

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR SIBI GEORGE AT THE OPEN HOUSE
AT THE EMBASSY, SEPT 9, 2020**

Good Afternoon everybody, A very warm welcome to Embassy of India,

This is our third Open House.

Let me begin today's open house by thanking His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for hosting the large Indian community in Kuwait. I also thank the Government of the State of Kuwait and Kuwaiti friends of India for their friendship and support.

Let me introduce the officers of the Mission. Mr. Raj Gopal Singh, Deputy Chief of Mission; Mr. Rahul, First Secretary (Community Welfare & Education); Mr. Fahad Ahmed Khan Suri, Second Secretary (Political, Commerce, Press, Information & Culture); Mr. Ranveer Bharti, Second Secretary (Consular); Shri. Jaladhi Mukherjee - Second Secretary & Head of Chancery; Mr. Amitabh Ranjan - Second Secretary (Community Welfare & Education); and Mr. Sibi U S - Second Secretary (Labour.

As I mentioned in the last open house, we continue to receive several hundred emails/letters on a number of topics. These are difficult times, everyone is facing many difficulties and many of the mails and suggestions are related to the difficulties being faced due to the Covid situation. The Mission continues to receive several calls on the 24x7 helplines. These helpline numbers are displayed on our website prominently. The Embassy continues to take action on each of these issues. Most are work in progress.

While I welcome all comments and suggestions from our participants, I would like to say this. We need to maintain some decorum in our deliberations and in our messages. We all come from a civilized country and live in a civilized country, let's be civilized in our deliberations. Our objective for organizing this Open House is to better understand each other, appreciate each other and to exchange ideas to bring in changes that can serve our community better and strengthen our relations with Kuwait at all fronts. Let's use this Open House for that purpose.

I am happy to note that we have some positive developments. The Vande Bharat Mission continued flying to different cities in India. We will show the figures shortly. The Government of India has revised its guidelines on lockdown in India. The Government of Kuwait also revised the guidelines by lifting the curfew. However, let's continue to observe social distancing and our guidelines at all our meetings and interactions.

The Consular Staff of the Embassy has worked last two weekends also preparing passports to meet the increased demand. We will show you the numbers shortly. I am

happy that the validity of residence permits have been extended by three more months till November 2020.

We received several mails from applicants to attend today's open house. We had to convey regret to many people. My request to those having labour complaints to first approach the labour wing of the Mission to file your complaints. Same is the case with issues related to Community Welfare wing. As we are organizing this under the Covid 19 guidelines and restrictions, I cannot accept all requests. Similar is the case with applicants from Consular services also. The Consular Officer conducts regular open house in his office every day from 9 am to 10 am and 2 pm to 3 pm. All are welcome to meet him.

If you think that the matter needs to be brought to my personal attention, by all means write to me or come for Wednesday Open House. I would like the Open House to always have a theme based discussion, before we get to individual cases. You recall that the theme of last Open House was 'Indian Community Welfare Fund', where we discussed how to better utilize the ICWF. Yesterday I had a meeting with a large group of volunteers here. I briefed them on ICWF. Please spread the message that ICWF Application boxes are kept at the Embassy Hall and also at the three passport offices to make the fund accessible to the Indians in distress. ICWF assistance form has been uploaded on Embassy website. You could also send proposals for assistance by email or letters. The three member committee headed by Deputy Chief of Mission is examining each of the assistance requests as per guidelines from Government of India.

Today we have chosen the theme 'Engineers' for our Open House. I held a few round of discussions with some groups and individuals on the issue. While we are in regular touch with the Indian and Kuwaiti authorities on this very important issue, I thought it is important to have an Open House discussion on the matter. We will have a presentation by a senior member of the Indian community and a highly reputed engineer Dr. Abdul Razzak Rumane who will make a presentation for us today. We in the embassy has also put together a brief presentation. I look forward to your valuable suggestions during the discussions today.

On the basis of the number of mails and calls that we received in the Mission, I would like to have 'Amnesty and Travel Document' as the theme of the next open house. To join the Open House, or to give your suggestions, you may please write to community.kuwait@mea.gov.in.

Dear Friends,

I conclude my remarks by thanking His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for hosting the Indian community in Kuwait.

Thank you.

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