

ICWF Day
20 August 2021
Stockholm

Remarks
Ambassador Tanmaya Lal

Thank you all for joining.

I arrived here **last December**, but it is only now that opportunities for **physical meetings** are opening up.

While some of us have interacted in **virtual** mode earlier, and briefly **last Sunday** at the special event, **I have been looking forward** to meeting you and engaging with you for a long time.

I would like to start by **briefing** you on some of the things that the Embassy has been engaged in.

What is remarkable is that despite pandemic, India-Sweden high-level engagement has maintained a hectic pace.

In the **last few months alone** there have been several interactions.

Our Prime Ministers held **Virtual** Summit in March this year. They also engaged at the **India-EU** Summit in May.

Minister of Commerce Shri Piyush Goyal has interacted twice with Minister Hallenberg. **Raksha Mantri** Shri Rajnath Singh interacted with Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist last month.

I have had the opportunity to have online meetings with
Foreign Minister Ms. Ann Linde,
Minister of EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren,
Minister of Health Ms. Lena Hallengren,
Minister of Foreign Trade Ms. Anna Hallenberg.

I also had an in-person meeting with **Minister for Business & Industry** Ibrahim Baylan.

There have been useful discussions with several **business leaders, think tanks, universities** and some **media representatives**.

A few months back, I presented **credentials** to H.E. the President of Latvia. Although I am yet to visit that country.

I am now looking forward to meeting with other senior dignitaries and Members of Parliament.

Foreign Minister Ann Linde and former Prime Minister Carl Bildt spoke at the **Raisina Dialogue**, reflecting their interest in engaging India at various platforms.

During the recent edition of the **Almedalen Week**, I gave an extensive half-hour interview during the **Engaging India** session, as part of our outreach.

We are planning for the **India Sweden Innovation Day** in late October. The next **Joint Economic Commission** is also due.

I have had excellent cooperation with my counterpart **Ambassador Klas Molin** on various issues.

In recent weeks, Sweden has formally joined the **International Solar Alliance**.

The membership of the India Sweden joint initiative - Leadership Group on Industry Transition - continues to expand. Significantly, President Biden announced the decision of US to join **LeadIT** earlier this year.

An Indian Navy Ship **INS Tabar** paid a goodwill visit to Stockholm recently. Due to Covid restrictions, we could not host a large reception.

Despite pandemic, there have been several announcements of **further investments** by big Swedish companies including IKEA, Autoliv and Sandvik.

Several **joint R&D proposals** are under process.

We have also been interacting with several leading **Indian company heads** who have made investments in Sweden and are manufacturing here.

We have initiated discussions on specific collaboration projects in **Space Sector** and **Polar Research**.

It was heartening to see **Independence Day Celebrations** in many other cities of Sweden including **Helsingborg, Luleå and Malmö**. A big event was also held in Riga, Latvia.

In June, a large number of **Yoga** Gurus and enthusiasts from several Swedish cities organized Yoga events on the International Day of Yoga. These included **Stockholm, Kiruna, Gothenburg, Uppsala, Malmö, Helsingborg, Luleå and Älmhult**.

Celebrations were also held in **Latvia**.

As I mentioned on Sunday, Indian and Swedish young women sports persons competed in **Table Tennis and Wrestling at the recent Tokyo Olympics**.

The young Indian Golf star Aditi Ashok who performed brilliantly at the Tokyo Olympics even as she narrowly missed a medal, is an alumnus from the **Annika Sörenstam Foundation**.

And of course, the Swedish connection to the first ever athletics gold medal winning Javelin throw by **Neeraj Chopra** has also been cemented in history now. As you may

know, Neeraj Chopra had done his final training in Uppsala before leaving for Tokyo. Mission extended facilitation, which was required.

Thomas Dennerby of Sweden has taken over as the Coach for Indian Women Football Team.

There are such India Sweden bonds in almost every field.

We have compiled some of these interesting connections in a **video**, which was shown on Sunday. This is an ongoing project.

Many of you have been long term residents in Sweden. We would greatly appreciate your **feedback** and also clues to many more such instances that we may have missed.

I would also request all of you to **share** any old photographs that you may have of such links or events. This would greatly help us in our outreach and also inform a wider audience about the history and context of India Sweden ties.

For instance, the fact that a 1,500 years old Buddha statuette from Kashmir was found in **Helgö**; or beads and crystals from India were found in **Birka**.

And that **Indology studies** in Sweden date back to more than 200 years.

We would also like to talk here more about the **Indian investments** in Sweden. Not only in IT but other sectors as well.

I am happy to see some **students** joining us today. While lot of academic linkages have existed over the decades, there is scope of much more.

I am also looking at going to **schools and universities** when things open up, to talk to the students about India. We would welcome any suggestions in this regard.

Many of you may be visiting this Building for the first time. The Embassy moved here last April shortly after the outbreak of pandemic. This heritage building, is otherwise known as **The Schinkel Building**. It was originally constructed 270 years back in 1750! Some of you may know that we started at Strandvägen in 1948.

We hope that some of you were able to watch the **illumination of this Embassy in India's tricolour last Sunday**, as we had announced during the morning function.

You may like to follow us on **Facebook** and **Twitter** if you are not already doing so.

My colleague Mr. Suresh Kumar will now brief you.

I thank you for joining us this morning.