

REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR SIBI GEORGE ON THE OCCASION OF
THE INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS OF INDIA IN KUWAIT,

AUG 15, 2021

My fellow citizens, Friends of India,

On the occasion of the 75th independence day of India, I extend my greetings to all Indians in Kuwait. Let's join our 1.3 billion brothers and sisters in India and millions of Indian Diaspora abroad and billions of our friends across the world to celebrate this occasion.

I thank His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Crown Prince His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al- Ahmed Al Jaber Al Sabah for hosting our large Indian community in Kuwait. I thank the Government of the State of Kuwait and Kuwaiti friends of India for their efforts and support in strengthening the bilateral relations between our two friendly countries and also for the support in our fight against Covid 19 pandemic.

75th Independence Day is a significant milestone in the history of our nation. We Indians in Kuwait celebrate this anniversary along with the 60th anniversary of establishment of our diplomatic relations. During this special anniversary year we will work towards further strengthening our relationship with Kuwait, which is an important country in our extended neighborhood. We have been celebrating this India @75 and India Kuwait @ 60 with a series of activities starting from blood donation camps and various awareness and motivational seminars and amazing cultural programs in digital format. Almost every association and group have come up with at least one program to celebrate these milestones in the history of our nation and in the history of our relations with Kuwait. We are steadily on the way to meet my target to have 750 events to mark the 75th anniversary and 600 events to mark the 60th anniversary. I congratulate each one of you who partnered with us to organize a series of events to celebrate India in Kuwait and to further promote our long standing dynamic partnership. Despite the constraints of COVID-19, our diaspora continues to celebrate India here. And each time we project India, we are contributing to inspiring a new generation of Kuwaitis and other foreigners to engage with and visit India.

During the last one year there have been several high level political exchanges between our leaderships. The visit to India of His Excellency Foreign Minister Shiekh (Dr.) Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in March this year and the visit to Kuwait in June by External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar were landmark visits that helped us rekindle our bilateral relationship and to set a roadmap for taking our relationship to a new higher level of partnership. They established a Joint Commission Meeting at the level of Foreign Ministers to be held annually. This is a major step in strengthening the institutional mechanism for cooperation between the two sides. In coming weeks and months we will continue to strive to further strengthen our long standing dynamic partnership with Kuwait in political, economic and cultural front while building on our unique people to people connect.

I would like to mention the efforts of various platforms that we set up like the Indian Business Network, Indian Professionals Network, Indian Cultural Network, Indian Sports Network and Indian Readers Network in promoting our partnership with Kuwait. Despite many challenges we are getting so much support in promoting India in Kuwait. Today as I am speaking to you, more than a hundred buses are crisscrossing Kuwait showcasing India's promotional advertisement with zero expenditure by the Embassy, such initiative by our talented entrepreneurs need to be appreciated and thanked. I invite you all to continue to contribute in these efforts in celebrating India in Kuwait and build our business partnership. We have set a new high target to expand our exports to Kuwait, and I am working with IBPC and our professional associations and groups to achieve this target. I am confident that with their active support we will be able to transform our buyer seller relationship into a mutually beneficial economic partnership.

Dear Friends,

India and Kuwait have always stood with each other in times of difficulties. Our cooperation in the fight against Covid 19 pandemic is the best example of what a traditional partnership of two friendly countries can do when faced with exceptional challenges which is to help each other unconditionally in times of need. We have seen the arrival of emergency medical team in Kuwait in April last year, arrival of Made in India vaccine in February this year and the Sea/Air Bridge taking Oxygen

Cylinders and LMO tankers to India with personal engagement of the leadership of the two countries and the support of the vibrant Indian community in Kuwait. All these are reflective of the unique partnership that exist between our two countries and peoples, which I hope to further strengthen.

Dear Friends,

This month I complete one year of my stay in Kuwait. I thank the Indian community in Kuwait and our many associations and groups for the support extended to me individually and collectively to undertake my responsibility as the representative of India in Kuwait. Last one year has been one of great partnership between the Embassy and the community and I look forward to further strengthening this partnership for the welfare of our community. I thank all my officers and all staff members at the Embassy and their families for working towards making our Mission a really home away from home for the Indian diaspora. Each one of them has been contributing to transform our Mission into a truly people friendly Mission.

We have been interacting regularly with you through our open houses and also during the several events that we organized physically, virtually and in hybrid format. We also had many opportunities to connect with each other through social media and through emails and our twelve WhatsApp helplines. In coming days and weeks we will continue our regular interaction and also take measures to further intensify our engagement. We will have a special open house on Friday August 20 when we commemorate the ICWF day in Kuwait. So I would like to be very brief today.

Dear Friends,

This has been a very difficult year for most of us. We lost so many of our brothers and sisters in Kuwait, in India and all across the globe. I express my heartfelt condolences to the families and friends of those who lost their dear ones in Kuwait. I thank our medical professionals, our doctors, nurses and other frontline warriors in the fight against the pandemic for their selfless service. I am fully aware of the many challenges they face and it's a priority for us to address their concerns.

I will be failing in my responsibility if I do not place on record my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for each of our community associations and groups starting with our Indian Community Support Group (ICSG), IBPC, Indian Doctors Forum, IIT/IIM alumni, ICAI Kuwait and many of you who individually and collectively contributed in supporting those in need. We have also seen how each one of them have contributed to our efforts to supply medical oxygen to support India during the second wave of Covid 19 pandemic.

You would also recall that a few weeks back ICSG had offered to pay one lakh rupees to each of the families of the people who passed away due to Covid 19 pandemic. Let me mention that today when I speak to you payments to sixty five low income families have already been made by the ICSG and more are on the way. This is their commitment, this is their determination that should be appreciated and acknowledged.

I should also mention the efforts of Indian Doctors Forum (IDF) to generate awareness about the Covid 19 pandemic and the services of many doctors who continue to support the community through tele-consultations and also visit our shelters for regular medical checkup. Let me also mention that there are so many unsung heroes who are silently extending a helping hand to support those in need.

We in the Embassy continue to be fully conscious of the difficulties faced by many of our brothers and sisters and our children due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Let me conclude by saying this, we may not have solutions for all your problems, but we in the embassy will continue to do everything humanly possible to help our brothers and sisters in need. We will follow up each of the issues with the authorities in India and in Kuwait. I am confident that we will be able to return to near normalcy soon. Your feedback and your suggestions are very important for us. I would like to repeat what I said from this very podium during my Independence Day address last year. Those Indians who need help and support are not liabilities, they are not strangers; they are our brothers and sisters, they are not problems, they are our priorities. Let me assure you, these are not just empty words, these are our solemn pledge which we will strive to achieve every day.

I thank you for joining us today. Once again I wish you a very happy independence day. Jai Hind, Jai Hind, Jai Hind.

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