

## **Remarks by AmbSibi George at the event “Combating COVID 19 Variants’, January 22, 2022**

President of Indian Doctors’ Forum Dr. Amir Ahmed,

Our moderator for the symposium Dr P Shankar Narayanan Menon, Our panelists Dr Arijit Chattopadhyay, Dr Saroj Bala Grover, Dr Varkey Alexander and Dr Shanthi Alexander, Other Senior Doctors who have joined us today,

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

A very Good Evening to you all. Welcome to Embassy of India for this virtual event.

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 congratulate Indian Doctors’ Forum (IDF), its President Dr. Amir Ahmed and all its members especially the panel of doctors who are here to conduct the symposium on an extremely subject ‘Combating COVID 19 Variants’.

Two years on, the battle against this pandemic continues to perplex everyone, everywhere in the world. It was a very difficult last two years for all of us. Many of us thought that 2022 would be a better year with COVID 19 behind us. But, it does not seem to be. We are now faced with a new and fast spreading variant Omicron, experts say more variants are likely to emerge. And we are here to continue our fight against Covid 19 it in 2022.

India and Kuwait are partners in the fight against Covid 19 pandemic. You recall the cooperation we had when India send its emergency medical team to Kuwait in April 2020, dispatched Made in India vaccines to Kuwait in February 2021 and Kuwait supplied medical oxygen in May last year. Our leadership has been in regular touch reviewing our bilateral engagement. Today morning our Foreign Ministers held a telephonic conversation.

Dear Friends,

I urge all members of the Indian community in Kuwait to strictly follow the Covid 19 guidelines set by the Government of Kuwait. We in the Embassy organize will organize all our events only virtually till the situation improves. We have a series of virtual events scheduled for next week, Jan 23 unveiling of the portrait of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose to mark his 125<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary, Jan 24 Open House with the community and Jan 26 our Republic Day celebrations. All are invited to join us virtually for these events.

Herewe are today on our virtual platform, with our partner Indian Doctors Forum (IDF) to generate awareness on the new variant and other variants. We have been regularly doing such events with IDF to generate awareness among our community and others.

I would like to thank IDF for being in the forefront of fight against the pandemic in Kuwait. 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 or free medical consultations. IDF doctors conduct free medical camp at the Embassy shelter every fortnight. I recall the humanitarian service IDF as an organization and our Doctors collectively and individually have given to the community during the pandemic, along with our nurses and other medical professionals. I also thank each of our frontline warries our doctors, our nurses and other medical professionals, without whose dedication and commitment, we would not have been able to beat this virus. Now with the new variant spreading, IDF has already come up with a panel of over fifty doctors in multiple languages of India for free teleconsultations.

Dear Friends,

India, like other nations, has also experienced the fury of this deadly infection, including the new variant. But we are facing this dire situation with great fortitude and resilience. A year from the date of launch of the World's largest vaccine campaign, we successfully administered 160 crore (1.6 billion) COVID vaccine doses, an unparalleled global feat.

While we fight this pandemic domestically, India continues to be at the forefront of the global fight against COVID in line with its

civilizational ethos. To mention one latest example, last week India supplied the third batch of medical assistance consisting of two tons of essential lifesaving medicines to Afghanistan. India had recently supplied 500,000 doses of COVID vaccine and 1.6 tons of medical assistance to Afghanistan through WHO. In coming weeks, we would be supplying more batches of humanitarian assistance consisting of medicines and food grains to Afghanistan.

India is guided by the vision “One Earth, One Health” in saving crores of lives by providing necessary medicines and vaccines to many countries. By rising to the challenge of the day, we have rightly justified the tag of being the “Pharmacy to the World”. Our healthcare professionals, doctors, nurses, paramedics, scientists, have been saving lives and winning trust, respect and hearts of peoples across the world with their expertise, professionalism and above all, human touch and care. While we are fighting this pandemic, our collective resolve and struggle with the strong support of the Government has ensured that our economy has forged ahead in these challenging times.

Dear Friends,

I once again congratulate the entire IDF team, its President Dr. Amir Ahmed, and the entire team who are part of this Covid 19 awareness campaign. I now look forward to hearing from the panel of experts who have joined us here today.

Thank you. Be safe and stay blessed.