

**75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**  
**Independence Day of India Celebrations**  
**ILCEF, Riga**  
15 August 2022

**Remarks by Ambassador**  
**Tanmaya Lal**

Dear Friends,

Warm greetings to you on this special occasion as India celebrates 75 years of Independence.

It is good to see the Indian Latvian Cultural and Economic Forum organise this special event in Riga.

Friends,

This Festival of IndiaAt75, or the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, is a proud occasion to look back at our remarkable journey.

India is a nation rooted in one of the oldest civilizations and is defined by its democracy and great diversity among its people who represent one sixth of the entire humanity.

There is a bewildering variety of languages, faiths, ethnicities, culture, art, cuisines, music and dance traditions. Yet there has always been a fundamental unity in this diversity.

India won its independence after a long hard non-violent peoples' struggle. Freedom came at a huge cost. A traumatic partition and massive forced migration. We started from a very difficult situation.

However, a complete transformation is underway in India.

Despite the huge challenges of our colonial past, tremendous progress has been achieved.

Today, according to IMF, India is the fastest growing large economy - world's fifth largest economy with a GDP of nearly 3 trillion dollars. Our exports and FDI levels are now at record levels.

Last year, despite Covid, 44 Unicorns – Startups with more than 1 billion dollar valuation - came from India. Highest in the world.

Today India is the global leader in real time digital payments. Mobile data usage in India is the largest in the world.

Digital transformation is rapidly scaling up development.

According to World Bank, even during Covid19, extreme poverty has declined in India.

India produced indigenous Covid vaccine within 11 months. The world's first ever DNA based vaccine also came from India.

India has already administered more than 2 billion doses of Covid vaccines in 18 months' time!

India is the first nation whose spacecraft reached Mars orbit in its first attempt! A manned space mission is now being prepared.

Indian scientists today work at their research stations in Arctic, Antarctic and Himalaya, contributing to the global research.

A Deep Ocean Mission is underway.

From supercomputers to fighter aircraft to aircraft carriers are now being manufactured in India.

Airports to Metros are now being run on solar power. India is among the leaders on climate action.

India today is also a big international development partner – building roads, dams, irrigation, metros, power transmission lines, schools, hospitals in a number of partner countries.

India is among the first responders in humanitarian emergencies in the Indian Ocean region. Affordable vaccines and generic drugs made in India are lifeline in many developing countries.

At a time of disruption of food supply chains, India is providing food grains to people of a number of countries.

The largest contributor to UN Peacekeeping is India. The first ever All Women UN Police Peacekeeping team came from India.

All this transformation is being achieved within an inclusive and open democratic framework.

Whether it is climate change or global health or international peace & security, India is working closely with partner countries.

Friends,

We greatly value our friendship with Latvia, as we mark 30 years of our diplomatic relations.

India's ties with Latvia and the Baltic region continue to grow. There have been four engagements at Head of State or Head of Government level in the last five years. There have been four interactions between our Foreign Ministers in the last three years. The first India Nordic Baltic Conclave was held in 2020. The pandemic affected the interaction but we now expect a resumption of high-level exchange.

Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to visit Riga and to meet some of you. It was encouraging to know about the good work that Indians are undertaking in Latvia in various fields. It was also good to interact with some Indian students studying at various Latvian universities, as also their faculty.

Before concluding I would like to thank the Indian Latvian Cultural and Economic Forum for working with this Embassy to organise Yoga Day celebrations in Riga last year and earlier this year despite Covid constraints.

Members of Indian Diaspora are also Ambassadors for India and help build bridges between our countries. You represent hard work and professionalism as also India's diverse cultural heritage and the spirit to live in harmony.

My best wishes to all of you and our Latvian friends.

Jai Hind.

Long live India Latvian Friendship.