



No. 02/14

November 2014

From the Ambassador's Desk

Dear Friends,

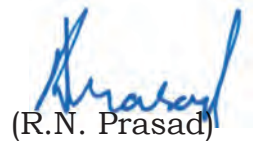
After a long and wonderful Indian summer and a rather brief autumn, winter finally seems to be setting in.

2. The BJP-led Government that came to power in India following the elections in May this year has now been in office for about six months. This is first time in thirty years that the party in power has a clear majority in Parliament on its own. The new Government, which was elected on the twin planks of governance and development, has announced a number of policy measures to fulfil the promises made in this regard. The 'Make in India' programme, launched by the Prime Minister in September is a major step in that direction, aiming at improving the ease of doing business in India as also making India a manufacturing hub and an investment destination. Another significant initiative launched by the Government is the 'Swachh Bharat' Campaign to realise Gandhiji's dream of a clean India. We are endeavouring to achieve this by 2019 which will mark the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

3. Engagements between India and the Netherlands have continued apace. Foreign Office Consultations were held in New Delhi in June 2014. Her Majesty Queen Maxima of the Netherlands visited India in end June in her capacity as the Special Advocate of the UN Secretary General on Financial Inclusion. The Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation took a large Trade Delegation to India in early November and our Minister of Road Transport & Highways and Shipping paid a brief visit to Rotterdam on 19 November to further cooperation between India and the Port of Rotterdam and also with relevant Dutch companies in inland water management, ports, tunnels and infrastructure sectors. Visits by delegations from the State Governments of UP and Gujarat took place in August and September for furthering trade and investment relations with the Netherlands. The Embassy held Round Tables with leading Dutch companies, organized a seminar on the Dutch Dairy Sector and an event to launch the Make in India Campaign and held an Apparel Buyer-Seller Meet (BSM) at the prestigious World Fashion Centre in Amsterdam in cooperation with the Apparel Export Promotion Council. The first meeting of the Joint Working Group between the Ministry of Urban Development of India and the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment also took place in June.

4. The tragic death of 298 passengers in the unfortunate incident involving the Malaysian airliner in Ukraine in July shocked the world. The Netherlands was particularly impacted as over 180 passengers who lost their lives in the crash were Dutch citizens. In his letter of condolence to the Dutch Prime Minister, the Prime Minister of India shared the sorrow of the people of India with the Dutch people in their hour of grief.

5. The Embassy celebrated India's 68th Independence Day on 15 August this year at the Gandhi Centre in The Hague. Other significant events that took place included the Gandhi Jayanti celebrations on 2 October, the International Hindi Conference in June, the performance by an ICCR-sponsored Gujarati folk dance group in July and the performance of a fusion band from India 'PAPON and East India Company' at the Holland India Festival in the second half of October.



(R.N. Prasad)

Ambassador of India

Launch of Make in India

On 8 October 2014, the Embassy organized an event in The Hague to give publicity to the launch of the “Make In India” campaign by the Hon’ble Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi on 25 September 2014 as also to disseminate the new policy initiatives of the Government of India to improve ease of doing business and to highlight manufacturing opportunities available in various industrial corridors, industrial clusters and smart cities coming up in India. The Chairman of the Netherlands India Chambers of Commerce and Trade (NICCT) also addressed the gathering. Around 40 Dutch companies attended the event. The Address made by the Prime Minister of India at the launch of ‘Make in India’ campaign on 25 September 2014 was shown with English voiceover.

68th Independence Day Celebrations: 15 August 2014



Independence Day Celebration at Gandhi Centre, The Hague

On the occasion of the 68th Independence Day of India, the Embassy of India in The Hague organized the Flag Hoisting ceremony at the Gandhi Centre (Cultural Centre). Over two hundred people from amongst the Indian diaspora, persons of Indian origin, Dutch and members of Surinami-Hindustani community attended the event.

Gandhi Jayanti Celebrations, 02 October 2014

A number of events were held in different parts of the Netherlands to celebrate Gandhi Jayanti on 2 October 2014. For the first time, an event was organized at the prestigious Peace Palace, The Hague by the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Foundation in collaboration with the Municipality of The Hague. The function was attended by members of the diplomatic corps, officials of various international organizations and the Diaspora. Speakers included Mr. Steven van Hoogstraten, General Director, Carnegie Foundation, Mr. Rabin Baldewsingh, Deputy Mayor of The Hague, Mr. Eric Niehe, former Ambassador of the Netherlands to India, Mr Ram Lakhina, Chairman, Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Foundation and Mr. R.N. Prasad, Ambassador of India. Ambassador Mr. R.N. Prasad, in his address, spoke about the increasing relevance of Mahatma Gandhi’s ideology in today’s world. The Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Foundation, later in the evening, organized its traditional Gandhi Jayanti celebration at the site of the Gandhi Monument in Amsterdam. The Foundation has been organizing this event for past many years and the Embassy of India has been supporting this event regularly. The Chairman (South Amsterdam Borough) and Ambassador of India addressed the gathering which included a large number of students from local schools.



Schoolchildren presenting a cultural programme at the Gandhi Jayanti Celebrations in Amsterdam

A “Gandhi Walk” was organized in Utrecht by Foundation India Netherland Suriname in which around 250 people participated. The Deputy Chief of Mission, Mr. R.K. Singh flagged off the 5 km long walk. A talk on Mahatma Gandhi was delivered by Prof. Dr. Pralay Kanungo (ICCR Chair, University of Leiden) on the occasion. A musical programme was also organized by the Foundation.



Mr. R.K. Singh, Deputy Chief of Mission, flagging off the ‘Gandhi Walk’ in Utrecht

Swachh Bharat Movement

On 2 October, the Ambassador of India administered the ‘Swachh Bharat Shapath’ (Clean India Pledge) to all officials of the Embassy of India.

India-Netherlands Foreign Office Consultations

India-Netherlands Foreign Office Consultations were held on 11 June 2014 in New Delhi. The Indian side was led by Mr. Dinkar Khullar, Secretary (West), Ministry of External Affairs and the Dutch side was led by Ms. Reneé Jones-Bos, Secretary-General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

Visit of Queen Maxima to India

Her Majesty Queen Máxima visited India from 30 June – 3 July 2014 in her capacity as the Special Representative for Financial Inclusion to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. During her visit, the Queen had a meeting with the Hon'ble Finance Minister of India, Mr. Arun Jaitley.

Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Netherlands visits India

Ms. Lilianne Ploumen, the Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation led a large trade delegation to India from 5-7 November 2014. The focus of the visit was on Agri-Food, Life Sciences and Health. During the visit, she met with Ms. Maneka Gandhi, Minister of Women and Child Development and Ms. Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of State of Commerce and Industry.

Minister for Road Transport, Highways and Shipping visits the Netherlands



Hon'ble Minister of Road Transport, Highways and Shipping meeting with CEO of the Port of Rotterdam

Mr. Nitin Gadkari, Minister for Road Transport, Highways & Shipping, Government of India visited the Netherlands on November 19, 2014. During this visit, he met with the CEO of the Port of Rotterdam, Mr. Allard Castelein and discussed possibilities of cooperation between India and the Port of Rotterdam. The Hon'ble Minister also met representatives from leading Dutch companies in the field of inland waterways, ports, tunnels and infrastructure sectors.

Visit of Hon'ble Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh

A seven-member delegation led by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Shri Akhilesh Yadav, visited the Netherlands from August 31-September 2, 2014. The delegation's programme included, *inter alia*, (i) visit to Aalsmeer Flower Auction; (ii) a Roundtable Meeting at the Netherlands Agro Food Technology Centre. An Intent of Cooperation (IOC) between NAFTC and Udyog Bandhu (a UP State Government agency 'Udyog Bandhu' means friend of industry) was signed (iii) meeting with Dy. Mayor of The Hague, Drs. Th. J.A.M. de Bruijn, (iv) a Roundtable Meeting chaired by Mr. Hans de Boer, President, VNO-NCW, the largest employers' organization in the Netherlands. An MoU was signed between the VNO-NCW and Udyog Bandhu, for promoting business engagements, trade missions etc.



Chief Minister Mr. Akhilesh Yadav with Chairman of VNO-NCW Mr. H. de Boer with other participants at the Roundtable Meeting held at the VNO-NCW headquarters

Visit of 'Vibrant Gujarat Delegation' to the Netherlands

A delegation led by Mr. A.K. Rakesh, Principal Secretary, Government of Gujarat, including companies from ports, logistics, renewable energy visited the Netherlands from September 24-26, 2014, to promote the forthcoming 7th Vibrant Gujarat Summit 2015 being organized in Gandhi Nagar, Gujarat from January 11-13, 2015. The Netherlands is one of the partner countries for the Summit. During the visit of the delegation, a well-attended Road Show to promote the forthcoming Summit was held at Amsterdam on September 24. The Ambassador Mr. R.N. Prasad, in his address to the participants, used the opportunity to also focus on Make in India campaign which was to be launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on 25 September. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands organized a dedicated programme for the delegation which included sectoral roundtables on energy, water and ports & logistics.

Indian Embassy organizes Seminar on Indo-Dutch Cooperation in the Dairy Sector

The Embassy organized a half-day seminar on Indo-Dutch Cooperation in the Dairy Sector on October 17, 2014, at The Hague. Apart from Ambassador Prasad, other prominent keynote speakers were Ir. R.R. Lapperre, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Ms. Rajni Sekhari Sibal, Joint Secretary (C&DD), Ministry of Agriculture, New Delhi. There were also speakers from the University of Wageningen, the Netherlands Agro, Food & Technology Centre; the Uttar Pradesh Dairy Cooperative Sector; and the leading Dutch dairy company M/s FrieslandCampina. The event was well received and around 35 persons from the dairy sector and trade promotion bodies attended the event.

Netherlands India Business Meet (NIBM)

The 9th Annual Netherlands India Business Meet was organized on October 21, 2014, by the Netherlands India Chamber of Commerce and Trade (NICCT) in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands as well as KPMG and ING at the KPMG Headquarters in Amstelveen. The theme for the Meet was "Commercial Championship Strategies for India". Ambassador Mr. R.N. Prasad was the Keynote speaker at the event along with Mr. Marten van den Berg, Deputy Director General Foreign Economic Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Other speakers included Mr. René C.W. Boender, Brain-Agent, Author, and Mr. Diederik Fetter, Managing Director, Hotraco Group. The speeches were followed by a panel discussion comprising of four companies having business interests in India: SPAR International; Danieli Corus; Allround Vegetable Processing and Greenfields. The presentations and panel discussion were followed by the signing of an MoU between the CII and the NICCT for furthering cooperation between the two organizations. The event was attended by over 250 persons from trade, industry and the government.

Joint Working Group (JWG) meeting between Ministry of Urban Development of India and Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment

The First JWG meeting between the Ministry of Urban Development of India and the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment under the aegis of a Memorandum of Understanding signed in April 2013 was held in the Netherlands from 18-20 June 2014. During the JWG, the Indian side had useful discussions with the Dutch side for furthering cooperation in urban planning and regional planning, smart city development, drinking water, sanitation and solid waste, knowledge and capacity building, river front development and re-development for multimodal transport.

Apparel Buyer Seller Meeting

The Embassy of India, The Hague in association with the Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) organized an Apparel Buyer Seller Meet at Amsterdam on 23-24 June 2014 at World Fashion Centre, Amsterdam. A group of 20 Indian producers/exporters of garments from India led by the Chairman AEPC participated in the meeting/exhibition which was attended by members of the Dutch trade and bilateral trade organizations.



Ambassador of India interacting with the participants at the Apparel Buyer-Seller Meet

Durga Puja Celebrations

Durga Puja festival organized by 'Kallol' in Voorschoten was inaugurated by Ambassador Mr. R.N. Prasad on 30 September 2014. Kallol has been organizing this festival for the last five consecutive years.

Diwali Celebrations

The sixth edition of Indian Diwali Festival organized by Diwali Festival Foundation was celebrated at Stadshart, Amstelveen on 18 October. The Mayor of Amstelveen and Ambassador of India were the Chief Guests at the event. A number of cultural events were organized on the occasion.

International Hindi Conference

An International Hindi Conference was organized on 25 June 2014 at the Gandhi Centre by 'Aadharshila Vishwa Hindi Mission' (India) and 'Hindi Universe Foundation, (the Netherlands). Ambassador Mr. R.N. Prasad formally opened the event. Certificates of merit were handed out to select poets and delegates by the Ambassador. Over 40 selected poets, writers and dignitaries from India participated in the event including Mr. Diwakar Bhatt, Editor of the monthly magazine, Aadharshila and Mr. Sunil Shah, Editor of Dainik Jagaran. This was followed by a musical programme in the evening presented by Pandit Ranajit Sengupta on Sarod and Mr. Heiko Dijer, a renowned Dutch Tabla player on Tabla, and a poetry session. About 150 people attended the event.

Reception in honour of PBSA 2014 Awardee

Ambassador hosted a reception at India House on 9 July 2014 in honour of Mr. Rabin Baldewsingh, Deputy Mayor of The Hague, who was conferred the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award for the year 2014. The reception was attended by 70 invitees. Mr. Baldewsingh is the third recipient of this prestigious Award in the Netherlands.

Gujarati Folk Dance Programme

A colourful cultural programme of Gujarati Folk Dance 'Saptak' was organized on 5 July 2014 at Gandhi Centre. The event was attended by about 250 invitees, including members of Diplomatic Corps, officials from the Royal Palace as well as prominent members of the Indian and Surinami-Hindustani community. The cultural troupe was sponsored by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR).



Performance by Saptak Group at Gandhi Centre

Papon & East India Company in the Holland India Festival

India's famous fusion band 'Papon and East India Company', participated in the Holland India Festival in the second half of October. On an ICCR-sponsored visit to the Netherlands, the band performed in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague. The performances attracted large audiences on all three occasions. Various dignitaries including Ambassadors, Judges and senior government officials were present especially at the event held at Dr. Anton Philipszaal/Lucent Theatre in The Hague.



Papon and East India Company performing at Erasmus Pavilion Rotterdam