

Republic Day - ILCEF Event

Riga

27 January 2024

Remarks

Ambassador Tanmaya Lal

Friends,

I would like to thank the Indian Latvian Cultural and Economic Forum for organising this special event.

The Republic Day of India marks 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 out of 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 10th 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.

Friends,

India Latvia ties are gathering real momentum.

As many of you may know, our Minister of External Affairs Dr. Jaishankar announced last month that India will soon open an Embassy in Riga.

This will greatly facilitate India Latvia partnership.

2023 has been an active year for high level political engagement. India and Latvia held parallel Presidencies of G20 and Nordic Baltic groupings during the year.

Our Foreign Ministers had a good discussion when they met in Stockholm on the sidelines of the EU-Indo Pacific Ministerial meeting last May.

And last month Parliamentary Secretary for Economic Affairs was in India to participate in the India Nordic Baltic Ministerial Business Conclave. Our Ministers for External Affairs and Commerce & Industry participated in these sessions.

The then Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs also visited India last year where she participated in the Raisina Dialogue in Delhi and had other useful engagements.

These meetings reflect the broad canvas of our relationship that goes beyond our bilateral relations.

I held discussions with senior Latvia leadership, colleagues at Foreign Office, chamber of commerce, other officials, members of Indian diaspora during my several visits to Latvia last year.

You may recall that we began last year with the grand opening of the largest ever Indian art collection exhibition in the Baltics which was hosted at the Riga Bourse Museum.

We were happy to work with partners to organise UN International Day of Yoga in Riga in June. And worked with Latvian colleagues on promoting Ayurveda and traditional medicine.

We are also working on a project to explore more about the deep similarities between Sanskrit and Latvian languages.

We also had Riga TechGirls visiting India last year.

Business and investment linkages in both digital and manufacturing sectors are growing.

As are links in higher education sector.

The future of our ties is promising.

Friends,

May I once again thank the Indian Latvian Cultural and Economic Forum for organizing this special event to mark India's Republic Day.

I look forward to meeting you during my next visit to Riga.

Our best wishes to all of you.

We will continue to work towards a continuing strengthening of India Latvia friendship.

Thank you.
