We welcome Qatar’s labor law reforms.

Indian Ambassador to "Lusail": We are grateful for Qatar's efforts in supporting the Indian community during the Corona pandemic

His Excellency Dr. Deepak Mittal, Ambassador of the Republic of India in Doha, said that the relationship of the two peoples of Qatar and India is a fundamental pillar for strengthening relations between the two countries, pointing to his gratitude for the support Qatar provided to the Indian community during the pandemic and the positive steps to enhance and protect workers' rights.

In an interview with Lusail, the Indian ambassador added that there are huge potentials to enhance cooperation between the two countries and investments in various fields, stressing that Qatar is the largest supplier of gas in India at about 50% of its need and is a reliable partner in Indian energy security .. To the details of the dialogue:

The beginning of His Excellency the Ambassador .. What are the most prominent developments in the Qatari-Indian relations during the past years?

Relations between Qatar and India have grown steadily in various sectors within an excellent framework provided by historical close relations with regular and objective partnerships at the highest levels between the two governments. The leaders of the two countries linked a close personal friendship between His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Emir of the country, and the state of Mr. Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, which led to revitalizing and strengthening the already strong bilateral relations.

The strong relations between the peoples of the two countries constitute an important pillar of the strength of bilateral relations and cultural exchanges are still strong, and last year the Qatar-India Cultural Year 2019 was celebrated very successfully. Qatar and India are working closely together to address the challenges facing the planet, from combating climate change to terrorism, and from public health to Internet governance and food sufficiency. In short, the relationship is very strong, multifaceted and has the potential to grow even more.

- What's in your agenda to strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries in the coming months and years?

India and Qatar already enjoy an excellent relationship based on strong foundations of historical contacts between the peoples of the two countries and commercial and maritime ties, sponsored by the leadership in both countries, and there have been regular contacts between His Highness the Emir and the Indian Prime Minister during the past few months. Our Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Jaishankar, is in contact with His Excellency Sheikh Muhammad bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

There is still an effort on both sides to deepen multi-faceted cooperation, including in the fields of energy, trade, investment, education, health care, culture, sports, agriculture, communication and manpower mobility among others.

The two sides also continue their efforts to diversify bilateral trade and promote mutually beneficial investment cooperation. In this context, the CEO of the Qatar Investment Authority recently participated in a virtual round table of global investors with the Prime Minister of India.

Labor rights reforms

- How do you see the reforms undertaken by Qatar in the field of workers ' rights and other areas recently?

We welcome and appreciate the series of highly progressive labor law reform adopted by the State of Qatar, which are very positive steps towards promoting and protecting the rights of the migrant workforce. We continue to work with the Qatari authorities to ensure the welfare of Indian workers and we are pleased that there is good cooperation from the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs to solve the problems quickly.

Intensive efforts and reform measures in Qatar and India aim to facilitate doing business, boost cross-border investments, and support the MSME sectors for industrialization.
There are many Indian companies that have already left their mark in Qatar in fields as diverse as financial services, infrastructure, information technology, energy, construction, water and electricity. There are more than 6000 large and small Indian companies operating in Qatar, and more than 100 companies have been registered in the Qatar Financial Center.

the trade exchange

- What is the volume of trade between the two countries? And in what areas?

There are active trade relations between India and Qatar, with bilateral trade totaling $ 10.95 billion in the 2019-2020 fiscal year. This year, despite the challenges posed by the epidemic, bilateral trade remains robust, exceeding $ 4 billion during the April-September 2020 period. India was one of the largest recipients of Qatar's exports, accounting for around 18% of total exports in the past few months.

The main exports of the State of Qatar to India include liquefied natural gas, liquefied petroleum gas, chemicals, petrochemicals, plastics and aluminum products, while India's main exports to Qatar include grains, copper materials, iron and steel products, vegetables and fruits, etc.India is among the three largest export destinations to Qatar and it is also among the largest Three sources of Qatar's imports.

There is huge potential to further improve trade and investment cooperation, and cooperation in the pharmaceutical sector, as India is playing a pioneering role, especially during the ongoing epidemic that has made India the title of "the world's pharmacy".

Investments between the two countries

- What size Qatari investments in India and future opportunities? And in what areas?

There is a lot of potential to build a strong and comprehensive commercial and investment partnership between India and Qatar, and despite the limited Qatari investments in India, this has witnessed a gradual change and over the past year the Qatar Investment Authority invested $ 150 million in BYJU'S technology sector and $ 450 million in exchange for a 25.1% share. In a unit of the Adani Electricity Transmission Company.
We believe that the current levels of Qatar's investment in India are well below its potential and India provides a very strong investment destination. Important reform measures were adopted over the past few years, which led India to rise in the World Bank's "ease of doing business" rankings. For example, for institutional investors keen to invest in operational assets, India has a pathway to monetizing or transferring technology including roads, airports and logistics sectors.

Also, there is constant communication between the Qatar Investment Authority, the Investment Promotion Agency (Invest in India) and (The National Fund for Investment and Infrastructure) to understand investment opportunities in both countries, and webinars are held frequently by Indian Chambers to present many investment opportunities in India during this. Pandemic, India is focusing on converting these challenges into opportunities through global partnerships. The comprehensive trade and investment partnership between India and Qatar will play an important role in this regard.

Your Excellency, let us shed light on the cooperation between the two countries in the field of energy?

Energy partnership is an important pillar of bilateral relations, there is a deep appreciation of Qatar as a long-term and reliable partner in energy security in India, and Qatar is the largest supplier of LNG to India and meets nearly 50% of our gas needs, and the volume of LNG exports has increased In the first half of 2020 despite the decline in global demand and the drop in oil prices caused by the Coronavirus pandemic. Meanwhile, India imports large quantities of LPG and petrochemicals such as ethylene, propylene, ammonia, urea and polyethylene from Qatar.

India is rapidly expanding its gas infrastructure to meet the needs of nearly 70% of its population, and investments in this area are estimated at around $ 60 billion in building gas infrastructure. This clearly creates new opportunities to build a comprehensive energy partnership between India and Qatar. His Excellency Eng. Saad bin Sheridah Al Kaabi, Minister of State for Energy Affairs, MD and CEO of Qatar Petroleum, recently participated in the 'Indian Energy Forum' and spoke in favor of expanding energy relations between India and Qatar.

- What kind of cooperation between the two countries in the fight against terrorism?

International terrorism and violent extremism pose a serious threat not only to regional stability but also to global peace and order, and they must be confronted by all countries in a coordinated and comprehensive manner. We firmly believe that terrorism has no religion and that it is a threat to all of humanity.

There is an agreement between India and Qatar regarding joint cooperation in combating terrorism and a statement of their intention to continue working together to combat terrorist financing.

- How do you see the role of national diplomacy in conflict resolution and mediation in all parts of the world?

Qatar has played a significant role in the mediation efforts, particularly in hosting the Afghan peace negotiations in Doha. India, as a neighboring country to Afghanistan, supports all efforts aimed at bringing peace, security, stability and prosperity to Afghanistan. The Indian Minister of External Affairs participated in the opening of the peace talks in Doha. We hope that this will pave the way for an end to violence and the return of peace and development in Afghanistan while preserving the gains of the past two decades.

- What kind of cooperation between the two countries in the fight against Corona? How do you see Qatar's efforts in this field?

The State of Qatar has done a wonderful job in the field of prevention and control of the spread of Coronavirus in the country. This was the result of a rapid and massive intervention

by the authorities here, such as the establishment of a field hospital, isolation and quarantine facilities, direct help lines, and the application of (precaution) and others.
We are grateful for the support provided by the Hamad Medical Corporation and the Ministry of Public Health to support the Indians residing in Qatar during these difficult times. Measures such as serving information in various languages including "Malayalam", ensuring availability of medicines, quarantine facilities and ambulances, and free treatment for all individuals infected with "Covid-19" are highly commendable.

- What is your evaluation of the Qatar - India Year of Culture 2019?

in making the “Indian-Qatari Year of Culture 2019” a truly unforgettable year. As you know we have successfully organized more than 40 events together in Qatar during the year. These events covered a wide range of events, ranging from classical and light music. I am particularly pleased that these events received an encouraging response from the Qatari and expatriate communities alike, as evidenced by the enthusiastic turnout for these events. Our aim has been to shed light on various aspects of Indian culture and the historical ties between the peoples of our country over the centuries, especially in a way that arouses interest in the younger generation on both sides.