

Remarks by H.E. Mr. Vinod K Jacob, Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Bahrain at the inaugural session of the 15th Annual Conference titled, “Above & Beyond” organized by the Bahrain Chapter of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (BCICAI) on 1 December 2023

I am happy to attend the inaugural session of the 15th Annual Conference titled, “Above & Beyond” organized by the Bahrain Chapter of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (BCICAI) on 1 December 2023. Let me begin by wishing all Bahraini women a Happy Bahraini Women's Day and seek their support for promotion of friendly relations between India and the Kingdom of Bahrain.

At the outset, let me congratulate the organizing abilities of the team led by Mr. Sthanumurthy Viswanathan Meera, Chairperson of Bahrain Chapter of ICAI for 2023 to 2024. The theme of the conference, namely “Above & Beyond” is also apt and resonates well in the contemporary context both for India, Bahrain and the wider region. I also look forward to hearing the keynote address by Hon Minister for Commerce and Industry, HE Piyush Goyal that will be an important highlight of the conference.

Friends,

The bilateral relations between India and Bahrain are strong and encompasses the entire spectrum of engagement covering political, economic, commercial, S&T, defence and security, cultural, tourism and people to people ties. Recently, on 17 November 2023, HE Sheikh Khalid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain participated in the Concluding Leader's Session of the Voice Of Global South Summit. A senior delegation led by Air Marshal PM Sinha participated in the flagship Manama Dialogue from 17 to 19 November 2023. Hon Governor of Goa PS Shreedharan Pillai visited Bahrain earlier this month. You can see that the frequency of visits is quite robust.

When we turn towards the economic and commercial statistics, there is a lot to be happy about for both Governments. For instance, according to the data from Bahraini side, bilateral non-oil trade in the period of January to October 2023 was US\$ 913.50 billion. Further, according to Bahraini data, during the period January to September 2023, almost 800,000 Indians visited Bahrain, representing a nearly 60 percent increase over the corresponding period last year.

My Embassy has started new initiatives to promote closer ties with the Bahraini society. We have started the “Visit Embassy” programme for school students. In our events and gatherings we have started re-introducing various parts of India to the friendly people of Bahrain. For instance, during the period between September and November we have showcased the attractions of Rajasthan and Jammu & Kashmir. It is my hope that such efforts will be complemented by the activities of the Indian diaspora here and together we can take the India-Bahrain bilateral relations above & beyond the current heights.

Friends,

We are gathering at a time when the leaders of the world have gathered in the region for the COP 28. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is also attending this important conference. He is following up on the successful G20 Indian Presidency that concluded on 30 November. In a widely read and well acclaimed op-ed titled, "Towards a brighter tomorrow: India's G20 Presidency and the dawn of a new multilateralism" on the occasion, Prime Minister Modi wrote, "Inclusive, ambitious, action-oriented, and decisive—these four words defined our approach as G20 president, and the New Delhi Leaders' Declaration (NDLD), unanimously adopted by all G20 members, is testimony to our commitment to deliver on these principles."

Let me share a brief summary on the achievements of India's G20 Presidency.

During India's G20 Presidency, the African Union was included as a permanent member of the G20, the Voice of Global South Summit was convened in two editions, and the period was described as a "People's Presidency" because of the initiatives to involve Indians all across the country.

At the critical midpoint of the 2030 Agenda, India delivered the G20 2023 Action Plan to Accelerate Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We successfully completed the Digital Public Infrastructure Repository, a significant stride in global technological collaboration. G20 Declaration calls for an ambitious tripling of global renewable energy capacity by 2030. Coupled with the establishment of the Global Biofuels Alliance and a concerted push for Green Hydrogen, the G20's ambitions to build a cleaner, greener world is undeniable. G20 acknowledged that developing countries require \$5.9 trillion to fulfil their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) by 2030. Given the monumental resources required, G20 emphasised the importance of better, larger, and more effective Multilateral Development Banks.

As Prime Minister Modi pointed out in his op-ed, "Gender equality took centre stage in the Declaration, culminating in the formation of a dedicated Working Group on the Empowerment of Women next year. India's Women's Reservation Bill 2023, reserving one-third of India's Parliament and state legislative assembly seats for women epitomizes our commitment to women-led development. The New Delhi Declaration embodies a renewed spirit of collaboration across these key priorities, focusing on policy coherence, reliable trade, and ambitious climate action. It is a matter of pride that during our Presidency, G20 achieved 87 outcomes and 118 adopted documents, a marked rise from the past."

In conclusion, let us recall the age-old wisdom of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, 'One Earth, One Family, One Future.'

Thank you.