

**ADDRESS BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA
SMT. DROUPADI MURMU
AT THE INDIA-NORTH MACEDONIA BUSINESS FORUM**

Skopje: 21 July 2026

It gives me great pleasure to address this gathering in the historic and vibrant city of Skopje. I bring with me the greetings and goodwill of the 1.4 billion people of India. I thank the Government of North Macedonia and business associations of both countries for organizing this event.

This is the first bilateral visit by a President of India to North Macedonia, which shows the keen interest of India to engage with North Macedonia in all areas of mutual interest. I also have with me in my delegation our Minister of State and two distinguished Indian Parliamentarians.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our economic and commercial relationship is a frontier waiting to be fully conquered. Our bilateral trade volume shows a steady positive trajectory, but it represents only a fraction of what is possible. India is already exporting organic chemicals, high-grade iron and steel, electrical machinery and textiles. North Macedonia's exports include high-quality marble, which is highly valued in our expanding market. We should further diversify and set an ambitious target to double our trade volume by the end of this decade.

To move from trade to a true economic partnership, we must focus on mutual investments. The scope for new investments spans across several sectors, including digital innovation and artificial intelligence, pharmaceuticals and healthcare, agro-processing, and the green energy transition. I am pleased to see representation from these fields here today.

India has revolutionised governance through widespread adoption of Digital Public Infrastructure. Tools like Universal Payments Interface or

UPI have fostered financial inclusion, and brought millions into the formal economy. We invite North Macedonia to co-author the next chapter of this digital revolution, supported by your highly educated, multilingual tech talent.

India is known globally as the "pharmacy of the world". Our pharmaceutical sector is poised to invest in North Macedonia. By establishing joint manufacturing facilities here, we can secure the supply of affordable, advanced life-saving medicines and medical devices for the entire Balkan and European markets.

North Macedonia's fertile land and strategic geographic position make it an ideal destination for Indian agro-companies. Our businesses can explore collaboration in modern food processing and cold-chain logistics, and build a resilient food supply chain that connects into the broader European Union markets.

Through platforms like the International Solar Alliance, India is pioneering scalable renewable energy solutions. We see immense scope for joint investments in solar fields, wind infrastructure, and green hydrogen technologies and we invite North Macedonia to join the International Solar Alliance.

Similarly, joining the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) will enable North Macedonia to upgrade its ecological and social infrastructure to withstand escalating climate-induced risks. Joining with the Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA) will provide access to sustainable bioenergy standards and cleaner cooking technologies.

I will also invite North Macedonia to participate in the World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES) next year in India. This is an international forum launched by the Government of India to promote cross-border collaborations in the creative industry, media and entertainment sectors.

We should also encourage partnerships among start-ups, universities, research institutions and technology enterprises. Cooperation in

Artificial Intelligence, cyber security, digital innovation should also be explored.

Businesses from both sides should take the lead in identifying viable projects and building long-term commercial relationships. I encourage Chambers of Commerce, Investment agencies and Business Associations of both countries to establish linkages and facilitate exchanges of business delegations.

I also urge companies to look beyond immediate transactions and invest in partnerships based on technology transfer, joint ventures, local value creation and employment generation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am confident that today's interaction will generate new ideas and open new avenues of cooperation. Let us work together to build an India–North Macedonia economic partnership founded on trust, innovation and shared prosperity.

Thank you.