



**Embassy of India
The Hague**

PRESS RELEASE

Visit of Lok Sabha Speaker Shri Om Birla to Netherlands: 21-22 August 2022

Hon'ble Speaker of the Lok Sabha Shri Om Birla visited Netherlands on 21 - 22 August 2022.

During the visit, Hon'ble Speaker offered prayers at the Sewa Dhaam Hindu Centre at The Hague. The Centre was founded by Surinami Hindustani community in Netherlands in 1995. It aims to bring people together to learn about Hinduism and to experience Hindu culture. As a mark of reverence, the Speaker gifted a Ganesha idol to the temple. He interacted with senior members of Surinami Hindustani community and shared with them the achievements and aspirations of New India. He also welcomed their enthusiasm to contribute to India's progress and further emphasized that as brand ambassadors of India, the Indian diaspora is a strong link between India and the Netherlands. He appreciated their strong links with India and their efforts to preserve Hindu culture, traditions and values.

In the evening, Hon'ble Speaker attended a reception organized by Ambassador of India at India House, The Hague. President of the Senate of Netherlands Prof. (Dr.) Jan Anthonie Bruijn made a special gesture to attend the dinner. Other dignitaries from the Netherlands government and prominent Indian community members were also present. Hon'ble Speaker addressed the gathering and spoke about the socio-economic progress in India and India's democratic traditions. He urged the diaspora to take advantage of the Digital India ecosystem which has led to growth of startups and innovation. He encouraged them to bring new innovations to India. He also appreciated the Indian community's contribution to growth and prosperity of the Netherlands and in promoting business & bilateral ties with India.

Prof. Jan Anthonie Bruijn in his address said that as natural partners with shared democratic values, it is important that the two countries learn from each other and further build on the partnership and cooperation in all possible fields. He highlighted the importance of greater parliamentary exchanges.

On 21 August, Hon'ble Speaker visited a greenhouse in Nootdorp and saw precision farming practices used by Dutch farmers to significantly enhance productivity of agriculture. He appreciated their approach to farming with the use of natural agriculture inputs, water conservation and innovative techniques.

India-Netherlands enjoy close and friendly bilateral relations, built on a strong foundation of mutual trust and shared democratic values. The Netherlands is the 4th largest investor in India and the largest export destination for India in the EU. The two countries have a robust and multifaceted partnership encompassing water, agriculture, health, science and technology and trade and commerce. The Netherlands is home to the largest India diaspora in mainland Europe. This year India and the Netherlands are commemorating 75 years of diplomatic relations.

**The Hague
22 August 2022**