

**AMBASSADOR'S MESSAGE**  
**ON**  
**THE OCCASION OF 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE DAY OF INDIA**

On the occasion of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Independence of India, I congratulate and extend warm greetings to all my fellow Indians living in Qatar.

I take this opportunity to also express our gratitude to His Highness the Amir of the State of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani and all Members of the Royal Family, the Government of the State of Qatar for their continued patronage and support to the Indian community in Qatar.

This day marks a new milestone in India's journey of the 75 years since Independence. We are entering *Amrit Kaal* (the golden era) that paves the way for New India and a journey towards the Centennial Celebrations in 25 years.

At this historic juncture, all Indians, especially those born in free and Independent India, remember and pay homage to our brave freedom fighters and the unsung heroes of our freedom struggle whose supreme sacrifices ensured that today 1.4 billion people are living lives with pride and dignity. We remember great leaders like Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi, Netaji Subash Bose, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Baba Saheb Ambedkar who laid the foundations of Modern India.

Every Indian is proud of 75 years' journey of Independent India. There is a lot to celebrate. This includes - unity in diversity – Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat; freedoms and equal opportunities guaranteed in our Constitution to all citizens irrespective of caste, colour, creed, sex, race, religion, region; democracy that ensured inclusive and participative governance and withstood the test of times. It is no mean achievement that in the 75th year, the people of India have made history by electing the second woman President and first ever from a tribal background. It is a befitting testimony to the core values enshrined in the Constitutions through which the state has been striving to attain socio-economic equality for the past many decades. Every Indian can be proud of the fact that India has emerged from being a low income country to be among top five economies globally; India has made strides in science and technology, including space and nuclear sciences; India is one of the leading centers of innovation and Information Technology globally; India is Pharmacy of the World; India has world class production and manufacturing capabilities; India is a leading global partner to address new age challenges facing the humanity, be it climate change or building resilient and reliable supply chains to ensure food and health security. India continues to contribute in keeping with our ethos of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" or the 'World is One Family'.

Today, we celebrate our *Tiranga* (the Tricolour National flag) through *Har Ghar Tiranga* movement. It is a symbol of our diversity, unity, and Independence. I am glad that the Indian community in Qatar has been actively celebrating the Amrit Mahotsav. I thank the friendly people and the Government of Qatar for sharing the joy of the Indian community in Qatar and being part of this *Mahotsav*.

It goes without saying that Qatar is a natural partner to New India. We enjoy historical relationship based on the strong foundations of people of people contacts. Qatar has been a valuable and reliable partner in India's developmental journey of India.

We enjoy very strong political relations and maintained momentum of high-level exchanges. Our leadership have maintained regular communications. The Vice President of India paid first ever visit to the State of Qatar in June 2022. It marked a new milestone and opened a new chapter in the bilateral relations. External Affairs Minister of India has visited Qatar on a few occasions and along with the Deputy PM and FM H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin AbdelRahman Al Thani laid the foundation stone for new Indian chancery building in Qatar in February 2022. Minister of State for External and Parliamentary Affairs V Muraleedharan visited Qatar in May 2022.

These high-level exchanges have naturally deepened the multifaceted bilateral ties in trade, investment, energy, defence, education, culture, health, technology and opened new windows of opportunities. Bilateral trade and investment partnership continue to grow. Last year, bilateral trade crossed \$15 billion, recording 63% increase year-on-year. India is the fourth largest export destination for Qatar and third largest with respect to its imports. Qatar's investments in India have increased fivefolds over the past two years. In February 2022, QIA committed US\$ 1.5 billion to financially support Bodhi tree, an investment platform jointly formed by Lupa Systems and Star India. India's edtech major Byju's signed an MoU with QIA to open an R&D centre in Doha. It is also amazing that Byju's is one of the sponsors to FIFA. Qatar Financial Centre had signed an MoU with Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) to promote entrepreneurship and facilitate set up Indian firms in Qatar through collaborative initiatives. In the similar lines, an MoU was signed between International Financial Services Centre Authority (IFSCA) and the Qatar Financial Centre Authority (QFCA) in January 2022. The launch of "India-Qatar Start Up bridge" aims to link the innovation ecosystems of the two countries.

Bilateral defence and security cooperation between India and Qatar continue to make a meaningful progress with continuous engagement at all levels. A high level delegation headed by Vice Admiral Ajendra Bahadur Singh, Commanding in Chief of Indian Navy's Western Naval Command participated in Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition (DIMDEX) in March 2022. INS Kolkata was deputed on the occasion. Qatari Emiri Naval Force participated as Observers in Biennial multilateral Naval exercise MILAN 2022 hosted by Indian Navy in Visakhapatnam.

These age-old ties still continue to feed the current people-to-people contacts be it - cultural, business, trade or other ties. The diverse Indian Community in Qatar epitomizes the fact that both the cultures are intertwined and integrated. It represents India in a microcosm. They have been actively celebrating *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav* through various cultural, sports, business, welfare, environmental and other events. It is matter of great joy that India is a partner in Qatar-MENASA Year of Culture 2022, thus further expanding the scope of #IndiaAt75 celebrations. The grandeur of the Indian Community Festival "Passage to India" held in March 2022 which attracted huge crowds, stands as a testimony to the strong cultural connect. The name of Qatar once again entered in the Guinness World Record when Indian Sports Centre successfully conducted a yoga session for maximum number of nationalities.

India-Qatar collaboration in education is already well known with 20 Indian schools running in Qatar and QIA's investment in the EdTech company BYJU's. The opening of first Indian university – Savithribhai Phule University – last year, in Qatar, is paving way for much such collaborations in the field of education.

Nevertheless, I strongly believe that the current level of bilateral relations is only a tip of the ice berg, as India has a lot more to offer and both countries can do wonders together. India is the world's 3<sup>rd</sup> largest in terms of purchasing power parity. It grew at 8.7% in 2021-22 while Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflow hit an all-time high of \$83.57 billion in 2021-22, indicating a 22% increase post covid i.e., from March 2020. This was made possible through a series of measures, utmost important of which was the largest vaccination drive in the world, which successfully administered over 2 billion doses, ensuring that 90% of the adult population are fully vaccinated. This would not have been possible at such a large scale in such a short span, without indigenous vaccines. A production linked incentive scheme announced by India for 13 priority sectors in April 2020, started bearing its fruits as currently India is one of the fastest growing mobile manufacturers in the world and second largest volume wise. India has one of the largest networks of higher education institutions in the world, which was estimated to be worth US\$ 117 billion in 2020-21 and is expected to reach US\$ 225 billion by 2025-26.

At the same time, it is not a secret that even after 75 years of independence and tremendous achievements in various fields, the rural-urban divide across various sectors still remains huge. Yet, New India sees this as an opportunity for improving and aims to bridge this divide during the *Amrit Kaal*. Already, a series of measures were put in place to double the income of farmers and widen their financial security net; expand agriculture production and promote agri-exports and provision of roads and electricity to villages. This is a great opportunity for bilateral cooperation which serves the mutual interests – food security to Qatar and investments to India. A related field to food and agri-industry, is the shipping and ports development one, again which can be a potential area for mutual collaboration. India allows up to 100% FDI under the automatic route for projects related to the construction and maintenance of ports and harbors. In the last two decades, Indian ports have attracted a cumulative FDI amounting to US\$1.64 billion. At the Maritime India Summit in March 2021, in which Qatar also participated, India announced 400 new projects in the sector with an investment potential of \$28 billion for the development of the country's coastline.

Going further, New India is aiming at a whole lot of new forward looking goals including – environmental security which pushed it to take on ambitious goal of achieving 450 GW by 2030 of which around 100 GW has been achieved ahead of schedule. A Green Hydrogen policy was unveiled in February this year aiming to bring down the production cost from \$5-\$6 per kg to \$1 per kg. India's electric vehicle industry too is gathering momentum and offers ample opportunities for investors. India's emphasis on Mission Circular Economy focusing on regeneration and restoration will eventually pave the way for sustainable economic and environmental ecosystems. These are also potential areas of bilateral cooperation between India and Qatar wherein both can jointly make new strides for the betterment of the region as well as the world at large.

The Indian diaspora has been one of the important pillars of India's development for the past 75 years and will remain so during the *Amrit Kaal* and beyond. I sincerely appreciate

the Indian community in Qatar for their contribution to both their mother land, India as well as to their second home, Qatar. The enthusiasm with which it has been celebrating *Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav* is highly commendable. The Indian Embassy leaves no stone unturned to improve the quality of its service to the community. It strives to reach out to every Indian be it through regular consular/labour camps, monthly open house or through various community organisations. To be available at a click away, a mobile app (India in Qatar) was launched last year. Through the app, currently appointments can be booked, grievances raised, assistance solicited and remain in touch with Embassy easily. Embassy also has a call centre – Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayta Kendra (PBSK) running from 8 am – 5 pm every day (except Friday) and is available in English, Hindi and Malayalam languages. A live chat option is also available on Embassy's website.

We all are looking forward to the spectacular FIFA World Cup 2022 to be held in Qatar. I am very happy that a large number of Indians have registered as Volunteers and cultural events are planned in run up to the mega event. The 100 days' countdown to the games has begun. I take this opportunity to appeal to the Indian resident community to extend full support for the successful and memorable conduct of the games by Qatar.

I once again extend my warm greetings to my fellow Indians in Qatar as India steps into a new phase, and thank them for their valuable contribution to the growth and development of Qatar and India. Let us all rededicate ourselves for New India that shares the fruits of development with all and achieve in the words of our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi - *Sankalpit Bharat, Sashakt Bharat, Atmarnirbhar Bharat and Shreshta Bharat*. At the same time let us all continue to consolidate the bonds of friendship and cooperation between India and Qatar.

Jai Hind !