

**Remarks by H.E. Mr. Vinod K Jacob, Ambassador Designate at the
THMC Connect in Bahrain on 23 September 2023**

Shri Mukesh Kavalani and other Members of the THMC Board, Bahraini friends, my colleague Mr. Ravi Jain, Second Secretary, Good morning everyone.

I am honoured to attend today's Connect organized by THMC. Since early August when I arrived in the friendly Kingdom of Bahrain, I have witnessed the efficiency of the THMC and its Board. They have shared in the successes associated with the Chandrayaan 3 Mission landing at the south pole of the moon and the ISRO's Aditya L1 to study the sun. They have taken pride in being active promoters of India-Bahrain relations for which they are uniquely placed.

I would like to use this opportunity to mention the good news of another milestone—the passage of the historic Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam last week. This Act of the Indian Parliament gives 33 percent reservation to women in the Parliament and is in line with the concept of “Women-led Development” presented by Hon Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the recently concluded G20 Summit. This Act will now ensure women's participation in decision and policy making.

Friends,

Now let me share a few words about my previous experience with economic diplomacy.

I had the honour to serve as the Joint Secretary in charge of Economic Diplomacy in the Indian Ministry of External Affairs in Delhi from October 2017 to August 2018. Though a relatively short period of time, it was an interesting responsibility as it took me out of my comfort zone of handling political work which is the staple for most Indian diplomats.

During this period, the Division did work on institution building in respect of the International Solar Alliance (ISA), expansion of the network of India's social security arrangements with other countries, the conceptualization and implementation of the India Pavilion at the Janadariyah Festival in Saudi Arabia in the first quarter of 2018 where India was the guest of honour country, and partnering with other stakeholders to institutionalize what has since evolved into an annual feature on the economic diplomacy calendar in India—the Deccan Dialogue.

This experience helped me during my subsequent stint as India's Deputy High Commissioner to Sri Lanka from September 2019 to July 2023. While in Sri Lanka, we were able to finalise the historic Trincomalee Tank Farms deal which had been in cold storage for 40 years, successfully implement a development cooperation portfolio of nearly USD One billion and a separate package of USD 4 billion humanitarian and economic assistance. I had the honour negotiating with the Treasury Secretary of Sri Lanka the financing assurances needed for their IMF loan.

To summarize, the theory that I learnt as Joint Secretary Economic Diplomacy, I was able to apply in practice as Deputy High Commissioner in Colombo.

This then brings me to the experiences here in Bahrain.

Friends,

I have been warmly received by the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain. They have made my transition extremely smooth. I have had the good fortune of calling on the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Commerce and Industry, Social Development, Transport and Telecommunications, Oil and Environment and Health, and a whole host of high level officials from other Departments and Agencies. We received the INS Vishakapatnam from 14 to 17 August. Earlier this month, I was privileged to receive the 14th President of India, HE Mr. Ram Nath Kovind and the former Vice President of India, HE Mr. Venkaiah Naidu during their visits to Bahrain.

I will endeavour to work towards strengthening of India-Bahrain relations, especially in the economic and commercial spheres and count on the support of the THMC and Bahraini friends in this regard.

Thank you.