

**Speech by H.E. Mr. Piyush Srivastava
Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Bahrain**

at the 72nd Republic Day of India 2021

Your Excellency, Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani,
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Bahrain;

Excellencies;

Dear Members of the Indian Community, and

Friends of India who have joined online;

Namaskar!

I welcome you all for joining us in celebrating the 72nd Republic Day of India. My special thanks to H.E. Dr. Abdullatif Al Zayani for gracing the occasion. Let me first of all convey best wishes and greetings on this joyous occasion to all of you. Due to Covid restrictions and protocols, we are organizing these celebrations in the virtual mode.

2. During the last year, the global community has faced the major health challenge of our times - the Covid-19 pandemic. The countries not only have to deal with the health challenges posed by the pandemic but also have had to make concerted efforts to revive the economy which was severely hit by the pandemic.

3. Both India and Bahrain are among the few countries who have successfully dealt with the pandemic, thanks to the vision, guidance and personal supervision by the top leadership of our countries. Our recovery rates are among the highest and mortality rates are among the lowest in the world. The pro-active measures taken on the economic front have borne fruit. The economies of both our countries are firmly on the path of recovery.

4. The Government of India has taken unprecedented reform measures with focus on key sectors of agriculture, manufacturing, digital and health. These alongwith, the flagship initiative of 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat' or 'Self-Reliant India', will help achieve our target of becoming US\$ 5 trillion economy by 2024. Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi has summed up our vision of Atma Nirbhar Bharat, and I quote: "When India speaks of becoming self-reliant, it does not advocate a self-centered system. In India's self-reliance, there is a concern for the whole world's happiness, cooperation and peace."

5. This is evident in India's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic. India is, because of its strengths in the bio pharmaceutical and vaccine domains, one of the major centres in the transnational efforts to counter the pandemic. India has come to be known as the 'pharmacy of the world' and has supplied necessary medicines to over 150 countries to deal with the pandemic. India has, a few days back, undertaken the world's largest vaccination drive by rolling out two 'Made-in-India' vaccines, COVISHIELD and COVAXIN.

6. As a trusted and dependable partner, despite the huge domestic demand, India has been supplying vaccines to the global community in this time of crisis.

7. Our two countries have had excellent collaboration in dealing with Covid-19 pandemic, be it the support of the Government of Bahrain for our community, 'Vande Bharat Mission', the 'Air Bubble' arrangement between the two countries for facilitating travel of people of both sides, or supply of medicines and paramedics to the Kingdom by India.

8. This is in line with the deep-rooted civilizational and close ties between India and Bahrain. Our bonds of friendship have been further strengthened in recent years due to regular high level political interaction and exchanges, and our bilateral cooperation has diversified and expanded. The landmark visit of His Majesty the King to India in 2014 had set the roadmap for our present bilateral engagement. This got further boost during the historical visit of Hon'ble Prime Minister of India to Bahrain in August 2019, and more recently the visit of Hon'ble External Affairs Minister of India in November 2020. We are looking forward to welcoming H.E. the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bahrain for the next meeting of India-Bahrain High Joint Commission. Our bilateral cooperation has expanded to include the new emerging and strategic areas of Defence & Maritime Security, IT, FinTech, Space Technology, health and pharmaceuticals, and energy including renewable Energy.

9. The Indian community in Bahrain constitute a key link in our bilateral relations. It is a matter of pride for all of us that with their professionalism and high standards of work ethics, our vibrant and dynamic community has made a name for itself in Bahrain and made significant contribution to the economic development of the Kingdom. This year's Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award given by the Government of India to Mr. Baburajan for his distinguished community service in Bahrain is testimony to this.

10. This has been possible due to the Kingdom's rich tradition of diversity, tolerance, co-existence and harmony. I take this opportunity to convey our gratitude to His Majesty the King and His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Prime Minister for their vision and guidance in strengthening our bilateral ties as well as providing an environment where the Indian community enjoys their cultural and traditional celebrations the same way as they do in India. We are particularly thankful for the care taken by the Leadership and Government of Bahrain of our community in the difficult times of Covid-19 pandemic.

11. I once again thank all of you for joining the celebrations through digital means.

भारत के बहतरवे गणतंत्र दिवस की आप सभी को हार्दिक शुभकामनायें।

जय हिन्द।

Long live India-Bahrain Friendship!

Thank you.

12. Now, it is my pleasure to invite today's Guest of Honour, H.E. Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Bahrain to say a few words.
