

**Speech by H.E. Mr. Piyush Srivastava,
Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Bahrain
at the Reception (virtual) organised on the occasion of
73rd Republic Day of India 2022
*[January 26, 2022; 1800 hrs]***

Your Excellency Dr. Shaikh Khalid bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Chairman of the King Hamad Global Centre for Peaceful Coexistence;

Your Excellency Mr. Jamal Mohammed Fakhro, First Deputy Chairman, Shura Council;

Your Excellency Shaikha Rana bint Isa Al Khalifa, Secretary General of the Higher Education Council;

Your Excellency Shaikha Hind bint Salman Al Khalifa, President of the Children and Mother's Welfare Society;

Your Excellency Mr. Abdulnabi Alshoala, Former Minister & Shura Council Member;

Your Excellencies, Members of Parliament, Senior Officers and Heads of Authorities of the Government of Bahrain;

Representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Your Excellency Ambassador Fatima Abdulla Al Dhaen;

Excellencies, Heads of Diplomatic Missions and Members of diplomatic corp;

Distinguished Members of Business Community and other invited Guests;

Dear Members of Indian Community;

Friends from Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Namaskar!

Assalaam Aaleykum!

Good evening to all of you!

1. I thank you all for joining us in our celebrations of the 73rd Republic Day of India. I extend my warm greetings and best wishes to everyone, on this joyous occasion.

2. On this day, India was established as the largest Democratic Republic of the world, and on this day in 1950, the Constitution of India was put into effect. The day is celebrated with fervour by all Indians, both in India and abroad. Republic Day is an occasion to celebrate the rich heritage and cultural diversity of India.

3. India has made tremendous strides in all facets of socio-economic development, and is today technological leader in sectors of IT, Health, traditional medicine, innovation, start-ups, among others. India's commitment and contribution to the global efforts in fighting the Covid-19 pandemic shows the prowess of our pharma industry which lived up to its name as the 'Pharmacy of the world'.

4. India is one of the fastest growing economies of the world. The policies, reforms and initiatives undertaken by the Government of India including start-up India and Atma Nirbhar Bharat have contributed to its economic growth and development. India's start-up ecosystem is creating waves across the world. The number of start-ups in the country have shot up from 500 to 60,000 in the last five years with a total of 82 unicorns, half of which have emerged in the last year alone.

5. This year Government of India is celebrating two milestones in India's history – Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav commemorating 75th anniversary of India's independence; and 125th birth anniversary of our great freedom fighter, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.

Excellencies,

6. This is a landmark year for our two countries. We are celebrating the Golden Jubilee of diplomatic relations between India and Kingdom of Bahrain. The majestic visuals of our historic monuments – Bab Al Bahrain and Qutub Minar – illuminated in each other's national colours in October last year will remain forever etched in our memories. We are celebrating our history rooted in trade, culture and people to people connect which date back thousands of years to Indus valley and Dilmun civilisations.

7. Despite the challenges and restrictions imposed by COVID-19 pandemic, the relationship between our two countries have remained stable and strong at all levels, including in trade where the bilateral trade figures have crossed USD 1.1 billion for the year 2021.

8. The visit of H.E. Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Foreign Minister of Bahrain to India in April 2021; the visit of Mr. V. Muraleedharan, Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs of India to Bahrain in August 2021; three virtual Ministerial meetings and a number of official level engagements have further strengthened and diversified our bilateral cooperation.

9. The close collaboration between India and Bahrain continued in dealing with Covid-19 pandemic. India recently crossed the landmark of one year of

vaccination with more than 1.6 billion doses provided to its citizens. Our 94% of eligible population have received the first dose and 72% are fully vaccinated.

10. The way the Kingdom of Bahrain dealt with COVID-19 pandemic has set an example for the world. Its care of its citizens as well as the expat community has been exemplary. The Kingdom provided medical and other necessary support to the Indian community in Bahrain including providing free vaccination for all the residents.

Excellencies, Distinguished guests,

11. Due to continued increase in Covid infections and in the interest of everyone's health and safety, we celebrated our Republic Day in virtual manner with a number of diverse events. We have inaugurated an Ayurveda Garden as well as a Tribal India Atma Nirbhar Corner at the Embassy showcasing India's art, handicraft and traditional knowledge. As and when the Covid situation improves, I would welcome all of you to the Embassy to visit these.

12. I was honoured to be present today afternoon at the launch of the book on Gandhi, written by the renowned Bahraini intellectual and Gandhian scholar H.E. Abdulnabi Al Shoala. The book is now available in four languages, English, Hindi, Urdu and Malayalam, in addition to the Arabic version, published in 2018.

13. Permit me to say a few words about our large and vibrant community in Bahrain. Indian community contributed to the economic development of the Kingdom and continues to remain an important anchor in strengthening our bilateral ties.

14. I take this opportunity to convey our thanks and gratitude to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, the Government and people of Bahrain for ensuring the well-being, safety and security of the Indian community in Bahrain, and their exceptional care and support to the community during the difficult times of Covid-19 pandemic.

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

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

जय हिन्द।

Long live India-Bahrain Friendship!

Thank you.

16. Now, it is my pleasure to invite Her Excellency Ambassador Fatima Abdulla Al Dhaen, Chief of Afro-Asian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Bahrain to say a few words.