

Bengali New Year

Bengali Association of Gothenburg

21 April 2023

Remarks

Ambassador Tanmaya Lal

Namaskar,

Shubho Noboborsho,

Greetings on Bengali New Year.

This year is special in many ways.

Your city Gothenburg will soon be celebrating 400 years of its establishment.

2023 is also a landmark year in Sweden celebrating His Majesty the King's 50th jubilee.

This year India and Sweden are holding the presidencies of G20 and the EU in parallel.

This year also marks 75 years of India Sweden diplomatic relations although our linkages go much further back.

I recently returned from India where I had the opportunity to also attend the celebrations marking 100 years of the Swedish company SKF in India. Ericsson has been in India for even longer.

A 100 years ago, some Indian revolutionaries made Sweden their home for a few years.

More than a 100 years ago, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore was awarded the Noble Prize in Sweden. Tagore's songs continue to resonate today and I am sure they will be an important aspect in your celebrations today.

150 years ago, young Swedish engineers engaged in the emerging steel and railways sectors in India.

Sanskrit and Indology studies at Uppsala University date back to 200 years in Sweden.

300 years ago, Swedish ships sailed out of the city of Gothenburg to pursue trade with the East. A replica of the famous East Indiaman is on display in your city.

The trade contributed to the success and prosperity of this port city in the north. Science and arts also flourished in Gothenburg.

Today engineering, IT and research are the basis of extensive business and academic linkages that bridge the thousands of kilometres of distance between this region and India. Our partnership continues to flourish.

Hon. Minister of Infrastructure is currently in India. Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Finance have visited India in recent months. Our Ministers of Environment have met. Further high-profile visits are being planned.

Both the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade have spoken about the remarkable contribution by the Indian diaspora to the Swedish economy and society.

I would like to compliment all of you for the good work that you do.

India had made a splash at the Gothenburg Kulturkalas last year. Some of you may have joined us that day.

We also had a hugely successful and popular day-long cultural festival Namaste Stockholm.

The remarkable thing is that all these amazing performances are entirely done by members of the Indian diaspora in Sweden.

Such cultural events not only provide a platform and showcase the young Indian talent but they also introduce India's rich cultural diversity and civilizational heritage to our friends and colleagues in Sweden.

They build bridges across generations and geographies.

I don't know whether Cherry Blossoms are already delighting people in Gothenburg. Here in Stockholm, we patiently await spring.

Best wishes for your event marking Poila Boishakh.

Best wishes for the year ahead.

Thank you.