

## **Remarks by Amb Sibi George at the event “India: The Global Healthcare Destination”, October 21, 2021**

President of Indian Doctors’ Forum Dr. Amir Ahmed,  
Senior Doctors who have joined us today,  
Esteemed dignitaries, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,  
Good Afternoon to you all. Welcome to Embassy of India.

I begin my address today by thanking His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait and His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Crown Prince of the State of Kuwait for hosting the large Indian community in Kuwait and for the care and support the Government and the people of Kuwait extend to the Indian community during the Covid 19 pandemic.

I am so happy to see that Kuwait is a success story in the effective handling of Covid 19 pandemic. The leadership here has acted with resolve during this unprecedented crisis. I congratulate the leadership, HE Minister of Health and all medical professionals, doctors and nurses who are part of the Ministry of Health, and of course the people of Kuwait. Life in Kuwait is returning to near total normalcy. Congratulations Kuwait.

I am glad that our cooperation with the medical fraternity in the friendly State of Kuwait continues to grow strong. Our cooperation in medical sector is a key element in our multifaceted bilateral relationship, and this is truer now than ever when we jointly fight against this deadly pandemic.

I congratulate Indian Doctors’ Forum, its President Dr. Amir Ahmed and all its members especially the panel of doctors who will conduct a symposium on an extremely subject of Breast Cancer awareness. I am sure we will all go back to our homes better informed and would be in a better position to take necessary early measures for prevention, early detection and cure and thereby save the lives of their loved ones. I would also like to thank all the volunteers, both doctors and nurses, who will be organizing the week long breast cancer screening camp at the Embassy premises starting today. I would encourage all my sisters in Kuwait to use this opportunity and

avail of this facility for their own good health and wellbeing and that of their loved ones back home.

Let me reiterate what I have said before and which holds true even today; that is, the IDF team is a trusted partner of the Embassy. The team is always in the forefront of the efforts of the Embassy in ensuring the welfare of the Indian community in Kuwait. Our partnership with IDF continues to grow and I thank IDF not only for its humanitarian efforts but also for its many endeavors in supporting the Indian community in its efforts to fight the pandemic. They have worked closely with the Embassy in many activities, be it organization of dedicated seminars, awareness campaigns, roundtable discussions to educate people about COVID-19, or by conducting medical camps for distressed nationals, or offering free of charge tele-consultations, and now again through this breast cancer awareness campaign.

Dear Friends,

Today's event is part of our continuous efforts to contribute towards the ongoing fight against COVID-19. In fact, in our fight against COVID-19, today we have crossed a historic milestone. India has hit the Vaccine Century; we have as on today administered more than 100 crore or 1 billion COVID-19 vaccine doses. More than 75% of India's eligible population has received at least one vaccine dose. What is even more remarkable is that, this 1 billion summit has been scaled in less than 40 weeks. This milestone exemplifies India's prowess in various elements in the vaccination journey – development of new vaccines, production of vaccines, deployment, and technology.

The indomitable spirit of India's frontline health workers – the doctors, the nurses, the auxiliary nurse midwives and the thousands of vaccinators, who overcame challenges of terrain and weather to reach the remotest areas ensuring that no one is left behind, has shone through helping us reach this 1 billion landmark. Once again, we thank our doctors, nurses and other medical personnel for their phenomenal contribution in helping reach this landmark and for working day in and day out to save lives, in our fight against this pandemic.

The sheer expanse of the vaccination drive can be gauged from the fact that there are 313,000 vaccination centres across India; there

are more than 264,000 vaccinators and 740,000 trained personnel in the vaccination teams. 74% of the vaccination centres were in rural areas accounting for 65% of the total coverage.

How have we achieved this feat? Well, the hallmark of India's vaccination drive has been the clear vision, the right guidance, the high level oversight and the impeccable coordination, particularly by the Hon'ble Prime Minister himself. Our prioritization of vaccine development through launch of 'Mission COVID Suraksha' is the reason behind India's vaccine development and production success. I am pleased to share that India is the only country in the world that has developed multiple vaccines across multiple platforms, be it the inactivated virus platform, or the DNA based vaccine, m-RNA vaccine, or the viral vector vaccine. In fact, India developed the first DNA-based COVID vaccine Zycov-D which will facilitate vaccination of children above 12 years of age.

Another outstanding aspect of this 1 billion vaccine journey is that nearly all the 1 billion doses administered have been Made in India. And more than 95% of vaccine administration has been done by the public health system, a testimony to its reach and robustness. Meticulous planning and effective use of infrastructure by leveraging on technological advancements in healthcare has made achievement of this feat possible.

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to inform you all that India has acted with resolve during this unprecedented crisis. In India, the rate of spread of infections, the number of fatalities and the number of cases requiring hospitalisation and critical care have dropped drastically and are historic lows today. An all-country, all-government approach has helped overcome two phases of peak infections in India. Prime Minister regularly addressed the State Governments and the people directly launching various programs aimed at taking this 'all India effort' forward. Health infrastructure has been ramped up continuously as a precautionary measure. India's technological prowess is being leveraged to deliver much needed healthcare solutions. The Co-WIN application, which forms the technology backbone of the vaccination programme in India, is an example of the success of Digital India.

While India implements these innovative solutions to combat the global pandemic, it keeps the needs of the international community at the center of its concerted efforts. The CO-WIN platform has been designed on an open source platform for the benefit of all friendly countries around the world. I am pleased to inform that many countries around the world have expressed interest in leveraging from the global public good created by India.

We have been doing this right from the start of this fight against COVID-19. Let me repeat, India extended medical and other assistance to more than 150 countries India has sent essential drugs, testing kits and other medical assistance. Medications made in India were shipped to destinations across the world in daunting logistical circumstances imposed by lockdowns. Indian rapid response teams were deployed in 8 countries. Indian naval vessels and air force airplanes delivered supplies along a wide arc to friends and partners. Through Vaccine Maitri, the global health diplomacy operation, we have supplied vaccines - Made in India – to more than 90 nations across the world, including to the friendly State of Kuwait.

Let me quote from the message of Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs Dr. S. Jaishankar who said today and I quote, "Today India has reached the milestone of hundred crores (one billion) vaccinations. This is obviously central to our economic recovery and central to our public health. And the fact that we have been able to achieve such a massive exercise in such a short time is due to the vision and even more motivation provided by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. From the External Affairs perspective what this means is that Indians will have a much easier and freer access to the global workplace, it would also mean that more people from abroad would come to India adding to our tourism flow, reviving our services and contributing to our economy. So this milestone is indeed a great achievement and collectively as a nation we should be proud of what we have achieved." Unquote.

In his message Hon'ble Prime Minister said, "India scripts history. We are witnessing the triumph of Indian science, enterprise and collective spirit of 130 crore (1.3 billion) Indians. Congratulations India on crossing 100 crore (one billion) vaccines. Gratitude to our

doctors, nurses and all those who worked to achieve this feat".  
Unquote.

Dear Friends,

Coming to the second part of today's event, I am very delighted to partner again with IDF and be part of an initiative which I strongly believe will be highly useful for everyone. I am honoured to welcome you all to the symposium on Breast Cancer Awareness that is being conducted and moderated by senior doctors from the Indian Doctors Forum in Kuwait who are experts on this subject matter. Breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among women. Delayed detection and ignorance about the disease are the prominent reasons for fatalities. To realize the dream of Hon'ble Prime Minister of a fitter and healthier India, it is essential that we pay attention to preventive healthcare. It is therefore advisable for women to not only self-examine themselves but also undergo periodic health screenings to rule out any serious health issue including cancer, which when detected early can be cured completely in most cases. Cancer is not a death sentence. A breast cancer diagnosis is not the end of life. It is the beginning of the struggle to regain control of our lives and a march towards healthier, productive, prosperous and happier lives.

This symposium and the week long medical screening camp that is being organized by the Embassy, in association with IDF, is an endeavor to encourage our sisters to not be afraid of medical screenings for breast cancer. Today screening will be held at the embassy premises, tomorrow it is held at the embassy shelter, and again this will continue for a week in our premises.

I once again congratulate the entire IDF team, its President Dr. Amir Ahmed, and the entire team who are part of the awareness campaign. Best wishes to you all. I now look forward to hearing from the panel of experts and other esteemed dignitaries who have joined us here today.

Thank you. Be safe and stay blessed.