

Launch of Radio MeghPeon

15 August 2021

Stockholm

Message

Ambassador Tanmaya Lal

Hello everyone,

Greetings from Stockholm

It is great to talk to you over, what I understand may be, the first Indian community radio station in Sweden.

What makes it even more special is that Radio MeghPeon is going live on 15th August, as the celebrations begin to mark 75 years of India's independence - Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.

Over these 75 years India has gone from being a colony to a confident young nation. India Sweden partnership has also grown from strength to strength.

Friends,

As we celebrate India at 75, it is also an occasion to reflect – on our heritage and achievements, our goals and what the future may hold.

Our strength lies in the heritage and dynamism of its unparalleled mega diversity. Of peoples, faiths, languages & cultures. Its strength also lies in its wise constitution, its inclusive democratic framework and strong and resilient institutions.

India is among the oldest civilizations. Several of the world's religions developed and took roots in this land.

India represents one sixth of humanity. Indians are also among the largest diaspora of any country in the world. India is among the top economies in the world and growing fast.

Therefore, whatever happens in India has global significance.

India at 75 is undergoing rapid transformation.

We have made remarkable all-round progress - in food security, in tackling extreme poverty, moving towards a more equal & inclusive society, improving the status of women, providing healthcare, education and employment opportunities. Technology is being effectively deployed to scale up interventions to fast-track development. More is being done.

India's women and youth are excelling in all fields with their dynamism and determination, something all of us witnessed also at the recent Tokyo Olympics.

Today, spacecraft designed and Made in India have reached moon and mars with the brilliance and hard work of our scientists. We are now preparing for our first manned spaceflight.

India is a responsible nuclear power. India's IT professionals have made Brand India global, including here in Sweden. The global relevance of India's pharmaceutical and healthcare industry has again been highlighted as the world battles the Covid pandemic.

On Climate Action, India is among the very few G20 countries who are on track to meet their Paris commitments.

Friends,

India's partnership with Sweden is on the upswing. Prime Minister Modi and Prime Minister Löfven had a detailed Summit in virtual mode despite pandemic. This was the seventh such interaction in the last seven years. Ministerial engagements, investment decisions and R&D collaboration initiatives have continued to intensify.

Our countries have worked together on global challenges for climate action, nuclear disarmament, decolonization and UN Peacekeeping.

Both India and Sweden have very long maritime trading traditions. A couple of weeks back an Indian Navy Ship INS Tabar paid a goodwill visit. This was the first such visit to Stockholm in 17 years. In 2019 INS Tarkash had visited Karlskrona.

Many of you may have visited the island of Birka, not far from Stockholm, a 1,000 years old trading port. Beads and crystals from India have been found in the Viking settlements on this island. On the nearby Helgö island, site of an even older settlement, a 1,500 years old bronze statuette of Buddha was found. These offer fascinating glimpses into ancient long distance trading networks. Closer to present times, in the 18th century, a Swedish East India Company was setup to trade with India and beyond.

In 1913, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore became the first Asian to be awarded the Nobel Prize. A few years later, and one hundred years ago from today, he visited Uppsala University. Indian revolutionaries Virendranath Chattopadhyaya and Lala Har Dayal spent some years in Sweden more than a century ago.

Newly established Swedish companies such as Alfa Laval, Atlas Copco, Ericsson, Swedish Match established their presence in India around a century back. Today There are nearly 250 Swedish companies in India and around 75 Indian companies in Sweden. IKEA, H&M, Volvo, SAAB, Astra Zeneca, ABB, Tetrapack, SKF, AutoLiv, Electrolux, Sandvik, Spotify, Truecaller have extensive presence in India. Major Swedish companies have contributed to the Covid relief efforts in India. India's majors like TATAs, HCL, L&T, Wipro, Infosys, Bharat Forge, Kalpataru, Crompton & Greaves and many others have excellent reputation in Sweden.

Today, clean technology, innovation, water, waste management, circular economy, life sciences and healthcare, smart grids, smart cities are some of the areas where India and Sweden are working together.

If we look beyond political and business engagement, there are extensive links in the academic, cultural fields or sports arena.

Leading Indian classical music and dance exponents have performed in Sweden.

Mrs. Lilavati Devi Häger, from the illustrious Tagore family, a renowned Indian artiste settled in Sweden and became India's dance ambassador here. She was awarded by H.M. The King Gustaf Adolf. Pandit Ravi Shankar was awarded music's most prestigious global award - the Polar Prize in Sweden in 1998.

A number of illustrious Indians from various fields have been awarded the Nobel Prize.

There have been many memorable sporting encounters. For instance between Bjorn Borg and Vijay Amritraj, Ramesh Krishnan or Leander Paes taking on Stefan Edberg or Mats Wilander. The legendary Prakash Padukone won the 1980 Swedish Open in Karlskrona. India and Sweden met in 1987 Davis Cup final in Gothenburg.

Motorsports and technology enthusiasts may remember that Sweden's Felix Rosenqvist drove Mahindra Racing to its first victory in Formula E Racing in Berlin four years ago.

Our young stars in Chess, Table Tennis and other sports play each other regularly at various international championships. The young Swedish wrestler Sofia Mattson played in Pro-Wrestling League in India. The Swedish Football star Freddy Ljungberg played in the Indian Super League. India's Junior Women Football team is being coached by Thomas Dannerby from Sweden.

At the recent Tokyo Olympics, Indian and Swedish women players met in table tennis and wrestling.

In recent years, some Indian movies have also been shot in Sweden, although there is a huge scope in this regard.

Friends,

I understand that there are around 50,000 Indians living in Sweden. Today, a large number of them are IT professionals, students and researchers and the Indian community is well respected. Their presence here represents, in many ways, the nature of contemporary globalization.

Radio MeghPeon seeks to reach out to the diaspora speaking about art, culture, science and technology. This is an excellent initiative and I thank the team behind this project for their efforts.

The Indian Diaspora represents India's diversity, the spirit to live in harmony, qualities of hard work and professionalism. You represent both, the Indian civilizational heritage and the enthusiasm of modern India.

You are all Ambassadors of India.

I wish Radio Peon and all of you great success.

Thank you.