

Remarks by Amb Sibi George at the Inauguration of Aatmanirbhar Bharat Series of events in Kuwait, Sept 10, 2020

Good Afternoon,

My apologies for joining late in the meeting. I had to attend a meeting that came up suddenly.

I am happy to join this important meeting today. For the Embassy this is a new beginning. Today by this event we are launching a series of Aatmanirbhar Bharat events that we propose to organize regularly.

These are difficult times for all. We are fighting the biggest battle of several generations in our fight against COVID 19 pandemic. But, we are winning this battle for sure. Today, India registered the highest single day recoveries of nearly 75,000. The total number of recoveries has touched 33,98,844 taking the Recovery Rate to 77.77%. India has progressively maintained a low Case Fatality Rate (1.7% compared to global average of 3.28%). There are 17 States/UTs that are even today reporting mortality figures lower than 1%. This is a battle we have to fight and win. And win we all shall, India, Kuwait and the international community. The exemplary role played by India in the global fight against COVID-19 has been recognized and appreciated widely.

While we fight the battle against COVID 19, both nationally and internationally, we should continue with economic engagement for the benefit of both countries. India has faced the COVID-19 situation with fortitude and a spirit of self-reliance. To overcome these testing times, Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi came up with Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan (Self-reliant India) that promotes local economy, while closely working with our international partners.

Let me quote Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, "1.3 billion Indians have embarked on one mission - to make an 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' or self-reliant India. 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' merges the local with the global. It ensures India's strengths act as a global force multiplier. Time and again, India has shown that our goal is global good. Despite our large local needs, we did not shy away from our global responsibility. The responsibility of being the world's leading producer of generic medicines. We ensured constant supplies to the world. We are also at the fore-front of research on the vaccine for Covid-19. A self-reliant and peaceful

India ensures a better world. 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' is about transforming India from being just a passive market to an active manufacturing hub at the heart of global value chains." Unquote.

The five pillars of Aatma Nirbhar Bharat are Economy, Infrastructure, System, Vibrant demography and demand. Its five phases are Businesses including MSMEs, Poor, including migrants and farmers, Agriculture, New Horizons of Growth and Government Reforms and Enablers. We will work on each of these pillars and phases in our engagement with Kuwait.

Agriculture constitutes a very important element of Aatma Nirbhar Bharat. I am very happy that we are inaugurating today our Aatmanirbhar Bharat series in Kuwait with this engagement in Agricultural sector. Today, reforms in agriculture marketing and 14 billion US Dollars agriculture financing facility bring several opportunities. Self-reliance in Agriculture targets at making Farmers both - producers as well as entrepreneurs. In recent years, India has undertaken several historic agricultural reforms. Just like other industries, now Farmers can also sell their produce anywhere in the country, wherever they fetch better prices.

The age-old, close, multifaceted bilateral relationship between India and Kuwait has always had a traditionally vibrant and strong trade and commerce component. India has consistently been among the top trading partners of Kuwait with agriculture and F&B products being amongst the most important commodities in the bilateral trade basket. Indian brands are well known and the exceptional quality of Indian products are well acknowledged not only in the Kuwaiti market but also across the globe. This event is an effort to strengthen the existing trade linkages, provide a platform to businesses to explore newer avenues for cooperation and to forge a special partnership in the agricultural and allied domain.

I look forward to a work closely with all of you to make this engagement and our subsequent engagements a fruitful one and provide a mutually beneficial platform.

Thank you.