

Independence Day

Stockholm
15 August 2023

Remarks

Ambassador Tanmaya Lal

Friends,

- The **scale and speed of transformation** that is underway in India, world's largest **democracy** and **fifth largest** and fastest growing large **economy** offer unprecedented opportunities of collaboration with our partners.
- India's **talent pool** is also **unmatched** in its importance for global economy.
- India's **role and capabilities** in collectively addressing **global challenges** whether it is climate change or global health or peace & security are also expanding significantly.
- This is a **special year** for India Sweden partnership as we celebrate **75 years of our diplomatic relations**.
- We welcome a close friend of India **Ambassador Niclas Kvarnström**, Head of Asia, Pacific and Latin America Division from Swedish Foreign Office who has taken time from his busy schedule to join us here this morning.
- **This year is special for both our countries also in the context of their international responsibilities** at a **time of serious global challenges**.
- India holds the Presidency of G20 and we **compliment Sweden on a substantive EU presidency**, which had several **significant initiatives** where **India** was also actively involved.
- One of the highlights of Sweden's EU Presidency was the **EU-Indo Pacific Ministerial meeting** in May in Stockholm where External Affairs Minister Dr. Jaishankar was a keynote speaker.
- Earlier in April, Sweden hosted the **first ever India EU Political Directors' Deliberations** in Malmö, a frank and rich discussion.
- Another very significant development has been the first ministerial meeting of the **India-EU Trade and Technology Council** during Swedish presidency. This brings India and EU closer as trusted technology partners.

- Sweden has also continued to support an early finalization of the **India EU Trade and Investment Agreements**.
- Over the last nine months or so, there have been **nearly 10 ministerial engagements** between our countries.
- **Sweden's Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, Infrastructure and Finance and State Secretary for Foreign Trade** have visited India. Our **External Affairs Minister** had a very substantive visit to Sweden, the first such visit by an Indian Foreign Minister in nearly two decades.
- Our **Ministers of Environment** co-chaired Leadership Group on Industry Transition, an India Sweden global climate action initiative at COP27 in Sharm-al-Sheikh.
- **Ministerial delegations from the states of Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu** have had good visits to Sweden exploring investment and technology linkages. The **20th session of Joint Economic Commission** was held in Delhi.
- High-profile **business delegations** have been exchanged.
- Sweden's Deputy Prime Minister alongwith our Minister for Science & Technology addressed the **India Sweden Innovation Day**. We had a substantive **Engaging India** seminar **at Almedalen**. Minister for Foreign Trade attended the **Republic Day** celebrations. Minister of Infrastructure attended the celebrations to mark 20 years of **Sweden India Business Council**.
- Last September **Namaste Stockholm** drew thousands of visitors despite rain where around 25 Indian groups performed in Kungsträgården. Indian groups also dazzled **Gothenburg Kulturkalas** marking 400 years of the city.
- Yoga enthusiasts celebrated **International Yoga Day** across Sweden.
- The India Sweden Sambandh has countless streams.
- During the last two years, I have spoken about some historical threads, for instance - **Swedish engineers** who worked in India in iron works and railways in 1860s; the tradition of **Indology studies** in Uppsala going back 200 years; and a fascinating **Sanskrit inscription** on a rock there.
- The story of the much older **Helgö Buddha** is by now well-known.

- I have also spoken of the brave **Indian revolutionaries** Lala Hardayal and Virendranath Chattopadhyay who spent active years in Stockholm after the first World War. They had an office at Artillerigatan in Östermalm.
- Starting with Rabindranath **Tagore** in 1913, there have been several illustrious Indians who have been awarded the Noble Prize in various fields.
- A few months back, in Pune I attended the celebrations marking **100 years of SKF in India**. **Ericsson** has been there even longer.
- This January the largest contingent at the 50th edition of the prestigious **Rilton Cup** in Sweden was from India and an Indian youngster won the cup. And **Pia Cramling**, the Swedish legend, won a Gold at the Chennai Chess Olympiad last November.
- Last week, I met **Thomas Dennerby** as he starts another innings as the Head Coach for the Indian Women Football Team, which is fast improving under his guidance.
- The world-renowned Coach Grandmaster **Ramesh Babu** has been partnering Swedish Chess authorities in coaching and mentoring young Swedish talent.
- It is great to see **Indians doing well in Sweden**.
- Here may I first **condole the passing away of one of the most prominent members of Indian Diaspora Mr. Bicky Chakraborty**, a highly successful entrepreneur and philanthropist, who was also a recipient of Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award. He has left behind a **substantial legacy**.
- In the past one year alone we have seen several Indians making mark in Sweden.
- Last month I met **Ms. Preeti Gahlawat** who has been awarded the **Lindqvist prize by Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in the field of teaching science and technology**.
- **Prof Rishikesh Bhalerao** from Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Umeå has been elected as **Member of the European Molecular Biology Organisation** last month.
- **Prof Madhav Marathe** from University of Virginia was awarded an **Honorary Doctorate by Chalmer's University** this February.
- Last October the **Hasselblad award for Photography** was awarded to **Ms. Dayanita Singh** from India.
- And a young scholar **Mr. Kunal Deoskar** whose **Warli art design** now adorns a student housing complex approach in Stockholm.

- And **Ryan Thomas** who has been elected as the Head of the Student Union at the **Stockholm School of Economics**.
- An interesting initiative has been the publication of a children's book- **Farmors och Mormors Sagor** - that introduces timeless Indian fables in Swedish language. Complements to **Ms. Ujjwala Andersson Chaphalkar**.

- **Many congratulations to all of them and to any others** who I may have missed.

- We are proud to see the **contribution of Indian Diaspora** to the Swedish economy, science, culture and society.
- **You all are ambassadors for India**. Your contributions and friendships are the bedrock of **India Sweden Sambandh**.
- Once again greetings on Independence Day and may we all continue to work for strengthening of India Sweden friendship.

Thank You