

Independence Day Event

Sambandh

15 August 2021

Stockholm

Remarks

Ambassador Tanmaya Lal

Namaskar,

Greetings on the Independence Day of India, as we celebrate India@75.

It is great to know about this initiative of Sambandh to also hold these celebrations in Helsingborg.

Over these 75 years India has gone from being a colony to a confident young nation. India Sweden partnership has also grown from strength to strength.

Friends,

This is also an occasion to reflect – on our heritage and achievements, our goals and what the future may hold.

India is among the oldest civilizations. Several of the world's religions developed in this land. We are proud of our rich heritage of philosophy, mathematics, sciences, medicine, music and arts and its contribution to human society over millennia.

Our strength lies in this heritage and the dynamism of its unparalleled mega diversity. Of peoples, faiths, languages, cultures, cuisines. Its strength also lies in its wise constitution, its inclusive democratic framework and strong institutions.

India represents one sixth of humanity. Indians are also among the largest diaspora of any country in the world.

India is among the top economies in the world and growing fast. Therefore, whatever happens in India has a global significance.

India is undergoing rapid transformation as we celebrate Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.

We have made remarkable all-round progress - in food security, in tackling extreme poverty, moving towards a more equal & inclusive society, improving status of women, providing healthcare, education and employment opportunities. Technology is being effectively deployed to scale up interventions to fast-track development. More is being done.

Today, spacecraft designed and Made in India have reached Moon and Mars with the brilliance and hard work of our scientists. We are now preparing for manned spaceflight.

India is a responsible nuclear power. India's IT professionals have made Brand India global, including here in Sweden. The global relevance of India's pharmaceutical and healthcare industry has again been highlighted as the world battles the Covid pandemic.

India is among the very few G20 countries that is on track to meet its Paris targets for Climate Action for use of renewable energy, afforestation, improved energy efficiency and use of cleaner fuel.

The dynamism and determination of our women and youth is making them excel in all fields, something we all experienced at the recent Tokyo Olympics.

Friends,

India's partnership with Sweden is also on the upswing. Prime Minister Modi and Prime Minister Löfven had a detailed Summit in virtual mode despite pandemic. This was the seventh such interaction in the last seven years.

The Series of Ministerial engagements, investment decisions and R&D collaboration initiatives have continued to intensify in the last six seven years.

Our countries have worked together on global challenges for climate action, nuclear disarmament, decolonization and UN Peacekeeping.

Both India and Sweden have very long maritime trading traditions. Despite the long distance, evidences of ancient trading networks have been found.

Some of you may have traveled to Birka island, not far from Stockholm. Beads and crystals from India have been found in Viking settlements on that island. Nearby on the Helgö island, an even older 1,500 years old bronze statuette of Buddha was found in a Viking settlement.

In the 18th century, a Swedish East India Company was setup to trade with India and beyond. In 1913, Rabindranath Tagore became the first Asian to be awarded the Nobel Prize. A few years later, he visited Uppsala. Indian revolutionaries Virendranath Chattopadhyaya and Lala Har Dayal spent some years in Sweden more than a century ago.

Almost a century back, Swedish companies such as Alfa Laval, Atlas Copco, Ericsson, Swedish Match who had been newly established, entered India. Today There are nearly 250 Swedish companies in India and around 75 Indian companies in Sweden.

There are a number of ongoing contacts in many other fields between our countries.

A couple of weeks back an Indian Navy Ship INS Tabar paid a goodwill visit. This was the first such visit to Stockholm in 17 years. In 2019 INS Tarkash had visited Karlskrona.

Leading Indian classical music and dance exponents have performed in Sweden. Mrs. Lilavati Häger was a renowned Indian artiste who settled in Sweden and was awarded by H.M. The King Gustaf Adolf.

Pandit Ravi Shankar was awarded music's most prestigious global award - the Polar Prize in Sweden in 1998.

A number of illustrious Indians from various fields have been awarded the Nobel Prize.

In sports there have been many memorable ties. For instance between Bjorn Borg and Vijay Amritraj or Ramesh Krishnan taking on Mats Wilander. Prakash Padukone won the 1980 Swedish Open. The Indian and Sweden Tennis teams met in 1987 Davis Cup final. Our young players in Chess, Table Tennis and other sports play each other. The young Swedish wrestler Sofia Mattson played in Pro-Wrestling League in India. The Swedish Football star Freddy Ljungberg played in the Indian Super League. India's Junior Women Football team Coach is Thomas Dennerby from Sweden. Indian and Swedish women players also met in in Tokyo Olympics in table tennis and wrestling.

There are some instances of Indian movies having been shot in Sweden, although there is a huge scope in this regard.

Friends,

I understand that there are around 50,000 Indians living in Sweden. Today, a large number of them are IT professionals, students and researchers and the Indian community is well respected.

You represent India's diversity, the spirit to live in harmony, hard work and professionalism. You are all Ambassadors of India.

I thank you for inviting me to engage with you today.

Our best wishes to all of you, your families and friends at Sambandh.

Looking forward to meeting you in person.

Thank you.