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LOCAL NEWS

India, a favored medical tourism hub: Dr Al-Sayer

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KUWAIT: A two-day international exhibition and conference titled 'India Medical Tourism Destination (IMTD) 2011 Kuwait' got off to an impressive start yesterday at the International Fair Ground, Mishref where India's state-of-the-art healthcare facilities went on display.

Health Minister Dr Hilal Musaed Al-Sayer inaugurated the 'IMTD 2011 Kuwait' at a ceremony held in Crowne Plaza Hotel on Tuesday evening in the presence of a large number of Kuwaiti and Indian doctors, conference delegates and attendees.

Kuwait's Health Ministry Undersecretary and Dr Ibrahim A Al-Abdulhadi and Indian Ambassador Satish C Mehta jointly cut the ribbon to officially open the exhibition yesterday morning in which 33 leading Indian hospitals and a number of top-notch Indian doctors participated.

Thanking the organizers for coordinating and conducting such a large and varied medical exhibition, Dr Abdulhadi said that the exhibition would provide an opportunity for the local health sector to interact with medical professionals from India and to share with them latest developments in medical knowledge and technologies. In his inaugural speech on Tuesday, Minister Dr Al-Sayer said India has emerged as a favored medical tourism destination due to the impressive advancement of its healthcare system over the last few years.

In 2010 alone, over half a million people from all over the world visited India for medical tourism," he said. "Around 60,000 doctors graduate every year from various medical colleges in India helping the country radically transform its healthcare system," he said. A significant number of Indian doctors are working not only in Kuwait, but also in other GCC countries. Similarly, about 50,000 Indian doctors are working in some of the best hospitals in the US and UK. This speaks volumes about the quality of Indian medical professionals," he pointed out.

He hoped that the exhibition will help in exchanging ideas and sharing knowledge between the two countries. Historic relations Dr Al-Sayer said Kuwait's relationship with India goes back hundreds of years. Cultural similarities and geographic proximity between the two countries have helped

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the nations forge deep-rooted relationship, he said.

Walking down memory lane, the minister said he spent many of his formative years in India since his family was based in Mumbai. He did his schooling and college education in Mumbai, he recalled. "As a medical doctor myself, I had the pleasure of working closely with many Indian doctors including my personal mentor and late Dr Jacob Oommen, who was a great human being and a brilliant surgeon," the minister recalled with a tinge of sadness.

It is no surprise that the number of Indian doctors working in Kuwait is rising rapidly as they have earned great respect among their peers due to their professional competence, diligence, sincerity and dedication," the minister added. Earlier, the Indian ambassador in his keynote address gave an overview of 'IMTD Kuwait 2011' by presenting India's advantageous position as an emerging medical tourism hub.

Dr Prem Nair, Medical Director, Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences, Kochi, Bharathi Reddy, CEO Vijaya Hospital, Chennai, Dr N Nampoory, Indian Doctors Forum and Jayesh Ranjan, Hyderabad Tourism Dept addressed the conference. Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) Director Lt Col Vivekanand Kodikal welcomed the gathering.

In addition to showcasing the top-end medical facilities available in India, the IMTD Kuwait 2011' also facilitates networking opportunities for medical industry professionals and academics and provides a forum for organizations and institutions in Kuwait. A series of seminars being held during the two-day event under the banner 'India-Kuwait Engagement in Medical Tourism:

Opportunities and Challenges,' will witness presentations of papers by eminent medical professionals and experts from India. IMTD 2011 Kuwait is being organized by FICCI and Trident Exhibitions in collaboration with the Embassy of India, Kuwait and Indian Doctors Forum (IDF), Kuwait.

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