, ADC, Flag Officer Commanding in Chief, Western Naval Command of the Indian Navy and included Inspector General S K Goyal PTM, TM, Deputy Director General (Materiel and Maintenance), Indian Coast Guard. The visiting Admiral and the delegation met with HE Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser Khalifa Al Thani, the Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of the State of Qatar and HE Dr. Khalid bin Mohammed al Attiyah, Minister of State [Cabinet Rank] for Defence Affairs of Qatar. The delegation also met with HE Maj Gen Ghanim bin Shaheen Al-Ghanim, the Chief of Staff of Qatar Armed Forces and HE Staff Maj Gen Nasser Mohammed Al Mohannadi, the Commander of Qatar Emiri Naval Forces. The Admiral also gave a highly acclaimed talk entitled "The Saliency of the Maritime Domain in the Security Architecture of the Arabian Sea and adjoining areas - An Indian Navy Perspective" during the Middle East Naval Commanders Conference held at QNCC on 30 March, 2016. 'Indian Naval Ship Beas' visited Doha port from 28 Mar to 01 Apr 2016 to participate at the DIMDEX 2016. An official reception to celebrate the high level participation of India at DIMDEX 2016 was hosted by Vice Admiral Sunil Lanba PVSM, AVSM, ADC, Flag Officer Commanding in Chief, Western Naval Command and Ambassador on board the ship on 30 March, 2016.

Commercial Relations

However, in the last two years, there has been a substantial growth of India's exports, amounting to nearly \$1 billion out of two-way trade of nearly \$17 billion in 2013-14, registering an export growth of 45% over the export figure (\$687 million) in 2012-13. In 2014-15, India's exports exceeded \$1 billion (\$1056 million), though bilateral trade came down to \$15.7 billion due to decline in Qatar's exports to India from \$15.7 billion in 2013-14 to \$14.6 billion in 2014-15. Major items of Indian exports are machinery & equipment, transport equipment, articles of iron or steel, plastic & articles thereof, construction material, electrical and electronic items, textiles & garments, chemicals, precious stones, rubber, spices and cereals. India is the third largest export destination for Qatar (behind Japan and South Korea) and ranks at 10th position for Qatar's imports.

Petronet of India and RasGas of Qatar signed a Sale Purchase Agreement (SPA) for additional annual supply of one million metric tons of LNG by RasGas in New Delhi on 31 December, 2015. This is in addition to the existing long term contract for supply of 7.5 million metric tons of LNG per annum. The composition of India-Qatar Business Forum has been finalized.

Both countries are keen to expand collaborations to their mutual benefit in the fields of energy; business, finance and investments; infrastructure; education and research; sports; travel and tourism; and other areas. Besides official interactions, people-to-people contacts and initiatives by private sector are energising dialogue and cooperation in various sectors.

India's corporate sector is increasingly pursuing business opportunities in Qatar. A number of reputed Indian companies, particularly in construction/infrastructure and IT, have operations in Qatar, including L&T; Punj Lloyd; Shapoorji Palonji; Voltas; TCS; Wipro; MahindraTech; HCL; etc. SBI, ICICI and other Indian banks have limited operations under Qatar Financial Centre or private exchange houses in Qatar; we continue to pursue request of our banks for full-fledged operations.

Following a MOU signed between Aiana Resorts (part of Leela Group) and Faisal Holding during the Emir's visit to India in March, 2015, both partners are constructing a high end luxury apartments complex in Doha's West Bay area, with 50% investment by each. During the Emir's visit, another MOU was signed for setting up a multi-speciality hospital in Qatar in partnership with Medanta of India.

In the economic arena, there have been a number of notable developments in our bilateral cooperation with Qatar in the last one and a half years. Mr. Sultan Al Khater, Under Secretary in the Ministry of Economy & Commerce led an 18 member composite delegation, focused on economic partnership, to New Delhi on 25-26 March, 2014. There has been expansion in business operations of Indian companies in infrastructural and IT sectors present in Qatar, including such prestigious projects such as Gold Line Metro and Wakra Bypass highway being awarded to Larsen & Toubro. 45 Indian companies participated in Project Qatar Exhibition (PQE) in Doha from 12-15

May, 2014; the number increased to 60 at PQE held from 4-7 May, 2015. 'Vibrant Gujarat' business delegation visited Doha from 3-5 September, 2014. The Embassy organized three business and investment events, attended by several Qatari businessmen/investors, in Doha on 25 September, 2014 coinciding with PM's launch of 'Make in India' campaign. A 20-member NASSCOM delegation visited Doha on 18-19 March, 2015. The Embassy is currently preparing for the visit of a CII business mission, led by CII's President-elect, to Qatar on 20-21 October, 2015.

A multi-sectoral delegation from the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) led by CII's President-designate visited Doha on 20-21 October, 2015. Qatar Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Embassy of India organized an event to promote the participation of Qatari businessmen and investors at the 'Make in India' Week in Mumbai from 13-18 February, 2016. There was high-level participation from Qatar at the Indian Investment Summit in New Delhi on 4-5 February, 2016. The largest ever (65) number of India companies participated in 'Project Qatar' Exhibition in May, 2015. Doha Bank's full fledged branch in Mumbai was inaugurated in April 2015. Qatar Airways started its flight to Nagpur on 1 December 2015; Nagpur is the 13th destination in India for regular Qatar Airways flights from Doha. This is an illustrative and not an exhaustive list.

There has also been encouraging participation from Qatar at major business conferences in India – the 4th India-Arab Partnership Conference in New Delhi on 26-27 November, 2014; Vibrant Gujarat Summit in Gandhinagar, Gujarat from 11-13 January, 2015; the Partnership Summit 2015 in Jaipur, Rajasthan from 15-17 January, 2015; BlackRock India Investor Summit in New Delhi on 3 February, 2015 (at which former PM of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabor Al Thani was among the attendees) and Aero India in Bengaluru from 18-22 February, 2015.

While the current volume of Qatar's FDI in India is modest, Qatar's Sovereign Wealth Fund [Qatar Investment Authority (QIA)] and other State-owned entities, as well as private investors in Qatar are keenly looking at attractive investment options in infrastructural sectors in India in various sectors, including real estate/construction, roads/highways, airports/airlines, ports; LNG, petrochemicals and fertilizers; and tourism/hospitality.

There is vast potential for QIA to substantially increase its investments in India, keeping in view India's huge investment needs (\$1 trillion in next five years in infrastructural sectors alone) and investment friendly policies, as also QIA's keenness to diversify its global portfolio. Mission has been actively engaged with QIA and other State-owned and private entities in Qatar, highlighting the new initiatives and policies of the current Government, such as 'Make in India' and the distinctive advantages of India as an investment destination.

Indian Business & Professional Network (IBPN), functioning under the aegis of the Embassy, contributes in promoting trade & investment between the two sides. The recent setting up of an India-Qatar Business Forum comprising senior representatives

of a number of Indian companies and Qatari businessmen nominated by Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry is another positive development.

Cultural Relations

Cultural ties between India and Qatar are deep rooted and actively nurtured by both sides. Qataris admire India's cultural diversity. There is a regular flow of Indian artistes performing in Qatar at events organised by community organizations affiliated to the Indian Cultural Centre (ICC), apex body of associations of the Indian community functioning under the aegis of Embassy of India, Doha, and private sponsors. With the Embassy's cooperation and support, ICC has organized a large scale Community Festival titled 'A Passage to India' in November, 2013, March, 2015 and April, 2016, aimed at presenting India in a composite way i.e. showcasing India's rich cultural diversity as well as strengths and achievements in different spheres. ICCR-sponsored photo exhibition on Islamic Monuments of India and Kathak and Kalbeliya performances organised by the Embassy in Doha in September-October, 2014, August 2015 and April, 2016 respectively, were highly acclaimed. Exhibitions on India by young photographers held by Qatar Photographic Society in the last two years have also been very popular. A few Indian films/documentaries are usually shown at the annual Film Festival of Doha Film Institute. Several visits/events related to tourism and sports have also taken place in recent months, including a seminar on Indian Tourism and participation of Indian teams in major athletics, boxing, volleyball and wrestling and other tournaments.

Fath Al Khair Dhow undertook a voyage from Doha to Mumbai, via Oman during 5 October - 17 November 2015. On arrival in Mumbai, the crews were given a warm and enthusiastic reception at a ceremony presided over by Hon'ble Governor of Maharashtra. We salute HH Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Emir of Qatar, for this unique initiative which was launched in 2013 as a commemoration by Qataris of the historical pearl. It is significant that on its second voyage, *Fath Al Khair* sailed to Mumbai, whereas its first voyage was to neighbouring Gulf countries.

There are 14 Indian schools in Qatar, offering CBSE curricula to over 30,000 students, most of whom are the children of Indian nationals working in Qatar.

Both countries had signed an Agreement on Cultural Cooperation during the former Emir's visit in April 2012. Qatari side has proposed to celebrate India-Qatar Year of Culture in 2019.

Yoga : India deeply appreciates Qatar's support, as a co-sponsor, to its Resolution at the UNGA, adopted unanimously with a record 177 co-sponsors, declaring 21 June as the International Day of Yoga (IDY), and for various activities to celebrate the first IDY in Qatar. PM's letter to Qatar's Prime Minister (QPM), conveying thanks for Qatar's co-sponsorship, was presented by NSA to QPM in Doha on 12 February, 2015. We are grateful to Government of Qatar and Q-Post for the release of a commemorative stamp to mark this occasion.

Indian Community

Indian nationals comprise the largest expatriate community in Qatar and are engaged in a wide spectrum of professionals, including medicine; engineering; education, finance; banking; business; media and labour. They are highly regarded for their honesty, hard work, qualifications and contribution to the development and progress of Qatar.

Reaching out to the Indian community in Qatar in a pro-active, helpful and inclusive manner, and ensuring their well-being and welfare, is the Embassy's foremost priorities. We are particularly mindful of our duties towards the large number of Indian workers who are making a vital contribution to Qatar's progress by the sweat of their brow. Several volunteers from the Indian community are also helping our workers, mainly through the Indian Community Benevolent Forum (ICBF), functioning under the aegis of Embassy of India, Doha - ICBF was awarded Pravasi Bharatiya Sammaan in January, 2011. Both countries have a Joint Working Group on Labour and Manpower Development, which held its last (3rd) meeting in Doha in August, 2015. We remain in close contact with the authorities concerned in Qatar regarding the well being of our workers and other nationals, and appreciate their cooperation and support. We welcome the process of labour reforms undertaken by Government of Qatar, and look forward to expeditious implementation of further steps being considered.

More detailed information on the Embassy's consular and labour & community welfare services is given on its website.

Useful Resources:

Embassy of India, Doha website:

www.indianembassyqatar.gov.in

Embassy of India, Doha Twitter Handle

<https://twitter.com/IndEmbDoha>

Embassy of India, Doha Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/IndianEmbassyQatar>

Embassy of India, Doha Youtube Account

www.youtube.com/user/Embassydoha

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