

**75th Anniversary
Independence Day
15 August 2022
Stockholm**

**Remarks
Ambassador Tanmaya Lal**

Friends,

As mentioned by Hon'ble President in her speech India has come a long way in this short span of 75 years.

Representing one sixth of humanity in an interconnected world, this has global significance.

Whether it is India becoming the fastest growing large economy among the top few in the world.

Whether it is the provision of access to safe water, housing, healthcare & energy to its people.

The scale and speed of financial inclusion or digital transformation

Becoming pharmacy to the world.

The abilities in science & manufacturing from biotech to IT to supercomputers to space.

The role as an important development partner & responder in humanitarian emergencies.

Indian's voice and role at multilateral level on global issues.

All this being achieved in an inclusive democratic framework has a deep global significance and importance

Friends,

May I acknowledge the gracious presence of Ambassador Niclas kvarnström, Head of Asia Pacific Division from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden.

His presence here today is reflective of the close bonds between our countries. India Sweden partnership is flourishing.

Prime Minister Modi and Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson had a very good meeting only three months ago. This was the eighth such leadership interaction in the last eight years.

A few days ago, an MoU was exchanged between our Financial regulatory bodies in the presence of Prime Minister Modi.

We had the honour of receiving His Majesty and two Hon'ble Ministers of Sweden at the India Pavilion at the Dubai Expo.

Our Ministers of Foreign Affairs have met more than once this year alone. Our Ministers of Trade met recently in Geneva.

Our Ministers of Environment co-chaired the meeting of the Leadership Group on Industry Transition, an India Sweden global climate action initiative, a day before the recent Stockholm+50 Summit in June.

Also in June, Investors from India were among the select focus groups at the Join Sweden Summit.

Research & Innovation, clean technologies, water & waste management, circular economy, life sciences, smart grids and smart city solutions are some of the areas where we are working closely together.

We also collaborate in areas such as space, polar research and defence.

Friends,

Next year marks 75 years of our diplomatic relations.

There are innumerable threads in this Sambandh.

For instance, during a visit to Tata Steel Surahammar, I came to know of Swedish engineers who travelled to India in 1860s to help set up iron works

Another Swedish engineer worked in the Indian railway sector in 1860s.

Some of you may be familiar with paintings on India rendered by a Swedish artist also around 1860s.

Even today one can see Sanskrit inscriptions on a rock in Uppsala. These are verses from Nala Damayanti story from Mahabharata that were inscribed by Otto Tullberg for his fiancé two hundred years ago in 1830s. He later established Indology studies at Uppsala.

More than a century ago in 1913, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore became the first Asian to be awarded the Nobel Prize. He later visited Stockholm and Uppsala University.

Around the same time, after the First World War, two Indian revolutionaries Lala Har Dayal and Virendranath Chattopadhyay spent some active years in Sweden.

It was also around that time, that newly established Swedish companies such as Ericsson, Alfa Laval and Swedish Match started their presence in India.

Today there are around 250 Swedish companies in India and around 75 Indian companies in Sweden.

Going back much further in time.

1,000 years old beads and crystals from India have been found not far from Stockholm on the island of Birka, which used to be an ancient Viking trading port. Today this is a UNESCO Heritage site. A 1,500 years old bronze statuette of Buddha was found on the nearby island of Helgö, which had an even older Viking settlement.

These offer intriguing glimpses into the ancient long distance trading networks.

Closer to present times, a Swedish East India Company was set up in Gothenburg 300 years ago to trade with India and far East.

Interestingly, we are now negotiating an India EU Trade Agreement and Sweden takes over EU Presidency next year.

In 1950s an Indian artiste, Mrs. Lilavati Devi Häger, settled in Sweden and became India's dance Ambassador here.

The legendary Sitar maestro Pandit Ravi Shankar was awarded music's most prestigious global award – the Polar Prize in 1998 in Sweden.

Today it is great to see the breadth of Indian talent in music and dance in Sweden.

Friends,

Only last week the Swedish chess legend Ms Pia Cramling returned from Chennai after winning Gold for Board 1 at the Chess Olympiad. She had shared some remarkable insights into trends in chess before leaving for India.

Earlier this year we worked with Swedish friends to organise a 45-days training for the Indian ski team here in Sweden. I saw their good progress in Åre.

Some of you may have cheered the Indian women football team when they played in Stockholm some months back under coach Thomas Dennerby, who is doing a wonderful job.

Rohan Bopanna played at Båstad tennis tournament last month. Young Indian women professional golfers are playing in Sweden currently.

And who can forget Neeraj Chopra, who trained in Uppsala before leaving for Tokyo Olympics last year, and who broke his national record last month at the Olympia Stadion in Stockholm !

Friends,

The size and profile of Indian Diaspora in Sweden is growing fast in the last few years reflecting our business and investment ties.

Some of you have joined us in various activities over the last year. Such as :

India Sweden Innovation Day in Stockholm

Sweden India AI and Digitalisation Summit in Gothenburg

Time for India - road shows in Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmö, Luleå

Engaging India at Almedalen seminars on Innovation & Sustainability

Special interaction about Indian Investments in Sweden and Join Sweden among others in Stockholm.

There were some novel engagements such as the Fika with Startups, Discussion on Business & Sports, India Sweden Space Collaboration event in Kiruna, and Food Talk with entrepreneurs.

There was also encouraging participation at Yoga Day and Ayurveda related sessions.

Further new areas of collaboration are being explored and finalised.

Friends,

The Indian community in Sweden is well respected for their competence and contribution.

You represent both – India's civilizational heritage and the dynamism of modern India.

You are all Ambassadors for India.

Best wishes to all of you.

Long live India Sweden friendship.

Thank you.

May I now request Ambassador Kwarnström to come on stage and say a few words.