Embassy of India

The Hague

Press Release

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**Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for internal Affairs of the Netherlands Kajsa Ollongren attends Republic Day reception hosted by Indian Ambassador Venu Rajamony as Chief Guest**

**Reception held at historic venue of Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam where coronation of the King and his marriage with Queen Maxima was held**

**A bicycle and Charkha used by Mahatma Gandhi, handwritten corrections of a speech by Martin Luther King Jr and Nelson Mandela’s Robben Island Bible displayed at the Reception as part of an exhibition on Gandhi, King and Mandela**

**Landmark Venue in Dam Square in heart of Amsterdam lit up in colours of the Indian flag**

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Interior and Kingdom Affairs Ms Kajsa Ollongren attended yesterday (January 26) as Chief Guest the diplomatic reception hosted by Ambassador of India to the Netherlands Mr Venu Rajamony to mark the 69th Republic Day of India. This was the first time in several decades that a Minister of the Dutch Government attended India’s Republic Day reception.

The Reception had many other firsts to its credit. It was hosted at the historic venue of Nieuwe Kerk, on the Dam Square of Amsterdam which is the official venue for the Dutch Royal investiture ceremonies and the Royal weddings. The Venue was lit up in tricolour marking the first time ever that a prominent monument of the Netherlands was decked up in the Indian colours. Moreover, guests had opportunity to view first hand a bicycle and Charkha used by Mahatma Gandhi, handwritten corrections of a speech by Martin Luther King Jr and Nelson Mandela’s Robben Island Bible displayed at the Reception as part of an exhibition - “We have a dream- Gandhi, King and Mandela” currently on display at De Nieuwe Kerk.

Other Dutch dignitaries who attended the Reception included Mr. Jan van Zanen, Mayor of the city of Utrecht, former Foreign Minister Bert Koenders, Former Health Minister Edith Schippers, Mr Rabin Baldersingh, Deputy Mayor of The Hague, Judge Dalveer Bhandari of the ICJ, Ambassadors of various countries stationed in The Hague, Senior officials of the Dutch Government and prominent members of the Indian community

Deputy Prime Minister Ollongren, in her speech pointed out that the Netherlands was one of the first countries to send Ambassadors to India even before it became independent and expressed confidence that relations between the two countries would soar in the future. She lauded the Government of India’s ‘Smart City Mission’ and Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s aim of creating 100 smart cities in India. She assured that the Netherlands is and will continue to support India achieve its goals.

Ambassador Venu Rajamony in his address highlighted the fact that India was the fastest growing large economy in the world and has shown the world that democracy and rapid economic growth can go hand in hand.

Built in the 15th century, De Nieuwe Kerk is the Royal Church of the Netherlands and most recently was used for the investiture ceremony of King Willem-Alexander and also the wedding of King Willem-Alexander to Queen Máxima.

The exhibition ‘We have a Dream – Gandhi, King, Mandela’ is about the three world-renowned figures who profoundly influenced the course of the twentieth century. The exhibition narrates the inspiring stories of these leaders who led great movements against social injustice and also features iconic objects owned by each of the three leaders.

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