

Independence Day Celebrations

Riga

18 August 2023

Remarks

Ambassador Tanmaya Lal

- Excellencies, Dear Friends,
- Namaskar
- It is a privilege to join you today here in Riga on this landmark occasion as India celebrates 75 years of Independence.
- May I thank the Indo Latvian Chamber of Commerce for organizing this special event.
- My special thanks to all our Latvian friends who have joined us this evening. Your presence here is deeply valued.
- India and Latvia are good friends and our partnership is growing steadily.
- This is my second time to join you to celebrate the Independence Day of India in Riga. Over the last year, there have been several high-level engagements between India and Latvia.
- Shortly before he was appointed as the President, His Excellency **Edgars Rinkēvičs**, then Foreign Minister and Dr. Jaishankar had a very good meeting in Stockholm where they met on the sidelines of the EU-Indo Pacific Ministerial meeting.
- State Secretary Andris Pelšs visited India last November where he had several substantive engagements and along with Secretary (West), he co-chaired the India Latvia Foreign Office Consultations which covered a lot of important areas.
- I had the opportunity to meet State Secretary this year in Riga.
- Parliament Secretary Gunda Reire participated in the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi in February this year. She also had several other important engagements and also met Secretary General, Lok Sabha. She spoke at the Jawaharlal Nehru University and interacted with Indian media. An interesting aspect of the visit was she was accompanied by the Riga Tech girls who also had useful

engagements in India. I have also had discussions with colleagues in Latvian Foreign Office on exploring new areas of collaboration.

- Some of you would be aware of the wonderful exhibition of Indian art collection at the Art Museum Riga Bourse in January this year. We are grateful that State Secretary Andris Pelšs was able to join the inauguration ceremony.
- The items included in the exhibition provide a brief glimpse into the culture and history of India and its peoples from certain periods and geographies.
- These objects are both utilitarian but also fine examples of art and creativity and skills of those who made it and the aesthetics of that time.
- The collection includes samples of textiles and clothing and other art objects of metal.
- Some these items take us back to the time when India was the leading economy in the world, and was long known for its textiles, metallurgy, spices, steel and ship building, but also mathematics and surgery.
- It was great to have eminent scholar Dr. Sigma Ankrava releasing her Latvian translation of the ancient Indian epic Ramayana.
- We had excellent interaction with some of the Latvian experts from difference fields who have attended ITEC programmes in India over the last several years. It was good to get their feedback and suggestions. We organized an India Latvia Sweden joint special event on chess as a bridge among countries, peoples, businesses and other stakeholders. Former Minister Ms. Dana Reizniece-Ozola, Managing Director of the International Chess Federation (FIDE) also joined the event along with Ambassador of Latvia in Sweden. Indian and Latvian players were the two biggest groups participating at the 50th edition of the Rilton Chess Cup in Stockholm this year.
- One of my colleagues joined the celebration of the International Day of Yoga in Riga in June this year at the University of Latvia.
- The Ayurveda Chair at the University of Latvia is an important initiative by both the governments and we hope that some concrete joint research, especially in the field of Ayurveda can come out of this venture. As some of you may know a WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine is being established in India. This will help provide good scientific base and rigour to Ayurveda studies and practice globally.
- These are difficult and uncertain times for countries individually and collectively. India is leading the G20 deliberations during 2023 helping push areas of wider

concern, especially among developing countries such as debt crisis, food, fuel, fertilizer security on the global agenda.

- Our engagement with Latvia also has a strong EU context. In addition to the EU Indo Pacific Ministerial, we have had a meeting of senior officials of India and the EU in Malmö. An India EU Trade and Technology Council has been launched and the first ministerial meeting was held in Brussels. Negotiations are underway to finalize India-EU Trade and Investment Agreements.
- One of the important global initiatives taken by India has been the focus on millets as climate smart super food in time of food insecurity.
- Prime Minister Modi and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres jointly launched Mission LiFE which focusses on encouraging all of us to adopt lifestyles which are environmentally sustainable. These are in addition to initiatives such as International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. Another important initiative is the Leadership Group on Industry Transition.
- This Festival of India At 75, or the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, is a proud occasion to look back at our remarkable journey.
- In this short span of 75 years, we have come a long way despite all odds.
- India is a young nation, which is rooted in one of the oldest civilizations of the world. India is defined by its democracy and also the immense diversity among its people who represent one-sixth of the entire humanity.