

Republic Day Reception

27 January 2023

Stockholm

Remarks by Ambassador

Tanmaya Lal

Hon. Minister,
Excellencies,
Distinguished guests and friends,

A very warm welcome to all of you.

This is a landmark year for us.

As celebrations of 75 years of our independence continue, we also mark 75 years of India Sweden diplomatic relations.

Sweden's Presidency of the EU Council also coincides with India's G20 Presidency.

Given the huge global challenges, these collaborative frameworks assume even greater significance.

Excellencies,

75 years ago, India emerged from a dark colonial past and a traumatic partition.

An ancient civilization and a relatively young nation, India is a microcosm of global diversity. Of ethnicities, languages, cultures and faiths, many of whom originated in India.

India's Republic Day celebrates the momentous decision made by one sixth of humanity to govern themselves in an inclusive democratic framework, based on equality for all, drawing upon their millennia old traditions of co-existence.

We have come a long way in these 75 years.

In the last one decade alone, Indian economy has grown from being the 11th largest to 5th largest in the world now and is growing at a pace, which is among the fastest.

Although challenges remain, a complete transformation is underway.

A pioneering digital infrastructure, built as public goods, is scaling up development solutions, financial inclusion and entrepreneurial energies.

Indigenous Covid Vaccines were developed by Indian scientists within months. More than 2,000 million doses were administered in 18 months.

Indian rockets have orbited moon and Mars. A Swedish built research payload travelled on India's first Moon Mission. A Human space mission is coming up. India and Sweden are exploring collaboration on our Venus Mission.

Space startups also are now launching rockets and deploying satellites.

Indian scientists, at their research stations in Antarctica, Arctic and Himalaya, are contributing to global polar and climate research. A Deep Ocean Mission is underway.

Airports and Metros in India are running on solar power. A massive Hydrogen Mission is being implemented.

Made in India fighter aircraft and Aircraft Carrier are being inducted into service.

The scale and speed of the ongoing transformation in India is multiplying collaboration opportunities.

Excellencies,

Today's challenges are global and reflect our mutual interdependence across borders. Their solutions can only be collective.

India is working with partners on Climate, Health, Sustainable Development, Peace & Security.

During Covid pandemic, vaccines from India reached nearly 100 countries.

Generic drugs from India serve a very large number of developing economies.

At a time of food crisis, foodgrains from India are reaching a number of countries.

In the context of food security, at India's initiative, the UN has designated this year as the International Year of Millets to promote these climate smart superfoods.

India is partnering nearly 80 countries to help build roads, Metros, Irrigation systems, dams, power transmission lines and human resource capacities.

Some of these efforts are in collaboration with United Nations and other partners.

In our extended neighbourhood India is among the first responders in humanitarian emergencies.

The largest number of UN Peacekeepers come from India. This includes the largest all-women UN Peacekeeping unit deployed last week.

India is also assisting partners facing debt crises.

We are engaging closely with fellow developing countries from the global south to help shape an inclusive and meaningful agenda at the G20.

On Climate, India has taken lead through concrete global initiatives – the International Solar Alliance and Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure CDRI.

Prime Minister Modi and UN Secretary General Guterres recently launched a global campaign ‘Lifestyle for Environment’, which focuses on what all of us can do at a personal level towards a more sustainable lifestyle.

India and Sweden are leading the international public-private coalition on Industry Transition through the LeadIT initiative.

As we celebrate 75 years of our diplomatic relations, we recall that our ties go much further back. A Buddha statuette from India that was found from a 1000-years old Viking settlement is one intriguing thread.

Indology studies in Sweden date back 200 years starting in Uppsala University. 120 years ago Ericsson came to India. 110 years ago, India’s poet philosopher Rabindranath Tagore became the first Asian to be awarded the Nobel Prize.

More recently, in the last two years alone, despite Covid constraints, there have been multiple interactions at Prime Ministerial level in addition to a series of Ministerial engagements. This high-level political commitment continues to provide clear direction to our ties.

Innovation and Clean Technology collaborations drive this partnership.

Some of the largest technical and R&D talent pool for companies including Ericsson or Volvo is in India. Swedish majors continue to expand their presence in India in manufacturing, telecom, chemicals, defence, retail and services sectors.

Indian companies have also invested in Sweden in manufacturing, specialty steel, cellulose, power transmission, IT and other sectors. Some of them provide sustainability solutions to Swedish businesses. Today Indian professionals are also working at Northvolt and H2Steel. Indian diaspora is being recognised for their contribution to Swedish economy.

Culture and sports are also important elements in building people-to-people ties. We are delighted that the Swedish chess legend Grandmaster Pia Cramling, who recently won an individual Gold at the Chennai Olympiad, is with us today. The largest contingent at the recently concluded 50th edition of the prestigious Rilton Chess Cup was from India.

We are confident of India Sweden partnership growing ever stronger.

Thank you all for joining us today.

May I now request Hon. Minister to address us on this occasion.

He had travelled to India recently leading a high-profile business delegation. The visit was very substantive and successful.

We deeply value his gracious presence with us today.