

## **RASHTRIYA EKTA DIVAS**

31 OCT 2022

Stockholm

### **REMARKS**

#### **AMBASSADOR TANMAYA LAL**

Namaskar

Thank you all for joining us this evening.

Today is Sardar Patel's birth anniversary.

Sardar Patel is remembered for his tremendous contribution in achieving the political integration of India, after India achieved independence in 1947 that was accompanied by a traumatic and violent partition.

Therefore, this occasion is celebrated as the National Unity Day or the '*Rashtriya Ekta Divas*' in India.

India is a vast country. And Indians represent one sixth of humanity.

India is perhaps the most diverse country and people in almost every aspect. And yet there has always been this abiding sense of unity.

This fundamental sense of unity has been there since millennia.

India has always been a civilizational entity. Those living across the length and breadth of this vast subcontinent have always had a sense of oneness, especially through its sacred places and pilgrimages across India, thousands of km across in times when long distance travel was very limited.

Despite the bewildering diversity of its peoples, this unity is experienced in the myriad of festivals, dance forms, music traditions, cuisines that India is known for.

This oneness is experienced every day in our lives at work and around us.

This is experienced on special occasions when Team India or Indian sportspersons represent India at the international stage and bring glory to our country. When our national anthem, which celebrates this unity in diversity of India, is played.

We experience it when our scientists, researchers and entrepreneurs excel at the global stage.

We experience it as our country moves forward on the path towards becoming a great power.

The whole country comes together whenever there is a collective challenge to be faced or when there is a calamity in any part of our country.

We also experience it even more clearly when we are outside India.

For instance, here in Sweden when we meet each other, celebrate various festivals and take pride in being Indians. Whichever region or community we come from, we all are Ambassadors of India.

On the occasion of Independence Day a couple of months back, Prime Minister Modi spoke of the renaissance of the collective consciousness in India@75.

Even as we celebrate *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav*, Prime Minister spoke of Amrit Kaal of the next 25 years looking ahead to India@100.

He spoke of *Panch Pran* for the *Amrit Kaal*. He spoke in the context of the progress achieved in these last 75 years of our independence from a long and exploitative colonial rule and our confidence and ambitions going forward.

I would like to recall here these five resolves :

The first is of a developed India.

The second is to completely erase any ounce of slavery from our minds or habits.

The third is pride in our heritage and legacy that has an innate capability of transforming itself with time.

The fourth *Pran* is of unity and solidarity, which can lead to wonders.

The fifth is about the duty of the citizens towards the nation.

Transformational change is underway in India.

From non-discriminatory and inclusive development to a fast-growing economy that is now the fifth largest globally.

Remarkable physical infrastructure and digital transformation coming up.

A huge renewable energy transition is ongoing.

International Solar Alliance, Coalition of Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, Leadership Group on Industry Transition LeadIT (a joint initiative with Sweden) are making a difference. Our Ministers co-chaired LeadIT meeting at Stockholm+50 in June.

India is becoming a global hub for innovation. Sweden's new Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Energy, Business & Industry Ebba Busch and our Minister for Science & Technology jointly inaugurated the India Sweden Innovation Day last week.

Deputy PM Ebba Busch also spoke of the active contribution of Indian Diaspora especially in the field of Innovation.

Manufacturing is moving to India. Whether it is smart phones or semiconductors or military aircraft or other defence systems. India is launching commercial satellites competitively.

Yoga and Ayurveda are gaining recognition and acceptance globally. A WHO Global Centre on Traditional Healing is coming up in India.

The concept of LiFE Mission on environmentally friendly lifestyle is catching attention.

India has also pushed for greater use of traditional climate smart and nutritious millets and coarse paddy. UN has designated next year as the International Year of Millet.

India today is a confident nation.

I recently had the memorable and inspiring experience of visiting the magnificent Statue of Unity in Kevadia Gujarat, which incidentally is double in height than the Statue of Liberty in New York.

All our Ambassadors had visited the Statue to attend the inauguration of the LiFE Mission, which was jointly launched by Prime Minister Modi and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres a few days back.

The Indian Diaspora in Sweden also represents the talent, dynamism and professionalism despite coming from different parts of India, speaking different languages. They are Ambassadors for India's strength of unity in diversity.

This sense of unity is manifest in the campaign *Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat*. We recall the engaging discussions that we had when we celebrated this campaign here at the Embassy some months back. Some of you were present on that occasion.

On that day it was wonderful to listen to the representatives from different Diaspora associations from different regions speaking different Indian languages share about their very rich cultural and literary traditions, festivals, stories and legends.

Today too we hope to hear from some of you about what do you see as the essence of this fundamental sense of unity in India.

Thank you once again for joining this special event celebrating the spirit of *Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat* and the *Rashtriya Ekta Divas* in this 75<sup>th</sup> year of India's independence.

I will close my remarks here.