

**Remarks by Ambassador at Dinner with Community Representatives by
Hon'ble Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas
at India House, 1900 hrs, October 11, 2020**

Hon'ble Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Shri Dharmendra Pradhan Sir,
My colleague Joint Secretary for Gulf region at the Ministry of External
Affairs Shri Vipul, Members of the delegation accompanying Hon'ble
Minister, Members of the Indian Community Support Group (ICSG),
Distinguished Guests, Friends.

Good Evening.

Sir, on behalf of the Indian community in Kuwait, I welcome you to Kuwait.
We are so honoured and happy to receive you today. I recall your visit to
Switzerland in 2018 to attend the World Economic Forum in Davos. It was a
very good beginning for me at the start of my Ambassadorship in
Switzerland. Your visit contributed in generating a great momentum in our
relationship with Switzerland. During my tenure I was honoured to receive
Hon'ble Prime Minister and Hon'ble Rashtrapatiji in Switzerland. I am
confident that your visit today to Kuwait will generate a momentum which
will upgrade our relationship and will lead to visit of Hon'ble Prime
Minister to Kuwait in coming months. We welcome you and your delegation
to Kuwait and to India House today.

Sir,

I would like to start this dinner meeting by paying homage to His Highness
Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al- Jaber Al- Sabah who passed away on September
29. We share the grief and loss of all citizens of this country. When Kuwait
mourns we Indians in Kuwait mourn with them.

To quote Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi who said in his
condolence message 'With the passing away of His Highness, the State of
Kuwait and the Arab world has lost a beloved leader, India a close friend,
and the world a great statesman. His Highness played a leading role in

strengthening our bilateral relations, and always took special care of the Indian community in Kuwait.' Unquote

For India he was a great friend and well-wisher. He contributed immensely in building our bilateral partnership. He visited India on several occasions including his memorable State visit in 2006, one of his first foreign visits, immediately after becoming the Amir of Kuwait. Indians are today loved and respected in Kuwait. As Amir, he welcomed several hundreds of thousands Indians to Kuwait, making the Indian community the largest expatriate community in Kuwait. We cherish the care he took for Indians here.

On October 4, the government of India observed a State mourning to pay respect to His Highness, when Indians in Kuwait also joined by observing two minutes silence at 11 AM including Embassy, PSUs, all schools, work sites, labour camps etc. The gesture from India was appreciated by all Kuwaitis. I received letters and phone calls from many in the leadership thanking India for the gesture. Hon'ble Minister is here with us to personally convey to Highness the new Amir the condolences on behalf of Government of India and the people of India.

May I now request all guests to kindly stand and observe one minute of silence.

Thank you.

Hon'ble Minister and Dear Friends,

Sir, most of us present here had the opportunity to listen to you when you made the virtual address on Aatmanirbhar Bharat last month. I recall your remarks when you said that your visit as Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas was long overdue. Your remarks on the efforts of the Government of India in handling the Covid 19 pandemic and the steps taken were a great inspiration for Indians in Kuwait.

I would like to mention that in this embassy we are following all norms of social distancing aimed at fighting Covid. On an average, everyday we receive around 800 to one thousand visitors at the Embassy and in our three passport outsourcing centers. We continue to extend consular and

community services during these difficult times. It is indeed a challenge, but we are facing this challenge with all possible precautions. In our Embassy we fully adhere to the Jan Andolan program that Hon'ble Prime Minister launched last week. Today, in your presence Sir, we are launching this Jan Andolan for the Indian community in Kuwait, which we in the Embassy and in our passport offices and all across the country pledge to follow. No carelessness until there is a cure.

Sir,

The Indian community in Kuwait has been fighting Covid 19 pandemic here alongside our Kuwaiti friends. It is our Indian doctors and nurses who were in the forefront taking care of the Kuwaitis and expatriates. I salute them for risking their lives trying to save the lives of others. Sir, some of our brothers and sisters faced an unprecedentedly difficult situation here, like all over the world, many have returned to India through the Vande Bharat Mission and other flights, while many in India are now eager to return back to Kuwait. There are many who are unable to visit their near and dear ones for months. There were many who faced serious problems including food and medical requirements.

It is in this context that I am happy to present the team of Indian Community Support Group (ICSG) that the Embassy set up in April to lead our efforts in providing support to Indians in distress in Kuwait. I am so happy to note that they spearheaded a campaign in collaboration with Kuwaiti friends and Indian Associations generating huge funds and providing food material for over five lakhs meals to Indians here. This campaign led by Shri Rajpal Tyagi who received the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman last year, also had self-made community leaders who are present here. I welcome them to this evening.

Similarly, the Indian Doctors Forum (IDF), a Forum which received the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman in 2013 contributed immensely as part of ICSG and through teleconsultations and supply of medicines. I am happy that the current President and former Presidents of Doctors Forum are present here. In addition, many Indian Associations here also provided food material and other support to many. Heads of our PSUs who always work as part of the Embassy team are also here with us today. What we witness here is an

unprecedented campaign when the Indian community in Kuwait joins hands with the Embassy transcending religious, regional and language barriers and works together to help their brothers and sisters in need. The fight against covid continues, and our campaign continues. I am confident that together we will be able to overcome the challenges in coming weeks and months.

Sir,

Despite these difficulties we continue our efforts in promoting India in Kuwait. We endeavor to reach out to everyone sharing the India story, its cultural heritage, the story of our new India and its economic and scientific transformation. In its transformational journey, India considers Kuwait as a natural partner. There is vast potential to combine our relative advantages, in capital, energy, technology, science and human resources, and to work for mutual benefit.

Sir,

We look for your guidance and support. I once again welcome you to Kuwait. May I request you to kindly say a few words?

Thank you.