

Republic Day Reception

26 January 2024

Remarks Ambassador Tanmaya Lal

Hon. Minister,
Members of Parliament,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests, and friends,

A very warm welcome to all of you.

Thank you for joining us as we celebrate the Republic Day of India. The day when India, that is Bharat, a civilizational state, adopted its Constitution in 1950.

India has always been a microcosm of humanity's megadiversity. Of ethnicities, languages, cultures, philosophical systems, and faiths, many of whom originated in ancient India.

India's Republic Day celebrates the momentous decision made by this one sixth of humanity to govern themselves in an inclusive democratic framework, based on equality for all.

This decision carried forward their millennia old tradition of respect for plurality and co-existence. It drew upon numerous examples of people's participation & representation in governance, dating back more than 2,000 years across the Indian subcontinent.

Switching to 2024, the world will soon witness the largest democratic election process ever in human history as India goes in for its 18th national elections. Nearly 1 billion Indians will be eligible to vote.

Today, India has broken the shackles of an exploitative colonial past, and a traumatic & bloody partition in 1947 that led to one of the world's largest ever forced migrations.

In the last decade, Indian economy has grown from being the 11th largest to 5th largest in the world despite global headwinds.

A few months back India landed on the moon! A Human space mission is now being prepared.

A complete transformation is underway in India. At scale and speed. Led by technology, policy reform and enterprise.

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

A very significant percentage of global growth and young talent pool is coming from India and this is projected to increase further.

In today's deeply interconnected reality and a world order in serious flux, most of our challenges are global or even planetary in nature – pandemic, security, climate change or biodiversity. They require cooperation.

As the world's largest democracy, India is actively contributing to meeting these collective challenges.

Ahead of COP28, India was rated among the top nations on Climate Action performance.

During pandemic India was a major contributor to global vaccine availability.

India has emerged as a first responder in humanitarian and disaster situations in the Indian Ocean region.

India is the largest troop contributor to UN Peacekeeping and this month marks the first anniversary of the deployment of our first all-women Peacekeeping contingent after 2007.

India is working with 80 partner countries on implementing 600 development projects.

As the G20 President last year, India brought the serious challenges faced by the global south firmly in focus.

In an historic milestone, the Delhi G20 Summit also welcomed African Union as a member.

Excellencies,

We have completed 75 years of India Sweden diplomatic relations. Our business linkages are older. Ericsson came to India 120 years ago. Swedish East India Company ships sailed from Gothenburg 300 years ago.

Going back even further, global trading routes have linked distant geographies.

2,000 years old coins, precious beads & gemstones and a 1,400 years old Buddha statuette, all from India, have been discovered in Viking settlements. Spices like Cinnamon or Cardamom originating in India and south Asia have long been Swedish favourites. There are even some similarities in ancient Indian and Viking mythologies.

One can visit a site in Uppsala where in 1830s a young Swedish scholar had inscribed a Sanskrit verse from the ancient Indian epic Mahabharata on a rock for his fiancé. He later established Indology studies in Uppsala. A century ago Uppsala welcomed Nobel laureate Tagore.

Today Innovation & Clean Technology drive our partnership.

Sweden's leadership in innovation, industrial transition & sustainability complements the scale and speed of the unprecedented ongoing transformation in India.

Swedish businesses continue to expand operations in India in manufacturing, co-development of clean technology and R&D. Indian companies are investing in Sweden in engineering and digital sectors.

Indian professionals are contributing to Swedish economic competitiveness.

The trajectory of our partnership is climbing strongly.

During the last one year, there have been more than 15 ministerial interactions.

We had the privilege of welcoming Hon. Minister Billström in India for the Raisina Dialogue. Our Minister of External Affairs Dr. Jaishankar had an excellent visit to Sweden when he also addressed the EU-Indo Pacific ministerial.

Hon. Minister for Financial Markets was in India recently for the India Nordic Baltic Business Conclave. State Secretary for Infrastructure was in India last week.

December alone provides a glimpse of the scope and value of our engagement.

From Climate Tech to Space Tech.

In Dubai Prime Minister Modi and Prime Minister Kristersson launched the second phase of LeadIT, a joint India Sweden global climate action initiative, for industrial transition in steel and cement.

Days later we hosted the first ever Space & Geospatial Business Summit in Stockholm. It was great to see young smart tech leaders coming together & discuss collaboration in these all-pervasive, fast changing & expanding technology and data domains.

The future is promising.

Excellencies,

May I once again thank Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs for his gracious presence here today on India's Republic Day.

May I also invite Your Excellency to address us on this occasion.

Thank you all for joining us today.
