

Address by Mrs. Namrata S. Kumar
Ambassador of the Republic of India to the Republic of Slovenia
On the occasion of
74th Republic Day
26 January 2023

नमस्कार,
राजदूतवास की ओर से, स्लोवेनिया सरकार का प्रतिनिधित्व कर रहे गणमान्य अथितियों
और भारतीय समुदाय के सभी मित्रों का मैं हार्दिक अभिनंदन करती हूँ।

Eminent Members of the National Assembly of Slovenia, Your Excellencies Mr. Miroslav Gregorič, Mr. Dušan Stojanovič, Ms. Tereza Novak, Ms. Monika Pekošak, Mr. Dean Premik and Mr. Darko Krajc.

Head of Diplomatic Protocol, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Natasa Prah, Head of Asia Oceania Department, Foreign Ministry, Ms. Jasna Lohtka, former Ambassador of Slovenia to India, Dr. Ernst Petrec, Dear friend Ambassador of Slovenia to India, Ms. Mateja Vodeb Ghosh.

Heads International Representations in Slovenia, Dean of Diplomatic Corps, Distinguished Ambassadors, Heads and Representatives of the National, Regional and Sectoral Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, Heads of distinguished Academic institutions

Honoured members of the Slovenian official delegation, Fellow members of the Indian community in Slovenia

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first sincerely apologize on behalf of the Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture, Ms. Meenakshi Lekhi, who despite her best efforts could not be part of today's ceremony in Slovenia.

I am deeply honored to welcome you all to today's Reception on the occasion of the 74th Republic Day of India.

Friends,

Last year, in 2022, India celebrated 75 glorious years of its independence, and today we celebrate the Indian constitution that has made India what it is today - the world's largest and strongest democracy.

This is a special year for India in more than one way. While we have become the most populous country in the world, we continue to uphold the ideals of socio-economic justice, liberty, fraternity, equality, pluralism, and tolerance enshrined in our Constitution,

which we celebrate today. Together, we transition from the Amrit Mahotsav to the Amrit Kaal – marking the entry of New India’s journey into the next 25 years.

In a world grappling with questions of identity, race, and religion, and where the very idea of multiculturalism is being challenged, India provides a model of a composite culture that is a living example of pluralism, inclusivity, and tolerance. It shows that there is no contradiction between growth and a polity that celebrates diversity – of religion, language, and beliefs.

Dear All,

The Amrit Mahotsav Celebrations that commenced last year were celebrations of these ideals. These were not just celebrations of India’s journey or of its achievements since independence, but also of its journey with all our friends worldwide and their accomplishments. We value our relations with all our friends, who are part of our extended family as we say in India – “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.” Along with them, we envision our journey into the Amrit Kaal.

Amrit Kaal, introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the next 25 years, is a term in Vedic Astrology describing a critical time period available to all for achieving the highest human potential. In spiritual terms, this means freedom from the bondage caused by ignorance about our true nature. In material terms, this time period is most conducive to achieving the best results.

Friends,

The coming 25 years are crucial, not only for the development of India and its people but also for the entire world. As we commenced our journey into the Amrit Kaal, India also assumed the Presidency of the G20 on 01 December 2022. The overarching theme for our Presidency is “Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam” – One Earth, One Family, One Future. Our Presidency is envisioned to be inclusive, ambitious, decisive, and action-oriented towards meaningfully contributing to finding solutions to pressing global economic issues and towards the betterment of the global community, especially for securing a good future for our coming generations.

During this Amrit Kaal period, India’s journey from being the world’s 11th largest economy a decade ago to the 5th largest today is envisioned to become the 3rd largest economy by 2030. India’s vibrant youth, skilled manpower, and "naari shakti" - women power – are all contributors to global growth and are geared towards making "Viksit Bharat @ 2047."

This year, we are observing the “International Year of Millets” to promote the use of millets worldwide. Under the Amrit Kaal theme, this initiative aims to address the global concerns of ‘food security’ and ‘equitable access to food for all.’ I am pleased to share that India will be a partner country at the AGRA fair in Slovenia this year, where the cause of promoting millets will be jointly advanced with the collaboration of Indian and Slovenian businesspersons.

India and Slovenia share strong, friendly relations. Our two countries share unique historical experiences and have emerged as strong democracies in the face of challenging surroundings.

The September 2019 visit of the President of India, Shri Ramnath Kovind, to Slovenia laid a forward-looking path, energizing our bilateral relations. This was followed by the visit of External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar to Slovenia to participate in the Bled Strategic Forum last year and the EU Foreign Ministers' Gymnich meeting when Slovenia held the Presidency of the EU Council for the second time. This was the first-ever visit by any Foreign Minister of India to Slovenia in 30 years, marking an important milestone in our relations. India and Slovenia share strong economic, cultural ties and deep people-to-people relations.

Leaders, businesspersons, scientists, scholars, cultural personalities, and students from our two countries are collaborating at all levels, creating stories of deep connections between India and Slovenia to celebrate. These stories connect us through history and lead us towards a better Amrit Kaal; stories that go a long way in further strengthening ties between Incredible India and Loving Slovenia.

Dear distinguished guests,

It is our privilege to host you all today. I thank you for your gracious presence at India's Republic Day reception and for witnessing India's growth story.

धन्यवाद, Thank you, *Khvala lepa*.

Jai Hind !
Jai bharat !