

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

Shri Jagannath Puri Rath Yatra

Organised by the

Bahrain Odia Samaj

[Friday, 16 July 2021, 1800-1900 hrs.]

**(Video messages by Guest of Honours –
Sh. Naveen Patnaik, Hon'ble CM of Odisha,
Sh. Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of Education,
Government of India)**

**Sh. Dinesh Mahanty,
President, Bahrain Odia Samaj**

**Smt.Gita Dash,
Renowned Bhajan Singer from Odisha**

Distinguished Guests and all the Devotees who have joined us virtually,

Good evening!!!

First of all let me extend warm greetings on the auspicious occasion of Shri Jagannath Puri Rath Yatra.

2. Though the celebrations this year have been limited due to the pandemic, it is thanks to the spirit and initiative taken by Bahrain Odia Samaj that such an event could be organised to celebrate the occasion with the same zeal virtually. Many congratulations to the members of Bahrain Odia Samaj for organising this event and I am pleased to participate in this celebration.

3. I am happy to note that Bahrain Odia Samaj is actively involved in various social and cultural activities, and in showcasing the rich cultural heritage of the state of Odisha.

4. Events, such as this, are an integral part of our celebrations of 75 years of India's independence. One of the main focus of India@75 celebrations is showcasing and celebrating India's cultural diversity.

5. The Indian diaspora has been instrumental in spreading Indian culture and values. Footprints of Indian culture is visible in all walks of life in Bahrain, be it cuisine, dance, art, theatre, music etc. Our vibrant community in Bahrain plays an important role in promoting our bilateral ties and further strengthening the existing goodwill between our two countries.

6. India and Kingdom of Bahrain have civilisational and close bilateral relations and people to people connect. These have strengthened and diversified over the years.

7. Our two countries have closely cooperated and collaborated in dealing with the global pandemic. The Leadership and Government of Bahrain took special care of the expat community of which Indians form the majority, during Covid-19 pandemic, including providing free vaccination to citizens and residents alike. I urge the Indian community to support Kingdom's efforts, get themselves vaccinated and stay safe. As you may be aware that Embassy is carrying out a special vaccination drive to help those of our community members who are finding it difficult to take vaccination or getting registration for vaccine, for this we have setup the link on our website and social media handles.

8. I conclude by wishing the Bahrain Odia Samaj and its members all the success in their future endeavours. May the blessings of Lord Jagannath fill our lives with health, peace and prosperity.

Thank You!
