

India-Qatar Bilateral 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

2. There has been regular exchange of high-level bilateral visits. The Amir of Qatar H.H. Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani had paid a State Visit to India in March 2015. Previously, the then Amir H.H. Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani [now the Father Amir] had visited India in 1999, 2005 and 2012. The then Qatari PM Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser Al Thani visited India in December 2016. During H.H. the Amir's visit to India in March, 2015, 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 News Agency.

3. Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi paid a state visit to Doha from 4-5 June, 2016 at the invitation of H.H. Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, the Amir of Qatar. PM's visit provided an excellent opportunity to both sides to engage at the highest level, and imparted fresh momentum to our bilateral ties. This was the highest-level visit from India to Qatar since the visit of former PM Dr. Manmohan Singh in November 2008.

4. During his visit to Doha in June 2016, PM held extensive talks with H.H. the Amir and exchanged views on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of mutual concern. Seven MoUs/ Agreements between the two sides were signed during PM's visit, which includes (1) MoU for investment in National Investment and Infrastructure Fund of India; (2) MoU between Financial Intelligence Unit – India (FIU-IND) and the Qatar Financial Information Unit (QFIU); (3) MoU for Cooperation in Skill Development and Recognition of Qualifications; (4) MoU for Cooperation in the field of Health; (5) Agreement on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Custom Matters; (6) MoU on Tourism Cooperation; and (7) First Executive Program for MoU in the field of Youth and Sports.

5. Prime Minister Modi met the Amir on the sidelines of the COP28 Summit in Dubai on 01 December 2023 and discussed the potential of India-Qatar bilateral partnership and well-being of the Indian community in Qatar. Earlier, the Prime Minister had met H.H. the Amir of Qatar on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly on 23 September 2019 in New York where they discussed bilateral relations and regional and international issues of mutual interest. They have been in constant touch with each other telephonically. They had spoken on 29 October 2022 and discussed bilateral relations, and agreed to jointly celebrate the 50 years of India-Qatar Diplomatic relations.

6. Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of Qatar, H.E. Sheikh Abdullah Bin Nasser Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, undertook an official visit to India from 2-3 December, 2016. During the visit, various Agreements/MOUs were signed, including the Agreement for Exemption of Visa Requirement for Holders of Diplomatic, Special and Official Passport Holders, and MoUs on Technical Cooperation in Cyber Space and Combating Cyber Crime; and between the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy of Qatar and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in addition to a Letter of Intent for e-visas for tourists and businessmen. Separately, an MoU between Qatar Ports Management Company ("Mwani Qatar") and Indian Ports Global Private Limited was concluded.

7. Hon'ble Vice President of India (HVPI) Shri M Venkaiah Naidu paid an official visit to Qatar in June 2022. He met Prime Minister of Qatar H.E. Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdulaziz Al Thani, and Father Amir of Qatar H.H. Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani. Speaker of Shura Council of Qatar, called on HVPI. During the meetings both sides emphasized the historical relations between both the peoples, and ways to take bilateral relations to further heights. HVPI chaired an India-Qatar Business Forum in association with Qatari Businessmen Association & Qatar Chamber of Commerce & Industry during the visit. Hon'ble Vice President of India, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar also visited Doha in November 2022 and attended the inauguration ceremony of FIFA World Cup 2022. On the sidelines, HVPI met H.H. Amir Sheikh Tamim as well as a number of other world leaders.

8. There have been several high-level visits between the two countries in the recent past:

- (i) EAM Dr. S Jaishankar, during his visit to Doha on 9 February 2022, met DPM/FM Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani. They jointly laid the foundation stone for new Chancery building in the land allocated in the diplomatic enclave.
- (ii) EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar, during his visit to Doha, met Qatar's DPM/FM Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani and DPM/MoS for Defence Affairs Dr

Khalid bin Mohammed Al Attiyah (15 June, 2021) and NSA Mohammed bin Ahmed al Misnad (09 June, 2021) and reviewed the bilateral relations and discussed global and regional developments. He met Qatar's DPM/FM in August 2021 and discussed the situation in Afghanistan.

- (iii) EAM Dr. S Jaishankar paid a two day stand alone visit to Qatar on December 27-28, 2020. During the visit, he called on Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, PM & Minister of Interior Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdulaziz al-Thani and Qatari DPM and FM Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani. EAM handed over a written message from Indian Prime Minister to Amir, inviting him to visit India in the near future. He also met Qatar Chamber, QBA officials and urged Qatari businessmen to invest in India. EAM held a virtual interaction with the Indian community in Qatar.
- (iv) Dr. Rajkumar Ranjan Singh, MOS for External Affairs and Education of India attended the 5th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5), in Doha from from 4-8 March 2023.
- (v) Shri V Muraleedhran, MoS for External Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs visited Qatar from 8-10 May 2022 and held discussion with Minister of State for Foreign Affairs HE Soltan bin Saad Al Muraikhi. They reviewed bilateral relations in addition to discussion on global and regional developments. MOS also met other Qatari dignitaries as well as a wide cross section of Indian community.
- (vi) Mr. Jassim bin Seif bin Ahmed al-Sulaiti, Minister of Transport of Qatar visited New Delhi from 5-8 February 2023. He met with Union Minister of Civil Aviation Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia, Minister of Road Transport and Highways Shri Nitin Jairam Gadkari and Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Shri Sarbananda Sonowal.
- (vii) Mr. Sheikh Khalifa Bin Jassim Al-Thani, Chairman of Qatar Chamber of Commerce & Industry participated in the B20 Summit in New Delhi from 24-28 August 2023.
- (viii) Dr. Mutlaq bin Majed Al Qahtani, Special Envoy of the Foreign Minister for Counter-terrorism and Mediation in Conflict Resolution of Qatar, participated in the 3rd Ministerial Conference on Counter-Terrorism Financing "No Money for Terror", held in New Delhi from 18-19 November 2022.
- (ix) Qatar's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Dr. Khalid bin Mohammed Al Attiyah visited India from 03-05 February 2020 and met with Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar. During the visit, Dr. Al Attiyah also visited the DefExpo 2020 exhibition in Lucknow.

- (x) Qatar's MOS for Energy Affairs Saad Sherida Al Kaabi visited New Delhi on 27 January 2020 and met with Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Shri Dharmendra Pradhan. The two leaders discussed bilateral cooperation in the field of energy. Earlier, Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas of India Shri Dharmendra Pradhan visited Qatar from 11-12 September 2019 and met with MOS for Energy Affairs and Qatar Petroleum CEO & President Saad Sherida Al Kaabi in Doha. He also called on the then Qatari PM and Interior Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser Al Thani and discussed bilateral relations and issues of mutual concern.
- (xi) Gen. (Dr.) V. K. Singh (Retd), the then MOS for External Affairs of India, visited Doha from 01-02 May 2019 to attend the 16th Ministerial Meeting of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD). On the sidelines of the event, he held meetings with his Qatari counterpart Soltan bin Saad Al Muraikhi.
- (xii) A high-level delegation from Qatar led by Minister of Transport and Communications Jassim Saif Ahmed al-Sulaiti visited Mumbai from 14-16 January 2019 to participate in the Global Aviation Summit. On the sidelines, Qatari delegation held meeting with India's Minister of State for Civil Aviation Jayant Sinha. The two sides discussed aspects of co-operation in the fields of transport and aviation services, and potential investment opportunities in these areas.
- (xiii) Smt. Sushma Swaraj, the then EAM visited Doha on 28-30 October 2018 which was the first-ever visit by any Indian External Affairs Minister to Doha. During the visit, EAM called on H.H. the Amir and discussed issues of common concern. She also called on the then Qatari PM Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani, and discussed of bilateral relations. EAM held delegation level talks with the Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani and reviewed the whole gamut of bilateral relations. During the visit the two sides also signed a Joint Declaration to establish Joint Commission.
- (xiv) Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani visited India on 25-26 August, 2017 and held delegation-level talks with EAM Smt. Sushma Swaraj on 26 August during which matters of mutual interest were discussed. The two sides reviewed progress on the follow-up of key decisions taken during the high-level bilateral visits which have been contributing to building a mutually beneficial partnership between the two countries. The visiting Qatari Minister called on PM Modi to hand over a letter from H.H. the Amir of Qatar. During the meeting, the Qatari side welcomed participation of the Indian companies through project exports in Qatar's infrastructure development, including for the ongoing FIFA 2022 related infrastructure. Sheikh Mohammed briefed his Indian interlocutors about the situation in the Gulf region.

9. Other recent virtual/telephonic engagements include:

- (i) Prime Minister Modi held a phone call with HH Amir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani on 29 October 2022. The Prime Minister thanked H.H. for his gracious Diwali greetings, and conveyed best wishes for a successful FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. Both leaders agreed to jointly celebrate 50 years of India-Qatar diplomatic relations in 2023.
- (ii) Telephone call between EAM Dr S Jaishankar DPM/FM Abdulrahman Al-Thani on 22 January 2022.
- (iii) Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas Shri Hardeep Puri and Qatar's Minister of State for Energy Affairs of Qatar Saad Sherida Al Kaabi on 10 July 2021.
- (iv) EAM Dr S Jaishankar participated in Qatar Economic Forum virtually, on 22 June 2021.
- (v) Commerce and Industry Minister of India Mr. Piyush Goyal and Commerce and Industry Minister of Qatar Mr. Ali bin Ahmed Al-Kuwari held a virtual meeting on 6 May 2021 to discuss bilateral trade relations.
- (vi) Mr Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas of India and Minister of State for Energy Affairs, Mr. Saad Sherida Al Kaabi held telephonic conversation in the first week of May 2021 to discuss Covid situation. Earlier, they had spoken on 11 December 2020 and agreed to set up Joint Task Force on Energy.
- (vii) Qatar's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister participated in Raisina Dialogue virtually on 13 April 2021.
- (viii) Minister of Transport and Communications of Qatar Mr. Jassim Saif Ahmed Al Sulaiti participated virtually in the 2nd edition of Maritime India Summit on 2 March 2021.

10. Meetings of Institutional Mechanisms:

- (i) India and Qatar held 4th Round of Foreign Office Consultations virtually on 1 February 2021. The Indian side was lead by Secretary (CPV & OIA) Sanjay Bhattacharya and the Qatari side by Secretary General (SG) of the Foreign Ministry Dr. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Hammadi. During the meeting, the whole gamut of bilateral relations were reviewed including political, energy, trade, investments, defense, food security, health security, science and technology, consular, community and cultural aspects.
- (ii) 3rd meeting of the Joint Task Force on Energy took place virtually on 30 June 2021 respectively.

- (iii) 2nd meeting of Joint Committee on Security and Law Enforcement was held on 26 October 2021 (virtually) between Ministry of Home Affairs and Qatari Ministry of Interior. Both sides agreed to further strengthen and deepen bilateral cooperation, including in the the fields of cyber security, counter terrorism, prevention of trafficking of drugs and psychotropic substances, enhancing industrial security, countering economic frauds, arrangements for FIFA World Cup 2022 to be hosted by Qatar.
- (iv) Inaugural meeting of Joint Customs Cooperation Committee was held on 01 December 2021 in virtual mode.
- (v) The 1st meeting of Joint Working Group on Health Cooperation was held virtually on 16 December 2021 between and MoHFW, India and Ministry of Public Health of Qatar. Both sides discussed digital health & pandemic management, pharmaceutical cooperation, exchange of experts and professionals, medical value tourism and possible areas of cooperation.
- (vi) Joint Working Group on Labour and Manpower Development: The 7th Meeting of the JWG was held on 4-5 May 2022.

Defence

11. Defence cooperation is an important pillar of our bilateral agenda. India offers training slots in its defence institutions to a number of partner countries, including Qatar. India regularly participates in the biennial Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference (DIMDEX) in Qatar. Indian Naval and Coast Guard ships regularly visit Qatar as part of our bilateral cooperation and interaction. India-Qatar Defence Cooperation Agreement, signed during the PM's visit to Qatar in November 2008, and further extended for a period of five years in November 2018. The agreement is implemented through the Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC), which held its fifth meeting in Doha on 27-28 November 2019.

12. Major visits by defence delegations and ship visits:

- Flag Officer Commanding- In-Chief Vice Admiral Ajendra Bahadur Singh along with his delegation visited Doha from 20-24 Mar 22 for participating in DIMDEX 22 and Middle East Naval Commanders Conference. The Admiral during his visit met HE Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdul Aziz Al Thani, PM and Minister of Interior Qatar, Lt General (Pilot) Salem Hamad Mohammed Aqueel Al Nabit, the Chief of Staff, Qatar Armed Forces and Maj Gen(Sea) Abdullah Hassan Al Sulaiti, Commander QENF. INS Kolkata participated in DIMDEX-22.

- The Vice Chief of Army Staff Lt General Chandy Prasad Mohanty visited Doha from 07-08 Dec 21. The Vice Chief met with Commander, Qatar Emiri Land Forces and Barzan Holding Vice President.
- Dr. Khalid bin Mohammed Al Attiyah, Deputy PM and Minister of State for Defence Affairs visited India in Feb 2020 and held bilateral talks with Raksha Mantri and EAM. The Minister also attended the opening ceremony of DefExpo 2020 in Lucknow.
- C-17 Aircrafts of Indian Air Force visited Doha in the month of May and June 2021 to transport cryogenic containers as part of Covid relief operation.
- INS Kolkata, INS Tarkash, INS Trikand and INS Shardul visited Hamad Port, Doha in the month of May and June 2021 to undertake shipping of medical supplies for Covid Relief from Qatar as part of “Op Samudra Setu- II”.
- Indian Naval Ship INS Tarkash, commanded by Captain Happy Mohan, paid a port call at Hamad Port on 22-23 April, 2021.
- The Chief of Staff of Qatar Armed Forces, Lt. Gen. (Pilot) Ghanim bin Shaheen Al Ghanim, visited in India from 19-22 June 2018 and called on all the three service chiefs and Defence Secretary. An agreement on white shipping information sharing was signed during the visit.
- The Commander of the Qatar Amiri Naval Forces (QENF) visited in India from 02-05 April 2019 and called on Chairman of Chief of Staff Committee (COSC), Defence Secretary and Vice Chief of Air Staff.
- Indian Navy’s first Sail Training Ship (STS) INS Tarangini visited Doha Port from December 08-09, 2019. A six-member team from the Qatari Navy visited the ship on December 09 for a familiarization event and interacted with the Indian Navy officials.

Commercial & Investment Relations

13. India's bilateral trade with Qatar in 2022-23 was US\$ 18.77 billion. India’s export to Qatar during 2022-23 was US\$ 1.96 billion and India’s import from Qatar was US\$ 16.8 billion. Qatar’s key exports to India include LNG, LPG, chemicals and petrochemicals, plastics, and aluminium articles, while India’s key exports to Qatar include cereals, copper articles, iron and steel articles, vegetables, fruits, spices, and processed food products, electrical and other machinery, plastic products, construction material, textiles & garments, chemicals, precious stones and rubber. India is among the top three largest export destinations for Qatar (China and Japan being the other

two) and is also among the top three sources of Qatar’s imports, along with China and US.

India-Qatar Bilateral Trade:

(Values in US\$ billion)

	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24 (Apr-Nov)
Indian Export to Qatar	1.61	1.27	1.28	1.87	1.97	1.01
Indian Import from Qatar	10.72	9.69	7.93	13.33	16.81	7.61
Total Bilateral Trade	12.33	10.96	9.21	15.20	18.78	8.62

(Source: Department of Commerce, India)

14. Qatar is the largest supplier of LNG to India (10.74 MMT for US\$ 8.32 billion n FY 2022-23), accounting for over 48% of India's global LNG imports. Qatar is also India’s largest supplier of LPG (5.33 MMT for US\$ 4.04 billion in FY 2022-23) accounting for 29% of India’s total LPG imports. Besides LNG, India also imports ethylene, propylene, ammonia, urea and polyethylene from Qatar. Therefore, the balance of trade continues to be heavily in Qatar’s favour. However, there has been a substantial growth in India’s exports to Qatar in the last few years.

15. A long term contract LNG Sale and Purchase Agreement was signed on 6 February 2024 during the visit of Qatar’s Minister of State for Energy Affairs Engineer Saad bin Sherida Al Kaabi to India for participating in the India Energy Week 2024. the deal stipulates 7.5 MMTPA supply by QatarEnergy to PetronetLNG for 20 years starting 2028.

16. According to the Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry (QCCI), there are over 15000 big and small Indian companies operating in Qatar, wholly owned and Joint Venture. Indian companies are today pursuing collaborations in various sectors like

infrastructure, communications and information technology, energy and other areas in Qatar. Qatar's North Field Expansion project which aims to increase LNG production from current 77 MMTPA to 126 MMTPA by 2027, infrastructure development as it prepares to host the prestigious Asian Games 2030, and attain its National Vision 2030 objective, and the acknowledged competences of India's corporate sector, offer attractive opportunities for cooperation. Indian companies have invested about US\$450 million in Qatar, according to a statement by Qatar Financial Centre (QFC). Indian companies from across sectors have been present in Qatar for over several years and among them are Larsen & Toubro, Voltas, Shapoorji Pallonji, Wipro, TCS and Tech Mahindra.

17. There has been a substantial increase in Qatar's imports from India past few years, facilitated by the opening of direct shipping lines linking Indian ports with Qatar. The increase has been in the area of food products, vegetables, pharmaceuticals, steel products and construction materials.

18. Major Qatari investments in India since 2019:

- In January 2019, QIA invested US\$ 200 million through a primary equity issuance in Bharti Airtel's arm Airtel Africa Ltd.
- In July 2019, BYJU'S announced that it has received an investment of US\$150 million led by Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), the sovereign wealth fund of the State of Qatar.
- In February 2020, Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) invested about US\$450 million for a 25.1% stake in a unit of Adani Transmission Ltd. The deal includes a subordinated debt investment by QIA, according to the filing, which said the two sides have signed a definitive agreement.
- In February 2021, QIA invested US\$100 million in Verse Innovation, the parent company of vernacular news aggregator Dailyhunt and maker of short video entertainment app Josh, along with Glade Brook Capital Partners.
- In April 2021, QIA along with other investors (GIC of Singapore, Falcon Edge, Amansa Capital, Think Investments, Carmignac and Goldman Sachs) invested US\$ 800 million in Swiggys.
- In October 2021, QIA along with other investors (Coatue Management and Evolve India) invested US\$ 175 million in Rebel Foods Pvt. Ltd.
- In February 2022, QIA announced its financial support of USD 1.5 bn to the investment firm Bodhi tree. In July 2022, Bodhi Tree Systems invested US\$600 million in Indian test prep business Allen Career Institute for 36% stake. In April 2022, Bodhi Tree Systems along with a consortium of investors invested Rs 13,500 crore in Viacom 18.

- Recently, in August 2023, QIA announced its plan to invest approximately \$1 billion into Reliance Retail Ventures Limited (RRVL), a subsidiary of Reliance Industries Limited (Reliance Industries). It was also reported that QIA has acquired about 2.5% stake in Adani Green Energy, for about \$480 million. In September 2023, QIA in collaboration with Grosvenor Property, has invested USD 393 million in IndoSpace Logistics Parks IV (ILP IV).

19. Joint Task Force on Investment has been agreed between both the countries to facilitate investments by Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) into India, and also to explore Qatari investments in the entire energy value-chain in India. Over the years, many Indian and Qatari trade and commerce delegations have visited and participated in events in both the countries.

Cultural Relations

20. Cultural ties between India and Qatar are deep-rooted and actively nurtured by both sides. There are regular cultural exchanges between the two sides, under the provisions of the Agreement on Cultural Cooperation signed between the two sides in 2012. Qataris admire India's cultural diversity.

21. The year 2019 was celebrated as India-Qatar Year of Culture, as envisaged in the Joint Statement issued during the visit of PM Modi to Qatar. Over 45 cultural events including exhibitions, fashion shows, art displays, dance performances, musical concerts, etc. were organized in Qatar by the Embassy during the year with the cooperation of Ministry of Culture & Sports of Qatar, Qatar Museums, Katara Cultural Village, Qatar Posts, and Qatar Foundation.

22. Embassy of India, Doha and the Indian Community in Qatar celebrated “Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav”, in 2022-23. India was also one of the partner countries for Qatar-MENASA year of culture 2022.

23. Mission also has a regular and active engagement with several Qatari organizations, like Katara, Qatar National Tourism Council and Qatar Museums in the areas of arts, culture, education, etc. and has organized major events in partnership with them.

24. A 3-day cultural festival ‘Passage to India’ was held in March 2023 for which MoS (VM) sent a video message. A number of Indian cultural events were also held in run up to FIFA 2022 and Asian Football Championship 2023.

25. **Yoga:** Qatar, as a co-sponsor, supported Resolution at the UNGA, adopted unanimously with a record 177 co-sponsors, declaring 21 June as the International Day of Yoga (IDY). A commemorative stamp to mark the occasion was also released by Qatar Post in June 2015. International Day of Yoga is being celebrated every year attended by large number of yoga enthusiasts. In March 2022, Indian Sports Centre

(working under the aegis of Indian Embassy) made it to Guinness World Record for conducting a Yoga lesson for maximum number of nationalities (114).

26. **Ayurveda:** Qatar has allowed the practice of complementary medicine, including Ayurveda, in Qatar. A 2-member delegation from the Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India, visited Doha from 09-10 September 2019 and held discussions with the officials at Qatar's Ministry of Public Health on establishment of legal framework in Qatar for practice of Ayurveda. On the margins of the visit, a business event was organized to spread awareness about the prospects of cooperation in the field of complementary medicine.

27. Dr. Ahmed Ali Al- Mohammed, Chair of the Complementary and Alternative Medicine Committee at Ministry of Public Health of Qatar, participated in the WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit Towards health and well-being for all, held in Gandhinagar from 17-18 August 2023. On the sidelines, he held meeting with a delegation of Ministry of Ayush of India on 17 August.

Indian Community

28. There are over 835,000 Indian nationals residing in Qatar as on December 2023. They comprise the largest expatriate community in Qatar and are engaged in a wide spectrum of professions including medicine; engineering; education, finance; banking; business; and media apart from a large number of blue-collared workers. They are highly regarded for their honesty, hard work, qualifications and contribution to the development and progress of Qatar.

29. Indian community comprises around 27% of total population of Qatar. There are approximately 45,000 Indian students studying in 19 Indian schools, with 27 branches, (9 of them providing senior secondary education and 12 upto secondary education), and a few hundred in international schools in Qatar. There is a miniscule number of students studying in universities in Qatar. One Indian University, namely Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU) also offers some courses in Doha.

30. Over the recent years, Qatar has introduced far reaching reforms in labour laws like abolition of the sponsorship system (Kafala system), removal of the requirement to obtain employer's consent to change jobs, imposition of penalty upon illegal confiscation of passports by employers, abolition of requirement of Exit Permit for 95% of the work force in private sector, streamlining the recruitment process through setting up of Labour Dispute Settlement Committees, bringing domestic-sector workers under a legal framework similar to other workers, creation of a Support Fund to settle salary dues of workers of financially-distressed companies, setting up of International Labour Organization Office in Doha. With effect from March 2021, Qatar introduced Minimum Wage Law for all sectors of work. All these steps have benefitted the labour sector though some maladies remain.

31. Both countries have a Joint Working Group on Labour and Manpower Development, which held its 7th meeting on 4-5 May 2022 in New Delhi. The Embassy remains in close contact with the concerned authorities in Qatar to ensure the well-being of our workers and other Indian expatriates.

32. The Indian Community Benevolent Forum (ICBF), functioning under the aegis of Embassy of India, Doha - ICBF was awarded Pravasi Bharatiya Samman in January, 2011. ICBF operates a help-desk beyond working hours and also organizes medical camps for low-income workers from time to time in different cities of Qatar, in collaboration with the Indian Doctors Club and medical centers who are willing to partner with the Embassy in this initiative. The Embassy also regularly organizes consular camps in cities outside Doha for the benefit of Indian nationals living there. A 'Meet the Ambassador' interaction is organised regularly, where any Indian national having a grievance can meet the Ambassador and other officers.

33. The Indian Cultural Centre (ICC), an umbrella community organisation of Indian socio-cultural associations in Qatar, functioning under the aegis of Embassy of India, Doha, undertakes a number of cultural and other activities with Embassy of India, Doha's guidance, support and cooperation.

34. The Indian Business and Professionals Council (IBPC) is a community based organization working under the aegis of the Embassy of India consisting of prominent businessmen and professionals. It works to promote bilateral trade and investment. It organises on a regular basis - Buyer Seller meets, business meets and takes part in trade exhibitions and fairs locally.

35. The Indian Sports Centre (ISC) is a community based organization working under the aegis of the Embassy of India, formed exclusively to focus on all aspects relating to the promotion of various sports and games, not only amongst the Indian community, but also amongst other expatriate communities. ISC also aims to support Qatar in hosting various national and international sporting events in a sustained manner.

(10 February 2024)