



## INDEPENDENCE DAY GREETINGS

India is celebrating its 69<sup>th</sup> Independence Day on 15 August, 2015. My family and colleagues join me in conveying our warmest greetings to all fellow Indians in the State of Qatar on this historic day.

Let us gratefully remember all those who sacrificed their present for a better future for our country, and cherish the ideals and aspirations that guided India's peaceful freedom movement in which millions of Indians participated under the exemplary leadership of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi.

On this joyous celebration of our Independence Day in Qatar, let us also celebrate the deep-rooted friendly ties between India and Qatar, and renew our sincere thanks to His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Emir; 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 nurturing the historic friendship and multi-dimensional partnership between our two great countries, and for their hospitality to the Indian community in Qatar.

The State Visit of His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Emir of Qatar to India on 24-25 March, 2015 at the invitation of Hon'ble President Shri Pranab Mukherjee, has imparted fresh momentum to our bilateral ties.

The visit was highly significant in many ways. This was HH the Emir's first visit to India, a country with whom Qatar's relations are steeped in history. This was also the first visit of the Head of State of an Arab country after India's current Government led by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi assumed office in May, 2014.

The most important dimension of any official visit between two nations is the personal chemistry between the leaders. HH the Emir and the Indian leadership struck an instant and excellent rapport, reflecting the strong ties, nurtured by cultural affinities, people to people contacts and trade and commerce between our two great countries through centuries. At all the meetings and events, there was a pervasive atmosphere of friendship, trust and shared keenness to work together for greater progress and prosperity of the people of both countries.

During the visit of HH the Emir, the two sides discussed ways and means to build a forward-looking partnership by further broadening and deepening the bilateral engagement and by better leveraging the existing complementarities between the two countries in key areas of mutual interest including inter alia, energy, power, petrochemicals, investments, infrastructure, development, project exports, education, culture, health, human resource, media and information technology. Six Agreements/MOUs were signed during the visit.

The last year has also witnessed other important developments in our bilateral cooperation with Qatar, including discussions between India's Law and Justice Minister and Qatar's Justice Minister, visit of India's National Security Adviser, and visit of Qatar's Transport Minister and Commander of Qatar Emiri Air Force to Aero India Exhibition at Bengaluru. Active exchange of defence delegations and the visit of Indian Coast Guard Ship VIJIT, in conjunction with the celebrations of Qatar's National Day, reflect the keenness of both sides to further strengthen defence cooperation.

Both sides have been taking active steps to further expand economic and commercial partnership. The composition of India-Qatar Business Forum has been finalized. Embassy of India, Doha organised three business and investment events, with the support of important Qatari organisations, coinciding with the launch of 'Make in India' campaign by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 25 September, 2014. Other developments include the visits of 'Vibrant Gujarat' and National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) missions to Qatar, the largest ever (65) presence of Indian companies at 'Project Qatar' Exhibition, opening of Doha Bank's full fledged branch in Mumbai, and the participation of Qatari officials and businessmen in major economic conferences in India.



India deeply appreciates Qatar's support, as a co-sponsor, to its Resolution at the United Nations General Assembly, adopted unanimously with a record 177 co-sponsors, declaring 21 June as the International Day of Yoga (IDY), and for various activities to celebrate the first IDY in Qatar. We are grateful to Government of Qatar and Q-Post for the release of a commemorative stamp to mark this occasion.

It is also heartening that several visits and events have taken place in recent months in the areas of tourism, sports and arts & culture, including a seminar on Indian Tourism, participation of Indian teams in major athletics, boxing, volleyball and wrestling competitions, and widely acclaimed cultural programmes held at KATARA – The Cultural Village Foundation, such as a photo exhibition on Islamic monuments of India and a Kathak classical dance performance sponsored by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, 'A Passage to India' Community Festival, an event on Yoga, and exhibitions on India by creative young photographers of Qatar Photographic Society. We are grateful to KATARA for their enormous guidance and support in organising these programmes.

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 particular, we have an extremely important responsibility 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 Indian 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 69<sup>th</sup> Independence 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.



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**Ambassador of India to the State of Qatar**