



**No. 03/13**

**October 2013**

**From the Ambassador's Desk**

Dear Friends,

We are now into the beautiful autumn season in The Netherlands and winter is knocking at the doors. A very good summer in The Netherlands was marred by the early and tragic demise of Prince Friso, the younger brother of His Majesty King Willem Alexander who passed away at the age of 44.

The summer has also seen a change of guard at the Embassy and I took over as the Ambassador of India to The Netherlands in July 2013. In the time that I have been here, I have found the country and the people of The Netherlands to be warm, friendly and hospitable. I particularly appreciate the fact that the Dutch authorities made it possible for me to present my Credentials soon after I arrived here.

The 67<sup>th</sup> Independence Day of India was celebrated at the Gandhi Centre on 15 August 2013 in the presence of Indian and Surinami-Hindustani Diaspora. Following the Flag hoisting and singing of the National Anthem, I read out the President's traditional 'Eve of Independence Day Address to the Nation'. The children from the Embassy presented a small cultural item on A.R. Rahman's 'Vande Mataram'. I should like to congratulate the children on their performance and express my appreciation for the hard work put in by their parents to put together this cultural programme. My thanks also to the very large number of members of the diaspora who were present for this independence day celebration.

A number of high level visits from India to The Netherlands took place over the summer. These include visits of Minister of Communication & Information Technology Mr. Kapil Sibal from 20-21 June 2013, Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports (Independent Charge) Mr. Jitendra Singh from 27-28 June 2013, and Minister of State for Shipping Mr. Milind Deora

from 23-24 July 2013. The visits provided a very useful opportunity for a productive exchange of views on issues of mutual interest.


I am happy to report that the interest in Yoga and Kathak Dance classes is on the rise amongst both the Indian and Surinami-Hindustani diaspora as well as the local Dutch people. The 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was launched at the Gandhi Centre through a special event during which a Prasar Bharti film on life and message of Swami Vivekananda was screened on 03 June 2013, followed by a presentation by Swami Sarvatmananda of Ramkrishna Mission.

To commemorate 140 years of the arrival of the first ship "Lalla Rookh" from India to Suriname on 05 June 1873, the renowned Bhojpuri music and dance troupe of Dr. Shailesh Srivastava, sponsored by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), gave several performances in The Netherlands including at the Gandhi Centre at The Hague, on 10 June 2013. The performances were deeply appreciated by the Surinami-Hindustani community who were present in large numbers during all the shows.

It is very heartening to note that despite the Eurozone crisis, trade between India and the Netherlands is on the upswing. Bilateral trade crossed the € 6 billion mark in 2012 and has shown an increase of 17% over the trade in 2011. It now stands at € 6.38 bn. Indian exports grew by 24% during 2012. Netherlands remains among the top ten partners of India in terms of trade volume with positive balance of trade in favor of India. Indian exports to the Netherlands continued to show steady rise during the first five months of 2013.

We are delighted that the visit of the Dutch Minister of Foreign Trade & Development Cooperation Ms. Lilianne Ploumen to India in the beginning of September was a highly successful one. We are looking forward to visits at high level from The Netherlands to India notably of the Foreign Minister Timmermans for the ASEM meeting in New Delhi on 11 November and the visit by Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport Ms. Edith Schippers later in November. India remains very keen to enhance its cooperation with The Netherlands in various sectors particularly water management, health, agro-processing, urban infrastructure, waste management, energy, development of ports etc.

*Best Wishes,*

  
(R.N. Prasad)  
Ambassador

**New Ambassador of India in the Netherlands**

H.E. Mr. Rajesh Nandan Prasad has taken over as the new Ambassador of India to the Royal Kingdom of the Netherlands. After the formal presentation of credentials to His Majesty the King of the Netherlands on the 17th July, the Ambassador had a meeting with His Majesty which covered issues of mutual interest. The Foreign Minister of Netherlands, Mr. Frans Timmermans was also present.



**Credential ceremony at Noordeinde Palace**



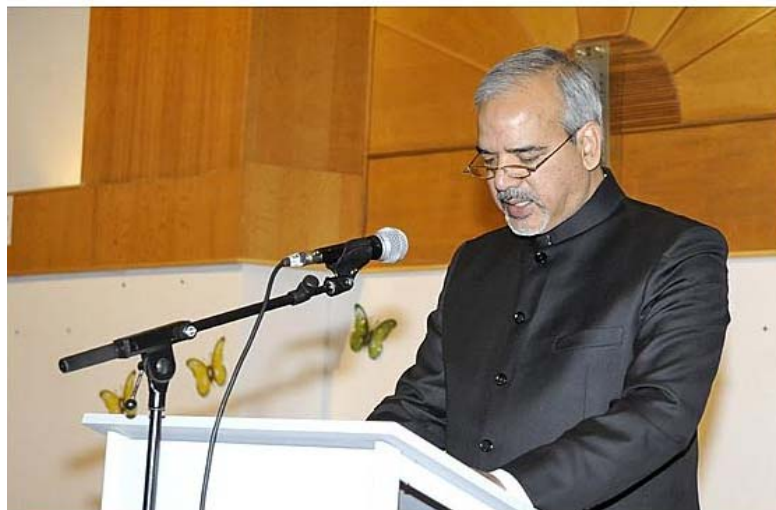
**Vin d'honneur at India House following the presentation of credentials**

### **Independence Day Celebrations**

The Embassy of India organized the Flag Hoisting ceremony at the Gandhi Centre (Cultural Centre) on the occasion of the 67th Independence Day of India. The President's Address to the nation on the eve of the Independence Day was read out by Ambassador Shri Rajesh Nandan Prasad. After singing of the National Anthem, a short cultural program was presented by the children of the Embassy officials. The function was attended by over 200 persons, including prominent members of Indian community, PIOs, Dutch and Surinami Hindustani community.



**National Anthem being sung after the unfurling of the National Flag**



**Ambassador R.N. Prasad reading out President of India's speech on the eve of Independence Day**

### **Seminar on Indo Dutch Cooperation in the Area of Urban Development**

As part of its continuing outreach activities, the Embassy of India organized a seminar titled “Indo-Dutch Cooperation in the Housing & Urban Development Sector” at the premises of the Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Rotterdam, on 11 June, 2013. The event was organized with the cooperation of the Municipality of Rotterdam, Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Rotterdam, and the Ministry of Infrastructure & Environment of the Netherlands.

The event was organized with the purpose of informing participants of the extensive interaction between the two governments for creating a proper institutional framework for business and to bridge the information gap between government activities and the business sector in the light of the recently concluded Memorandum of Understanding in this area during the visit of Hon’ble Minister for Urban Development, Shri Kamal Nath to the Netherlands. The event was attended by over 75 participants from trade and industry as well as trade promotion organizations in the Netherlands active in promoting Indo-Dutch trade.



**Deputy Mayor of Rotterdam, H.E. Ms. Jeannette Baljeu, being welcomed at the event by Marketing Officer A.C. Kaushik**



**Deputy Chief of Mission R.K.Singh addressing the gathering with Mr. J. Kshirsagar, Chief Planner, Town & Country Planning Organization, Ministry of Urban Development on his left and Deputy Mayor of Rotterdam, H.E. Ms. Ms. Jeannette Baljeu on his left**

### **Heavy Industries' Delegation in the Netherlands**

A delegation led by Shri Ambuj Sharma, Joint Secretary, Department of Heavy Industries visited the Netherlands from June 24-27, 2013 to enhance cooperation between India and the Netherlands in the Electric Mobility Sector pursuant to the National Electric Mobility Mission 2020. The delegation had representatives from the Government and Industry including associations of the industry. The delegation had useful meetings at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and had field visits to various facilities in the Netherlands.

### **Minister for Communications & Information Technology and Law & Justice visits the Netherlands**

Mr. Kapil Sibal, Minister for Communications & Information Technology and Law & Justice, Government of India visited the Netherlands from June 19-21. During his visit he met with Ms. Lilianne Ploumen, Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation; Mr. Fredrik Teeven, State Secretary for Security and Justice; Mr. Jozias van Aartsen, Mayor of the City of The Hague and Mr. Eberhard van der Laan, Mayor of the City of Amsterdam. During his meetings he exchanged views on issues of mutual interest to both the countries. He also had an interaction with senior representatives of prominent Dutch and Indian ICT companies in the Netherlands.



**H.E. Mr. Kapil Sibal, Minister for Communications & Information Technology and Law & Justice in bilateral meeting with H.E. Ms. Lilianne Ploumen, Minister for Foreign Trade**

### **Minister of State for Youth Affairs & Sports visits the Netherlands**

Mr. Jitendra Singh, Minister of State for Youth Affairs & Sports (Independent Charge) visited the Netherlands from 27-28 June, 2013. He was accompanied by Mr. P.K. Deb, Secretary, Department of Sports, Mr. Jiji Thomson, Director General, Sports Authority of India, and Mr. Vikramjit Singh, OSD to MOS. During his visit, Hon'ble Minister had discussions with officials from the Dutch Ministries of Foreign Affairs as well as Health, Welfare & Sports. He also had meetings at the Office of the Mayor of Amsterdam and other officials from the Johan Crujff Foundation, Dutch Sports and Infrastructure industries etc. to study the management of multi-purpose stadia within Amsterdam Arena and Olympic Stadium in Amsterdam. Cooperation between India and the Netherlands in the sports sector was extensively discussed during the visit.



**Hon'ble Minister being received at the Johan Crujff Court by Vice Mayor of Amsterdam, H.E. Mr. E. van der Burg**

### **Ministry of Corporate Affairs delegation**

The 2nd Meeting of the India-Netherlands Joint Working Group (JWG) on Corporate Responsibility and Corporate Social Responsibility was held from 11 - 12 July, 2013, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Hague. An eight member delegation from India led by Mr. M.J. Joseph, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs attended the JWG.

During the visit, bilateral discussions were held on the subjects of Challenges and opportunities of CSR: Supply Chain Responsibility and SME's and CSR: Instruments for Implementation and collaboration between the two countries in the area of CSR. The delegation also visited the companies Heineken and Tata Steel and was briefed on their CSR policies.

### **Minister for Shipping visits the Netherlands**

The Indian Minister of State for Shipping, Shri Milind Deora, led a 4-member delegation to The Netherlands from July 22-24, 2013. The delegation included Joint Secretary (Ports) and Advisor from Ministry of Shipping, CMD, Shipping Corporation of India Ltd., Mumbai, and PS to Minister. During the visit, the Indian delegation had discussions with officials at the Ministry of Infrastructure & Environment, Rotterdam Port Authority and APM Terminals. Bilateral cooperation in the field of shipping, especially in the area of inland shipping as well as infrastructure investment and development, were discussed during the visit.



**Minister Deora at the Rotterdam Port Authority**

### **Kerala Minister visits the Netherlands**

A delegation from the State Government of Kerala led by Mr. K. P. Mohanan, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture, visited the Netherlands from July 25-28, 2013, for cooperation in the Piggery Sector. The delegation included Chairman and Managing Director of Meat Products of India Ltd. and senior officials from Animal Husbandry Department, Kerala and Kerala Livestock Development Board. The delegation had useful meeting at the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation as well as useful visits to industry comprising slaughter houses, genetic breeding companies and companies in the forefront of establishing slaughter houses. The visit was in the context of State Government of Kerala establishing a Centre of Excellence in the piggery sector with the cooperation of the Dutch Government.



### **Amsterdam World Cinema Festival**

Indian Movie “The Lunchbox” (Dabba) was screened at the inauguration of the World Cinema Festival on 07 August 2013 at Amsterdam. The movie received critical acclaim from a predominantly Dutch audience present on the occasion. Ambassador and other officials from the Embassy attended the event.

### **Launch of Vessel for Dredging Corporation of India**

The ceremony for launching and naming of the dredger DCI DREDGE – XXI built by IHC Holland for Dredging Corporation of India on 8 August, 2013, was held at Kinderdijk.

This was the third dredger built by IHC Holland for Dredging Corporation of India. Earlier two dredgers in this series were launched in November 2012 and February 2013 respectively.

Official launching was done by Mrs. R. Mohanty, wife of Capt. D.K. Mohanty, Chairman and Managing Director of Dredging Corporation of India. Ambassador Shri R.N. Prasad attended the event.

The vessel will be deployed - along with the DCI DREDGE XIX and DCI DREDGE XX - for the maintenance-dredging project on the Hooghly River, which is a tributary of the Ganges River in West Bengal. These new DCI vessels are specially designed for this task, taking into account the Hooghly River's soil properties, strong current and shallow depth. The dredgers feature high levels of productivity, reliability and efficiency.



**DCI DREDGE XXI floating out for the first time from the IHC Yard**

### **Maharashtra Health Secretary visits the Netherlands**

Mrs. Meeta Rajivlochan, Secretary (Health), Government of Maharashtra, had visited the Netherlands from August 19-22, 2013. Secretary had visited Netherlands to study the Dutch healthcare system. During her visit, she met with officials of various stakeholders in the Netherlands involved in the healthcare sector and was appropriately briefed on the process of policy formulation, pricing, market regulation, policy execution and enforcement in the healthcare sector in the Netherlands.

The visit took place in the context of the Government of Maharashtra having carried out a pilot project (8 districts) for providing healthcare through an insurance company appointed through a tendering process. The Government is to pay premiums to the provider who is then responsible for contracting healthcare for the people. After successful completion of the pilot project, the State is planning to go ahead and implement this model throughout the whole state.

### **Demise of Prince Johan Friso**

Prince Johan Friso of Orange-Nassau, aged 44, younger brother of His Majesty King Willem Alexander, passed away on 12 August 2013. He was in a state of coma since February 2012 having met with a serious accident while skiing in Austria. On behalf of the people and Government of India, Hon'ble Rashtrapatiiji has conveyed a message of condolences to His Majesty the King of the Netherlands.

### **Visit of Director, Central Bureau of Investigation**

Mr. Ranjit Sinha, IPS, Director, Central Bureau of Investigation, visited the Netherlands Forensic Institute (NFI) and the Europol Headquarters in The Hague on 29th & 30th August respectively. At the NFI, he explored possibilities of cooperation with the NFI. He was shown the state-of-the-art facilities available at NFI. In a meeting with Mr. Rob Wainwright, Director, Europol, he discussed the opportunities for closer cooperation between Europol and the Indian police.

### **Horticulture Delegation Visits the Netherlands**

A six-member Indian delegation led by Dr. Gorakh Singh, Horticulture Commissioner, Department of Agriculture and Cooperation visited the Potato Europe Fair from 9-13 September. It is the largest such fair in Europe held every 4 years in the Potato Capital Emmeloord. About 250 companies from

around the world participated in the fair. As a part of the visit, the delegation visited Wageningen University and also made field visits to some prominent companies who are associated with storage and processing of potatoes including M/s FruVo BV and Vogelaar Vredenhof BV.

### **Celebration of Hindi Divas**

On 14 September 2013, Embassy celebrated Hindi Divas at the Gandhi Centre. A message by Hon'ble Home Minister was read out by the Ambassador. Embassy officers and staff members took part in various programmes, including Hindi poem recital, essay reading etc.

### **Embassy Festival in The Hague**

An Embassy Festival show-casing music, activities, art, theatre, cuisine, reading and tourism opportunities by the local foreign embassies was organized by "Life I Live B.V." in close cooperation with the Municipality of The Hague (Department of International Affairs) on 7 September 2013. 18 Embassies, including 3 from Asia (India, Thailand and Philippines), took part in the festival. Shri Hari, the ICCR-deputed Kathak Dance Teacher at Gandhi Centre gave a performance which was highly appreciated by the audience. The Embassy of India pavilion attracted a large number of visitors who took the opportunity to get a taste of Indian cuisine. The pavilion was managed by the spouses of Embassy officials. Brochures on tourism in India and information on Yoga and Dance classes being conducted at Gandhi Centre were also distributed amongst the visitors. Proceeds from the Festival were given to the Red Cross for charitable purposes.



**Ambassador R.N. Prasad with Embassy ladies prior to start of Festival**



**Proceeds from the Festival being handed over to the Red Cross by Mrs. Anjali Singh**

### **Annual Diaspora Conference**

The annual Indian Diaspora Conference with the theme “The Rise of Indian Diaspora in Europe” took place on the 29th of September at the Louwman Museum in The Hague. The Chief Guest was Hon’ble Baroness Sandip Verma, Member of House of Lords and Deputy Minister of the UK who gave the keynote address. Deputy Mayor of the Municipality of The Hague H.E. Mr. Rabin Baldewsingh and Deputy Chief of Mission, Mr. R.K. Singh, of the Indian Embassy also made brief remarks at the conference. There were other panel sessions at the conference in which there were participants from the Indian and Surinami-Hindustani Diaspora of the Netherlands as well as other parts of Europe. The programme concluded with performance by the Dhoad Gypsies from Rajasthan.

### **Activities of Consular Section**

Consular Section of the Embassy continues to provide all possible help to Indian and foreign nationals for various passport, visa, OCI/PIO card and other consular services. In August 2013 the Embassy facilitated the transportation of the mortal remains of two Indian nationals who had died in the Netherlands.