ADDRESS BY AMBASSADOR
DURING ONBOARD RECEPTION - 21 AUGUST 2023

Under Secretary Defence of the State of Kuwait H.E Dr Abdullah Meshal Mubarak Al-Sabah

Western Fleet Commander of Indian Navy Rear Admiral Vineet McCarty

Captain Ashok Rao

Excellencies, Ambassadors and High Commissioners

Dignitaries from Kuwait

Officers and crew members of INS Vishakhapatnam

Friends from media

Good Evening !! Namaskar! Assalam-Alaikum

Let me first express my gratitude to His Excellency Dr Abdullah Meshal Mubarak Al-Sabah, for his gracious presence as the Chief Guest for this evening's reception onboard Indian Naval Ship Visakhapatnam, our indigenously built flagship carrier of Western fleet and named after

a historical city and naval base on the eastern coast of India. It cannot be a more proud moment for me to see this majestic Indian Naval Ship berthed in Kuwait. The presence of the Western Fleet Commander onboard the ship shows the importance we attach to the growing defence ties between India and the State of Kuwait.

2. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation and profound gratitude to the leadership, the Government and the people of the State of Kuwait, for their steadfast commitment to the close and friendly relations between India and Kuwait.

Friends,

3. Dhows and ships have historically been the main driver of the strong and intense people to people ties between our two countries. Not only did our Kuwaitis friends in the 19th and early 20th century went to India on dhows and boats with Arabian horses, pearls and dates and brought back textiles, timber, spices etc, they laid the foundation of our strong bilateral ties. And what could be more poignant a fact then that the Indian rupee was the legal tender in Kuwait for over a century till 1961. It would be no exaggeration therefore to say that India and Kuwait are natural allies and true partners. And this could be seen in our multi-faceted bilateral relations over the years - be it energy, trade, infrastructure development, medical cooperation, people to people exchanges, or defence cooperation and security. The large and vibrant

Indian community in Kuwait is a manifestation of our close people to people linkages.

4. Defence cooperation constitutes a significant element of our shared strategic vision for the region. The bilateral defence engagements have seen a noticeable upswing in the recent past with an increased frequency of Indian Naval ship visits facilitated with active support of the State of Kuwait. We will remain ever grateful to our Kuwaiti friends for their assistance in establishing the Sea-Air bridge between India and Kuwait in 2021 for supply of liquid oxygen during the second COVID wave. These Naval engagements have assisted us in promoting understanding and furthering inter-operability between the two friendly Navies.

Friends,

5. Indian Naval assets have been increasingly deployed in recent times to address the maritime concerns of the region. In addition, Indian Navy has also been involved in assisting countries in the Region with Hydrographic Survey, Search and Rescue and other such capacity building and capability-enhancement activities. During the three days of port call, both sides participated in various training interactions onboard and at the Naval base to understand the operational procedures of both sides besides the high level meetings/ interactions. This unique exposure and interaction between the two Naval forces has given them

meaningful insights into the working aspects of each other. I am sure that the coming days will witness more such interactions.

6. I know humidity has been very high during the last one week and therefore I would conclude my remarks by once again thanking all of you for joining us today evening. My special thanks to His Excellency Under Secretary Defence .

Ladies and Gentlemen, please enjoy the evening.

Thank you,

Jai Hind !!