

**Opening Remarks by Amb. Sibi George
at the Swami Vivekananda Annual Address
organized by Embassy of India, Kuwait
January 12, 2022**

Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs
Shri V Muraleedharan Ji,
Office Bearers of various cultural associations in Kuwait,
Members of Indian Cultural Network,
Media Representatives,
Esteemed Guests from Kuwait and India, Young children,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very Good Evening to all of you.

Let me begin by wishing you all, a very happy and healthy New Year 2022 and also Greetings of National Youth Day!

I would like to begin my remarks by thanking His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Amir of the State of Kuwait, and His Highness Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Crown Prince of the State of Kuwait, for hosting the large Indian community in Kuwait and for their leadership in strengthening the bilateral relations between our two friendly countries. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Government and the people of Kuwait for the personal care and humanitarian support being extended to the Indian community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It gives me a great pleasure to address you all today, and welcome you all to today's event. Today, on the occasion of National Youth Day which marks the birth anniversary of a great son of India, I am so happy to welcome our Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs Shri V Muraleedharan Ji who has kindly agreed to deliver our Annual Swami Vivekananda Address on the most relevant topic: 'Swami Vivekananda, An Eternal Youth Icon'. He has been tested positive last week but still has made it a point to join us today. Thank you Sir, we all pray for your speedy recovery and look forward to welcoming you in person in Kuwait soon.

Dear Friends,

I am also happy to note that among our participants today we have many young Indians and also our students from our twenty-four Indian schools in Kuwait. I was delighted to see the enthusiasm with which the youth in Kuwait has welcomed today's celebrations. Today morning, we had in our social media platforms and at our outsourcing centers live telecast of the National Youth Festival that Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji inaugurated. Later during this event we will again screen the video of this inauguration and his visionary address.

Today morning I was so happy to read an article on National Youth Day written in IndiansinKuwait.com by Ms. Sai Harshita Adivi of Class XI from FAIPS – DPS welcoming our Youth Day celebrations. In this beautifully written article she says, "through this article, I offer my sincere Pranam and prayers to Swami Ji and I request each one of us to read his articles and books and draw inspiration that can help us to contribute positively to the society". Thank you and congratulations Ms. Sai Harshita Adivi and DPS school for this initiative today. I look forward to meeting you personally soon.

Sir, this year when we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations and also the 75th anniversary of India's independence, the Indian community in Kuwait which is around one million have always been with us to celebrate India and Indian festivals. Our over 350 Indian associations in Kuwait and over fifty thousand students in our schools are our partners in these celebrations. Our diaspora contributes immensely to strengthen our partnership with Kuwait. The admiration and affection garnered by our Community in Kuwait is not a mere coincidence, rather it is the result of the hard work put in by generations of our people living and working here.

Sir, the relationship between India and Kuwait is historic and deep rooted by civilizational affinities tracing back to centuries. At the heart of this relationship are the people-to-people exchanges which have sustained and nurtured this close relationship over centuries. These vibrant exchanges have transformed the relationship substantially into a

mutually beneficial long-standing dynamic partnership. Our endeavor during this anniversary year has been to further build on this relationship at every field.

Sir, our community in Kuwait faced many challenges and difficulties during the Covid 19 pandemic, and as the Minister in charge of this important region, you have been in the forefront of addressing these challenges. It has not been easy for the community here. Our Indian doctors and nurses were in the forefront taking care of the Kuwaitis and expatriates. Indian Community Support Group (ICSG) that the Embassy set up has spearheaded a campaign in collaboration with Kuwaiti friends and many Indian Associations to support Indians in need here. The ICSG and other community groups like IIT/IIM Alumni and IBPC in collaboration with the Embassy led the campaign to supply oxygen to India making Kuwait among the largest supplier of medical oxygen to India. Also ICSG led the unique program of Rs one lakh assistance to the families of those low income workers who their lost their lives to Covid. Sir, in short last two years have been one of significant partnership between our Embassy and our community. Now with the new spike in numbers of Covid 19 cases in recent weeks our associations and groups are getting ready to together face these challenges. Indian Doctors Forum has already launched a new drive of free medical consultation for those in need.

Sir, the community here fondly recalls your visit to Kuwait in September 2019 when you interacted directly with many of our community members here. We are so grateful for the personal interest that you have towards the diaspora in Kuwait. I recall the regular messages that I get from Hon'ble Minister and his office enquiring about the welfare of the Indian community in Kuwait and also following up on these issues. We recall the interaction that you held recently with representatives of the community here to discuss various issues that they face here. We thank you for your personal support to the community during the pandemic particularly the Vande Bharat mission and also support in allotting Kuwait as a center for the NEET examination first time outside India, which benefited a large number of our children and their families. Sir, on behalf of the vibrant Indian community in Kuwait I welcome you to this celebration today.

Dear Friends,

Coming to today's event, where we commemorate not just an individual but a phenomenon, who cannot be described in just mere words. Swami Vivekananda was a colossal figure in our nation's history who played a leading role in bringing about a new awakening in India. Swami Vivekananda emphasized on the ideals of service and renunciation among the youth of India.

Today morning in his message on the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji said and I quote, "I pay tributes to the great Swami Vivekananda on his Jayanti. His was a life devoted to national regeneration. He has motivated many youngsters to work towards nation building. Let us keep working together to fulfil the dreams he had for our nation." Unquote.

Dear Friends, Dear Children,

I thank you all for your overwhelming participation today. I now request our Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs Shri V Muraleedharan Ji to kindly deliver the annual 'Swami Vivekananda Address'.

Thank you and good evening.