

Remarks by Amb Sibi George on the occasion of 'NEET Day in Kuwait' on July 27, 2021

Respected Principals, Teachers and Students, Parents, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening 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.

We are gathered here today to share the happiness of our children and their parents on a historic decision by the Government of India to allot Kuwait as the first center for NEET examination outside India. I was happy to see the overwhelming response of our students, parents and teachers who welcomed the decision by Government of India and thanked our Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji and Hon'ble Education Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan Ji. On the requests of our students, parents and teachers and our many Indian Professionals in Kuwait, we are organising this NEET Day today. This is an occasion to take part in the happiness of our students and parents and also to reiterate our solemn pledge to do everything that is humanly possible to address the many concerns that our children face in the middle of this devastating Covid 19 pandemic.

Dear Students,

I had addressed you on a few occasions in recent past, including through an Open House session dedicated to issues related to CBSE examinations and various entrance examinations. I recall my personal messages to each one of you on the eve of New Year 2021. If you all recall, through these communications, we had made a promise to all of you, a promise that we the elders will take care of all your worries especially those surrounding the uncertainties of the conduct of your examinations and that you should leave your worries to us.

I recall what I mentioned in my interactions and remarks: I quote: Our school children are facing the multiple challenges on account of a number of factors, including the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, restrictions on their school operations; dislocations and separation from friends, teachers, guides; uncertainties related to forthcoming

examinations including final CBSE examinations and so on. Despite all this, I am proud of the fact that our students have shown exemplary courage and resilience in dealing with every challenge that life under covid-19 has thrown at them. We as elders understand their concerns; their anxiety and their nervousness. To allay their fears and genuine concerns, I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate to all the dear students that they should leave their worries to us. We at the Embassy, along with our School authorities and our concerned authorities in Kuwait and India including CBSE, will do everything that is humanly possible to ensure that the final examinations are conducted in as safe and orderly manner as possible and they will not lose an academic year under any circumstances. I urge the students to focus on their studies at this crucial stage. I am sure that they will all excel with flying colours. Unquote.

Dear Students, Dear Parents,

My promise was based on the firm belief and understanding that our Government back home in India is fully committed to addressing the various concerns that our community including our children abroad face. We have seen the crucial decision on cancelation of CBSE examination that Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi took after wide consultations keeping the interest and safety of our children in mind. And now we have again seen now, in a historic first, Government of India has allocated a centre for Kuwait for conduct of NEET examinations. Earlier this year, for the first time in the history of Kuwait, we held JEE examinations in Kuwait. A centre in Kuwait was also allocated for NATA examinations.

The fact that you do not have to travel thousands of miles, especially during the times of the Covid 19 pandemic; and also that you do not have to worry about other logistical problems that students face while travelling to far flung places/cities to appear for examinations like accommodation, locating and going to exam centres etc., I believe, solves many of your problems and also saves you time and energy. Again, let me reiterate you this we, in the Embassy, are fully aware of the challenges that we face in organising such an important examination abroad. To ensure smooth, fair and secure conduct of NEET, I have set up a committee of senior officers in the Mission, who will coordinate each step with the concerned authorities in India and Kuwait on a regular basis. Again, leave that worry to us, and you focus on your studies. Your safety and security are most important to our leadership, your Embassy, your schools and your parents.

Dear Friends,

I see all these positive decisions by Government of India as part an overall transformative approach that our leadership has adopted in recent years towards developing the academic ecosystem in our country. Education is a priority sector for the Government and holistic development of our young minds for the future of our country, is of utmost importance. The New Education Policy introduced by the Government is part of India's efforts to not only help children realize their true potential but also a well thought out action plan to prepare for India's leadership role in the 21st century.

One of the salient features of this policy is that learning has been envisaged as an interlinked phenomena and not just as something which can be confined to the four walls of a classroom. It is definitely a paradigm shift which will make learning a fun-based and holistic experience. With a revamped curriculum, the seeds of the next generation era have been sown. I am quite confident that this will keep us in good stead for a future where there is ought to have a strong emphasis on futuristic skills based on creativity, innovation, real-time problem solving, AI adaptability and so on.

Dear Students,

Many of you would be aware that the Embassy had launched "India @ 75" to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the independence of our motherland. We have been organizing a number of events as part of these celebrations, which will continue till August 15, 2022. You may also be aware that this year we celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between India and Kuwait. These are important milestones in history of our nation and history of relationship with Kuwait.

Embassy has been working closely with our partners to organise various events to celebrate these anniversaries, and to highlight the emerging New India to the world, to reach out to our Kuwaiti partners and friends. I see our schools, teachers, students and parents as important partners in these celebrations. It is in this context that we are also felicitating some of our winners of the various contests held on the occasion of the International Day of Yoga. In fact, most of our schools are partners in our endeavour to promote India in Kuwait and many of our children have always been part of Embassy's various

online competitions. I invite you all to continue to participate in Embassy's events including the quiz competition being planned on the occasion of the Independence Day next month.

Dear Friends,

We have seen the decision of the Government of Kuwait to a gradual easing of restrictions associated with Covid 19 pandemic. Let's continue to remain vigilant and follow all precautions. I will cover the issues related to the travel restrictions and vaccination certificates in my virtual Open House tomorrow. Look forward to seeing you all tomorrow.

Thank you. Stay safe and stay blessed.