Mission success

Ambassador Pooja Kapur's diplomatic journey is nearing culmination, as Indian-Danish relations reach historic heights.



New Year's reception hosted by HM Queen Margrethe II, Ambassador Pooja Kapur paying her respects with grace and dignity alongside esteemed diplomats from around the globe.

Ambassador Pooja Kapur's tenure as India's Ambassador to Denmark has been distinguished by notable achievements in enhancing the Indo-Danish relationship to unprecedented levels. As she prepares to conclude her term, it is appropriate to reflect on her contributions and the flourishing bond between our nations.

By Jens Bache

Her Excellency, Ms. Pooja Kapur, known for her unwavering commitment and tireless enthusiasm, has played a pivotal role in strengthening the ties between India and Denmark during her three-year tenure. Through joint efforts, including with her Danish counterpart, Mr. Freddy Svane, and the two embassies, she expresses admiration for the shared engagement in fostering collaboration between India and Denmark.

As we begin our conversation, it's clear to me that we're about to gain insights from a seasoned diplomat. With her sharp intellect and commanding presence, she sets the stage for a compelling discussion. I eagerly await the Ambassador's perspectives on the Indo-Danish relationship, anticipating our usual friendly and warm exchange that defines my interactions at the embassy.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Under Madam Ambassador Kapur's leadership, the relationship to Denmark has flourished, building upon the foundation laid by the establishment of the Green Strategic Partnership. Notable visits, like Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen's to India in 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's to Denmark in 2022, and the royal visit of King Frederik and Queen Mary to India in 2023, underscore the strengthening diplomatic bonds between our nations, of which I understand that further high-level engagements are on the horizon.

ECONOMIC COLLABORATION

Economic collaboration, particularly in the green revolution, has been pivotal in the Indo-Danish relationship, with reciprocal investments between Danish and Indian firms. Ambassador Kapur highlights key moments of cooperation, such as the signing of MoUs and Letters of Intent during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Denmark in May 2022, and the royal visit of King Frederik and Queen Mary to India in February 2023, which saw the participation of numerous top CEOs from a broad scope of business corporations. Madam Ambassador emphasises that this collaboration will have a significant future impact, especially considering India's trajectory to become the world's third-largest economy soon, projected high annual growth rates, and estimated to include more than 130 million young people in the workforce. She also highlights the unprecedented potential for economic collaboration between India and Denmark, emphasizing cooperation within universities, research and development as well as student exchanges.

POTENTIAL OF THE INDIA-DENMARK RELATIONSHIP

Ambassador Kapur also expresses optimism about the vast potential of the India-Denmark relationship, citing India's rapid economic growth and



International Day of Yoga 2023 with Ambassador Pooja Kapur and the representatives of Indian yoga traditions in Copenhagen. Jens Bache, the author, is on the far right.

Denmark's expertise across sectors as key drivers. She highlights IT, ICT, renewable energy, water management, green transition, and the circular economy as promising areas for collaboration. This convergence of India's scale with Denmark's skills will pave the way for innovative solutions to global challenges, with a ripple effect across sectors and disciplines including agro-food, shipping, skill development, and sustainable urbanization. Furthermore, Ambassador Kapur notes with pride the Indian contributions to infrastructure projects worldwide, including the design of bridges in Denmark and airports in Greenland by Indian engineers at Cowi and Rambøll. She expresses fascination with the potential for further collaboration in this regard.

Ambassador Kapur then next highlights the collaborative possibilities between India and Denmark, citing successful partnerships such Reliance and Stiesdal and Larsen & Toubro collaboration with F.L. Schmidt Engineering in sustainable energy solutions. She emphasises the ethos of frugal innovation, showcased by collaborations with the Innovation Centre such as L&T and Terma, where Indian and Danish companies leverage each other's strengths for mutual benefits. This shared mindset of resourcefulness and adaptability is the driver for progress and addresses challenges effectively.



Søren Gade, Speaker of the Danish Parliament, visits India House to strengthen democratic relations between Denmark and India.

KEY MOMENTS OF ENGAGEMENT

During her tenure, Ambassador Kapur has skillfully engaged with diverse stakeholders, including political leaders, business executives, and cultural figures. As she enthusiastically recounts key moments with Robert Maersk Uggla of A.P. Møller-Maersk and Mads Clausen of Danfoss, she emphasises how these encounters underscore the robust Indo-Danish relationship across various domains. In diplomatic and cultural spheres, her experience at Folkemødet on Bornholm last year left a lasting impression of fostering dialogue and understanding, she tells me. She humorously suggests monthly gatherings like these to sustain the momentum of interaction and collaboration in a democracy. Her immediate meetings with Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, a former prime minister, and several current ministers further fueled



Ambassador Pooja Kapur joins the vibrant Indian community in Denmark for Navratri puja festivities.



Exploring scientific collaboration between India and Denmark with Nobel Chemistry laureate, Prof. Morten Meldal.



Discussing business engagement in India with Carlsberg Group CEO, Mr. Jacob Aarup-Andersen.



Ambassador Pooja Kapur with the Prime Minister of the Faroe Islands, Mr. Aksel V. Johannesen, during her official visits to the Faroe Islands.



Ambassador's meeting with Minister of Higher Education and Science, H.E Christina Egelund.

her engagement and impressions from Bornholm, embodying a democracy characterized by direct and straightforward dialogue.

EXTENDED RELATIONSHIPS

Madam Ambassador Kapur's diplomatic efforts have extended beyond Denmark to include other countries in the Kingdom, such as Greenland and the Faroe Islands, where she had visited three times, engaging with their prime ministers on multiple occasions. These interactions has underscored India's interest in collaborating with this part of the Kingdom, particularly in Arctic and Climate research and the fishing industry, highlighting the mutual benefits of skills and scales in these extended relationships. She tells me with a smile that she did not witness the Northern Lights, and I understand from her expression that she hopes to return one day.

PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE BONDS

Madam Ambassador Kapur continues to emphasize the deep connection between Indian and Danish people, which she finds rooted in common values and shared perspectives. She points out the values in the cultural exchange between our nations:

- Resilience: Both Indians and Danes exhibit resilience, drawing strength from adversity to drive progress and innovation.
- Innovation: Innovation is a common thread that unites the two nations, with both India and Denmark leveraging creativity and ingenuity to address societal and economic challenges.
- Commitment to Sustainability: Both nations prioritize environmental conservation, embracing sustainable practices for a better future.

In our discussion, Madam Ambassador frequently revisits the key aspects resonating between Indian and Danish people: a shared appreciation for democracy and freedom, a commitment to sustainability and green initiatives, and a mutual passion for culture and the arts.

DIPLOMATIC ENGAGEMENT

Madam Ambassador Kapur also highlights recent diplomatic engagements, such as Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen's joint visit to India in February 2024, where he, alongside India's Foreign Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar, launched a logo marking 75 years of diplomatic ties and an essential Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement. As I navigate complex geopolitical challenges, Madam Ambassador emphasises the importance of dialogue and diplomacy, particularly from the perspective of the Global South, echoing the Indian Foreign Minister's call for a nuanced understanding of global dynamics.

I at this point express my admiration for the ambassador's excellent diplomatic talents, her respect for diversity, and her ability to connect with people from all levels of society. From engaging with our queen and prime minister to interacting with Chairman of the Parliament Søren Gade and EU Commissioner Margrethe Vestager, she seamlessly navigates diverse social circles. Moreover, her participation in yoga sessions with regular people underscores her genuine connection with the Danish and Indian community here.



Sri Sri Ravi Shankar engaging in discussions on global peace with Madam Ambassador Kapur and fellow diplomats in Copenhagen.

CULTURAL RELATIONS

To my interest in Indian culture and history, Madam Ambassador Kapur accentuates India's rich cultural tapestry and its remarkable ability to integrate elements from the past, present, and future with a segue that fosters harmony and coexistence. Having observed the Danes' pride in their heritage, she emphasises our commitment to cultural identity while maintaining an outward-looking perspective. Madam Ambassador even identifies this as a cultural trait that has nurtured the growth of global Danish corporations.

Furthermore, Madam Ambassador Kapur has in Copenhagen with exceptional impact celebrated the significance of the International Day of Yoga on the 21st of June every year, in collaboration with Indians and Danes from various yoga traditions. She expresses her joy at witnessing its popularity in Denmark, noting how yoga is becoming an integral part of Danish culture. Our mutual appreciation promotes physical and mental well-being while strengthening bonds and fostering camaraderie between our people through ancient Indian disciplines like Yoga and Ayurveda. Madam Ambassador Kapur expresses her delight in our annual joint celebrations of the International Day of Yoga, mentioning the event at Folkemødet in 2023, which was held in collaboration with the European Commission on Bornholm, as well as at the Royal Opera House in Copenhagen. Events that further underscore the cultural exchange, shared values and traditions that unite India and Denmark.

MOMENTS OF PERSONAL IMPRESSION

Madam Ambassador Kapur reflections on her time in Denmark offer insight into her deep appreciation for our country's rich history and traditions. Her exploration of renowned Danish sites, including Kronborg Castle, affectionately referred to as "Shakespeare's Castle," as she first arrived in 2021, Christiansborg and Amalienborg Palace, the royal residence, Hans Christian Andersen Museum, Funen village and Viking sites underscore her immersion in Danish culture.

During her visits to these historical landmarks, Madam Kapur shares her delight in the rich tapestry of Denmark's cultural heritage. A particularly fond memory is the dinner hosted by Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II during the historic visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Denmark, and the engagement with the monarch and the royal traditions equally appreciated by all. Additionally, Madam Kapur expresses her fondness for New Nordic cuisine, enhancing her cultural journey by inviting friends and family to share in the culinary delights together. This cherished experience will accompany her as she returns to India.

Moreover, Madam Kapur expressed her affinity for Danish design, jewellery and especially Georg Jensen and Royal Copenhagen, and acquiring decor for her home in Delhi. Integrating these design elements serves as a tangible reminder of her time in Denmark and reflects her admiration for Denmark's renowned design aesthetic, encapsulating the essence of Nordic living, she describes with precision and shares with me.

She then appreciates her forthcoming conversations with the Danes, finding them refreshing, and expresses her admiration of the well-behaved young people, who represent the future of any nation.

In conclusion, Madam Ambassador Pooja Kapur's tenure has been transformative for the Indo-Danish relationship. Her diplomatic finesse and profound understanding of bilateral dynamics have nurtured collaboration and mutual understanding between India and Denmark. With her warmth, grace, and unwavering dedication, she has made a lasting impact in Denmark, touching all those she encountered across the diplomatic sphere and beyond. As she embarks on her next journey, may she carry with her the cherished memories of her time in Denmark, knowing that her efforts have strengthened friendship and cooperation between our nations. We bid her farewell with heartfelt appreciation and best wishes for continued success.