

**Remarks by Ambassador Sibi George, on Ayurveda Day,
13 November 2020**

Distinguished Participants,
Esteemed Guests, those joining us here in the Embassy and those joining us on the virtual platform,
Members of the Media Community,
Distinguished Principals of Indian schools in Kuwait,
Dear Children,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me immense pleasure to address you all today and welcome you all to our celebrations of the 5th Ayurveda Day. Today's event comes on the festive and auspicious occasion of Dhanvatari Jayanti, which truly elevates the nature, spirit and the overall atmosphere of our celebrations.

In the run-up to today's event, the Embassy had organized competitions for students of Indian schools in Kuwait. In this regard, I am pleased to learn that we received an overwhelming response from the students, who wholeheartedly took interest in these competitions; the number of participants in the quiz competition alone were in thousands. In addition, tremendous participation was also witnessed for the essay writing competition. We would be felicitating winners of the quiz competitions here today; the winners of the essay writing competition will however be announced in the near future. The quality of the participation is quite high and in fact I am glad to state that I have incorporated some of the most interesting thoughts and ideas shared by young children in my remarks today.

The central theme for this year's Ayurveda Day is "Ayurveda for COVID-19". It cannot, and I repeat, cannot be more apt than this. The year 2020 has been a difficult year for mankind as a whole on account of the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic. On account of COVID-19, the entire humanity continues to face an unprecedented global public health crisis, which has now metamorphised into a larger socio-economic, psychological challenge for all of us, our societies and our countries. Our leaders, our Governments, administrators, health experts, researchers, businessmen, ordinary citizens everyone of us are fighting this battle against the evolving pandemic. I am quite confident that we are going to win this battle for sure; the positive trends emerging from India and other parts of the world with improving recovery rates and lower fatality rates are encouraging signs which firms up my optimistic belief and hope.

We are also making good progress on development of vaccine for COVID-19. However, until the time we find a definitive cure for this infection, we need to remain vigilant in our fight; take all the necessary precautions and follow all the covid-19 related guidelines. In this context I recall the Jan Abhiyaan against COVID launched recently by the Hon'ble Prime Minister.

And whilst we follow the precautions, the relevance and importance of Ayurveda, which is one of the most ancient and well documented system of medicine that is equally relevant in modern times, comes to the fore. Ayurveda provides you with a ready well trusted doctrine of preventive healthcare and lifestyle. Ayurveda addresses all aspects of life — the body, mind, and spirit. Its holistic approach whether for healthy individuals or for those who need medical attention remains unparalleled. Prevention of disease and promotion of health is the main aim of Ayurveda.

During the current times, when secondary psychological challenges are also beginning to take its toll on individuals, especially the most vulnerable ones in the society, Ayurveda can play a vital role as it positively influences mental health, while at the same time improving the immunity function of the human body. Ayurvedic belief rests on the basic premise that health and wellness depend on a delicate balance between the mind, body, and spirit.

It is pertinent to mention that Ayurvedic interventions can be quickly implemented on large scale with inherent advantages of simplicity and affordability. The Ministry of Ayush, a nodal Ministry of Complementary and Alternative Medicine, Government of India, has released a set of guidelines for boosting immunity and measures for self-care by using Ayurvedic principles. These guidelines have also been disseminated by the Embassy through its social media handles. I encourage you all to utilize these concise guidelines.

While we talk about Ayurveda and its various benefits, it is my honour to share with all of you that earlier in the day, today, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi dedicated two future-ready Ayurveda institutions to the nation on the **5th Ayurveda Day** today via video conferencing. These are the Institute of Teaching & Research in Ayurveda (ITRA), Jamnagar and the National Institute of Ayurveda (NIA), Jaipur. In his address today PM said, "Ayurveda is the heritage of India, in whose expansion the well-being of the whole humanity is covered. Which Indian will not be happy to know that our traditional knowledge is now enriching other countries as well?" He said, and I quote: "The demand for immunity boosters from India such as turmeric and Ayurvedic products has grown globally. Despite our nation being very populous, the Covid-19 situation is under control because every household is consuming immunity

boosters like turmeric milk, the ashwagandha herb, kaadha etc. The demand for these products has increased during the pandemic”.

It also gives me immense pride and happiness to inform you all that the World Health Organization has announced that it will open a WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine in India to strengthen the evidence, research, training and awareness of traditional and complementary medicine; which shows that India’s traditional knowledge and heritage is enriching the entire global community. This is in line with India’s age old philosophy of Vasudaivakutumbakam – which looks at the entire world as part of one big family and also stems from our approach to global issues which envisages a merger of local with global.

It is important then that this rich Indian heritage, i.e., Ayurveda, with its tremendous health benefits, be expanded in its global reach for Ayurveda’s expansion entails the welfare of the entire humanity.

One of the first things I ask any Kuwaiti friend I meet both at official level and social level is this. Have you been to India? Many have visited India many times. But we need to get many of young Kuwaitis to visit India. A visit to India has always been in the wish list of most of our Kuwaiti friends. My endeavour is to move their Visit India plan from a wish list to an active ‘things to do list’. I would like them to choose India as the first visit destination after the Covid 19. In fact the job of an Ambassador is to transform that wish list to a ‘to do this year’ list.

In this regard, I am happy to announce that the Embassy will be organizing a series of events throughout the year to promote Ayurveda. Ayurveda and Yoga will constitute an important aspect of the ‘Embassy Familiarisation Visit’ that we plan to start early next year for our children and friends. We are also launching an Ayurveda Information Center at the Embassy to share information in multiple languages on the wellness program that various reputed institutes organise in India. We are also launching an Ayurveda Bulletin in English and Arabic. This is part of our efforts in building an Aatmanirbhar Bharat to make India a centre for global wellness.

I look forward to working closely with all our friends and experts to create a sustainable and mutually beneficial platform for promotion of Ayurveda.

Thank you.