

**Speech by H.E. Mr. Piyush Srivastava,  
Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Bahrain  
At the book launch ceremony  
“Gandhi: His Engagement with Islam and the Arab World”  
Organised by Bahrain India Society  
(26 January, 2022; 1600 hrs)**

**Your Excellency Mr. Abdulnabi Alshoala, Former Minister & Shura Council Member, Kingdom of Bahrain;**

**Mr. Abdulrahman Juma, Chairman, Bahrain India Society;**

**Dr Shobhana Radhakrishna, Renowned Gandhian scholar from India;**

**Distinguished Guests;**

Good evening to all of you!!!

1. It is an honour for me to be present at the launch of the book titled “Gandhi: His engagement with Islam and the Arab World” authored by H.E. Abdulnabi Al Shoala. The Arabic version of the book was launched in 2018, during 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi by the then Foreign Minister of Bahrain, H.E. Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa. Today, the book is being launched in four languages, English, Hindi, Urdu and Malayalam.

2. The author needs no introduction. A distinguished intellectual and Gandhian scholar, H.E. Abdulnabi Al Shoala, is no stranger to India and Gandhi. In his own words, and I quote: “My relationship with Gandhi began more than twenty years after his death. In 1969 I visited India, when the country was celebrating the Mahatma’s 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, and stayed there for four years. There, I enrolled myself in one of the most prestigious colleges of the University of Bombay, which is currently known as University of Mumbai. In St. Xavier’s College, I chose to study political science and public administration. Owing to the subjects of my choice, and the time and the place, Mahatma Gandhi was a constant presence in my life during my stay in India”. I may add that Gandhiji has been the constant presence in his life till date, even after his studies in India.

3. Mahatma Gandhi is a name that transcends the bounds of nation-states. Lovingly called ‘Bapu’ in India, his legacy influenced leaders and eminent global personalities alike. In this context, I would like to quote the words of one of the greatest scientific mind of our times, Albert Einstein. I quote, “Generations to come, it may well be, will scarce believe that such a man as this one ever in flesh and blood walked upon this Earth.” Gandhi is a world phenomenon whose relevance is eternal, timeless and universal.

**Excellency, Distinguished guests,**

4. It is a matter of great pride that this book on Gandhi in four languages is being launched on the occasion of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Republic day of India. I extend my greetings to all of you on this occasion. We are also celebrating a milestone in India's journey – Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, commemorating 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of India's independence.

5. This book launch is all the more significant at a time when India and Kingdom of Bahrain are celebrating the Golden Jubilee of establishment of Diplomatic relations. It is a celebration of our shared history rooted in trade, culture and close people-to-people connect which date back thousands of years to the Indus Valley and Dilmun civilisations.

6. I would like to compliment H.E. Abdulnabi Al Shoala for his contribution in strengthening the bonds of friendship between our countries and peoples, as well as for his in depth research work on the life and thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi.

7. The book travels through various phases of Mahatma Gandhi's life and brings to fore his intellectual heritage and ideals with the core value of harmony and non-violence.

8. The book makes for a fascinating reading. I am sure that the readers, not only in India and Bahrain, but across the world would enjoy reading this brilliant work.

9. May the message of Bapu "Be the change you want to see in the world" continue to inspire and awaken our inner strength!

Thank you,