



Republic Day Greetings

India is celebrating its 66th Republic Day on 26 January, 2015. It was on this historic day 65 years ago that a newly independent India adopted its Constitution enshrining the same ideals and aspirations that guided India's peaceful freedom movement in which millions of Indians participated under the most inspirational leadership of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi.

The people of India resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic and to secure to all its citizens: Justice - social, economic and political; Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; and Equality of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all Fraternity, assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation.

My family and colleagues join me in conveying our warmest greetings and best wishes to all fellow Indians in the State of Qatar on India's 66th Republic Day.

India, a country of over 1.2 billion people, the world's largest democracy and the third largest economy on purchasing power parity terms, is on a cusp of history. Following an overwhelming mandate given by the people of India in the last General Elections concluded in May, 2014, the Government led by Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India has launched major new initiatives and taken several measures to re-energize the Indian economy and make India a preferred destination and partner for business and tourism. Prime Minister's visionary initiatives such as the launch of 'Make in India' campaign on 25 September, 2014, inviting businessmen from other countries to collaborate with Indian corporates, and 'Swachh Bharat' (Clean India) campaign on the 145th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on 2 October, 2014, and 'Digital India' and 'Smart Cities' missions, are inspiring Indians and India's global diaspora, and

enhancing the attractiveness of India for businessmen, investors and tourists from around the world.

On this joyous celebration of our Republic Day in Qatar, let us also celebrate the deep-rooted ties and time-tested friendship between India and Qatar, and renew our sincere thanks to His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Emir of Qatar; His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Emir; His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Thani, the Deputy Emir; His Excellency Sheikh Abdullah Bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Interior; and the Government and people of Qatar for their steadfast commitment to nurturing the centuries old friendship and multi-dimensional partnership between our two great countries, and for their hospitality to the large, diverse, accomplished and highly regarded Indian community in Qatar.

India-Qatar cooperation in diverse sectors is flourishing within an excellent framework provided by historic relations and regular and substantive engagement, including at the highest levels of the two Governments. In his tweet conveying thanks to HE Sheikh Abdullah Bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of Qatar for his gracious congratulatory phone call on the day the results of General Elections in India were announced, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi stated: "We will take India-Qatar ties to newer heights". Both sides are working closely to schedule high level visits and other exchanges in the coming months.

The Government and people of India greatly admire the strides being made by Qatar in education and research; infrastructure; business, finance and investments; sports; travel and tourism; and other areas, and are keen to expand collaborations to the mutual benefit of both sides. Besides official interactions, people-to-people contacts and initiatives by private sector are energising dialogue and cooperation in various sectors.

With its huge and growing energy needs, India greatly values Qatar's vital partnership in the energy sector. Qatar is the largest supplier of LNG to India. There is a large and expanding market for Qatar's LNG, oil and petrochemical sectors in India.

Bilateral trade between the two countries has been steadily growing, reaching nearly \$17 billion in 2013-14. Indian companies are pursuing collaborations in infrastructure, communications and information

technology, energy and other areas in Qatar, to the mutual benefit of both sides. The extensive infrastructural development in Qatar as it prepares to host the prestigious FIFA World Cup in 2022, and the world class competences and competitiveness of India's corporate sector, offer attractive opportunities to both sides. The huge potential for significantly increasing Qatar's investment in India, especially in view of the new initiatives of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's Government, also presents a win-win situation for both countries.

There have been several important developments in our bilateral cooperation with Qatar since we celebrated our last Republic Day. HE Sultan Al Khater, Undersecretary in Ministry of Economy & Commerce led an 18 member composite delegation, focused on economic partnership, to New Delhi on 25-26 March. 45 Indian companies participated in Project Qatar Exhibition in Doha from 12-15 May. 'Vibrant Gujarat' business delegation visited Doha from 3-5 September. Three business and investment events were organized in Doha on 25 September coinciding with the launch of 'Make in India' campaign. There has been encouraging participation from Qatar at major business and diaspora conferences in India – the 4th India-Arab Partnership Conference in New Delhi on 26-27 November, 2014; Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and Vibrant Gujarat Summit in Gandhinagar, Gujarat from 7-9 January and 11-13 January, 2015, respectively; and the Partnership Summit 2015 in Jaipur, Rajasthan from 15-17 January, 2015, among others.

Assistant Foreign Minister HE Al Rumaihi visited India for Foreign Office Consultations with Shri Anil Wadhwa, Secretary(East) on 5 June, and the latter visited Doha on 9 July. Indian Coast Guard Ship VIJIT visited Doha from 20-23 December, in conjunction with the celebrations of Qatar's National Day. The 4th meeting of the Joint Defence Cooperation Committee was held in Delhi on 6-7 January, 2015.

A popular photo exhibition on 'Islamic Monuments of India' was displayed at KATARA from 23 September – 18 October, 2014. An event to promote Indian tourism was organised on 27 October. I am glad to announce that the Indian Cultural Centre (ICC), apex organization of socio-cultural associations of the Indian community in Qatar, functioning under the aegis of Embassy of India, Doha, will be organizing the next 'A Passage to India' Community Festival at KATARA on 19-20 March, 2015. We are grateful to KATARA management for their support.

Ensuring the well being and welfare of Indian nationals in Qatar is the highest priority for Embassy of India. We have a regular, active and inclusive outreach to the Indian community. In this context, we are particularly mindful of our responsibilities towards the large number of Indian workers who are making a vital contribution to the progress of Qatar with the sweat of their brows. We remain in close contact with the authorities concerned in Qatar regarding the well being of our workers and other nationals, and appreciate their cooperation and support. We welcome the process of labour reforms undertaken by Government of Qatar, and look forward to the implementation of further steps being considered. As we celebrate our 66th Republic Day, I warmly congratulate the Indian community in Qatar for all that they do for the development and progress of their host country, and for further strengthening the strong ties between India and Qatar.



(Sanjiv Arora)
Ambassador of India
to the State of Qatar