

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA  
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND  
AT THE STATE BANQUET HOSTED BY HIS MAJESTY KING  
WILLEM ALEXANDER OF THE NETHERLANDS**

**Royal Palace, Amsterdam, April 5, 2022**

I would like to thank His Majesty for the cordial welcome and warm hospitality. I am deeply touched by the kind reception accorded to me and to my delegation.

This year marks a milestone in our bilateral journey as we are jointly celebrating the 75th anniversary of our diplomatic relations that reflects the depth of India-Netherlands partnership.

This year, India is also celebrating 75 years of its independence. The Netherlands was among the first nations to recognize independent India. After seven decades, it remains one of the foremost reliable partners of India.

It is my pleasure to be here in your beautiful country, the land of tulips; the birthplace of famous painters, scholars and explorers; and a fulcrum of modern trade and commerce. As the saying goes, 'God made the world and the Dutch made the Netherlands'. The unique ability of the Dutch to plan and prepare for future challenges as reflected in your motto of 'Meten is Weten' is worthy of high praise.

As two thriving democracies and as two economic giants, India and the Netherlands are natural partners. We share a common outlook of multilateral solutions to global challenges. Pluralism, inclusiveness, respect for cultural diversity and rule of law are a part of our common ethos.

The Netherlands is an important player in the Indo-Pacific and EU. As key advocates for a free and open Indo-Pacific, we share a common commitment to work for global peace, security and

prosperity. The Netherlands can also play a pivotal role in strengthening India-EU ties in areas of connectivity, energy transition and trade & investment.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The history of India-Netherlands relations dates back more than four centuries. While the paintings of Rembrandt show creative influence of Indian miniature art, Marius Bauer captured impressions of India in his paintings. Professor Hendrik Kern, one of the leading Indologists in Netherlands taught Sanskrit to Dutch students in mid-nineteenth century. Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Jiddu Krishnamurti were hosted by the Dutch with great enthusiasm and have inspired many.

In recent years, we have witnessed a strong momentum in our bilateral relations. We were honoured to receive Your Majesties in India in 2019. I recall our discussions covering diverse areas of cooperation.

Prime Minister Rutte visited India in 2015 and 2018, and Prime Minister Modi visited the Netherlands in 2017 during the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our diplomatic ties. Last year, our Prime Ministers held a Virtual Summit and launched the Strategic Partnership on Water, a sector which can benefit immensely from Dutch expertise. I appreciate our ongoing collaboration for rejuvenating the River Ganga, as well as in flood management and water treatment technologies, which are a big priority for India.

Our bilateral cooperation is extensive and diverse, covering trade and investment; science and technology; water, agriculture and health; renewable energy and space, among others. Robust trade and investments form the bedrock of our bilateral relations. Dutch companies have long been a household name in India. With an investment of US\$ 38 billion, the Netherlands has consistently been among the largest investors in India.

Significant investments are also flowing from India to the Netherlands. India offers new opportunities for Dutch companies, Small and Medium enterprises and start-ups to 'Make in India for the World'. Our flagship programs like Digital India, Start-up India, and smart cities development, coupled with wide-ranging reforms offer an attractive environment. Dutch expertise in various sectors is a natural fit for India's growth and development.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would also like to thank the Netherlands for its solidarity with India during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our mutual support during the pandemic has highlighted the synergy in the area of healthcare and has shown that we can partner to develop and produce vaccines for the world.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, the Netherlands is home to the largest Indian diaspora in mainland Europe. They form a living bridge between our countries and include the Surinami-Hindustani community that represents a unique synthesis of Indian traditions and Dutch values. It includes professionals as well as Indian students who are making a positive contribution to the Dutch economy and society.

I am confident that our strong bonds of friendship and multifaceted partnership will continue to flourish. I thank the Dutch leadership for devoting personal attention to strengthening our partnership. Together we can achieve the common goals.

With these words, I once again thank Your Majesties for the warm welcome and hospitality.

Please join me in raising a toast:

To the good health and well-being of Your Majesties, King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima

To the continued prosperity and progress of the people of the Netherlands and India; and

To the ever-growing bonds of friendship between India and the Netherlands

Dank u wel! Thank You.