

India Qatar Relations

Days after the remarks made by BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma and party leader Navin Kumar Jindal on the prophet Muhammad, India is facing a backlash from several Arab countries.

Several Arab nations, including Qatar, held an official protest against New Delhi, demanding a "Public Apology."

The top trending hashtag, which translates as "Except the messenger of Allah oh Modi," is surfacing on Twitter. Widespread calls for the boycott of Indian goods have been made on social media.

On Sunday, Qatar summoned its Indian ambassador Dr. Deepak Mittal to protest.

The Minister of state for foreign affairs, Soltan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi, condemned the remarks made on the holy prophet PBUH. He said, "these insulting remarks would lead to incitement of religious hatred and offend more than 2 billion Muslims around the world."

He further added, "Doha is expecting a public apology and immediate condemnation of these remarks from the Indian Government."

This statement has come just after the visit of Indian vice-president Venkaiah Naidu to Qatar on Sunday.

The tweet of Qatar's assistant foreign Minister Lolwah Al-Khater is also making its place in the demands. She tweeted, "The Islamophobic discourse has reached dangerous levels in a country long known for its diversity and coexistence. Unless officially and systemically confronted, the systemic hate speech targeting Islam in India will be considered a deliberate insult against two billion Muslims."

The Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC), of which Qatar is also a part, stated that the remarks came in a "context of intensifying hatred and abuse toward Islam in India and systematic practices against Muslims."

Covering the Catastrophe

Soon after the statement, India's foreign ministry rejected comments made by OIC and said, "They do not, in any manner, reflect the views of the Government of India."

The Indian embassy in Qatar released a statement regarding this issue. It said that the derogatory remarks on the prophet were made by fringe elements and not supported by the Indian Government. The embassy clarified that decisive action had already been taken against the culprits.

In another statement, the ministry denied any role of the Indian Government in the ongoing issue. It said that the offensive tweets and comments did not reflect the views of the Government.

The Indo-Qatari Relations

The state of Qatar enjoys a substantive and strong relationship with the Republic of India. Trade exchange between India and Qatar has seen an incredible growth reaching 15.3 billion USD during 2021-22.

India imports Petroleum gas, Crude petroleum, Urea, and Halogenated hydrocarbons from Qatar. India is considered the fourth-largest importer of the state of Qatar, followed by Japan, South Korea, and Singapore. Besides, both India and Qatar have a good relationship in the banking sector as well.

A lot of overseas Indian live in Qatar, and they send remittances to India, which, according to the Indian sources, are estimated to be around close to 1 billion USD per annum.

Recently, the Qatar Investment Authority also exhibited its interest in investing in India in various Infrastructural domains such as roads, highways, economic corridors, airports, ports, and hotels, apart from the projects related to gas and fertilizers. Qatari Foreign Direct Investment to India has hit 2 billion USD in the last two years.

In turn, India had also ensured Qatar that it would invest in the manufacturing and production of the Liquified Natural Gas (LNG) and chemical industries.

There's also a growing interest in investing in Qatar, shown by the Indian companies in contributing to the construction, infrastructure, communication, Information Technology, energy, and other fields.

During the [Gulf Qatar Rift](#) also, when Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries had cut all diplomatic ties with Qatar, India stood up for Qatar. It did not take the side of other Arab countries.

India is also progressively working to conclude a similar economic cooperation agreement with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as it has with UAE. This agreement includes free trade deal and various other investment opportunities for both sides. The GCC comprises six countries in the Gulf region, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, UAE, and Oman.

In the defense area also, India and Qatar jointly perform the Za'ir-Al-Bahr (Roar of the Sea) naval exercise in the Persian Gulf. It is majorly focused on the fight against terrorism, maritime piracy, and maritime security.

India's message to Qatar

The above data/facts clearly show the strong growing ties between India and Qatar. Amid this controversy, the foreign ministry, in a press release, aware Qatar by stating that "vested interests that are against India-Qatar relations have been inciting the people using these derogatory comments. We should work together against such mischievous elements who aim to undercut the strength of our bilateral ties."

India as a nation has very clearly expressed its views that it has "respect for all religions, and it denounces insult to any religious personality or demeaning any religion or sect."