

**SPREEKPUNTEN VAN DE VOORZITTER VAN DE TWEDE KAMER TEN
BEHOEVE VAN DE ONTVANGST VAN DE PRESIDENT VAN INDIA,
DHR. RAM NATH KOVIND**

6 APRIL 2022 – 11.05 – 11.45 UUR, EERSTE KAMER

Mr President, Your Excellencies,

Namasté,

It is a great honour for our Parliament to welcome you today. The relationship between India and the Netherlands is strong. And your visit to our country symbolises this. We are delighted to have you here.

Mr President,

There is great interest in the House of Representatives in developments in India. The last time an official delegation from our “Tweede Kamer” visited your country was in January 2010, but our Parliaments have always had good working contacts in the Inter-Parliamentary Union. And the Committee on Foreign Affairs has decided to make cooperation with India one of its top three priorities for this year. The Chair of this Committee, Ms Attje Kuiken, is also present here today. The Committee’s decision underlines the importance that our Parliament attaches to our bilateral relationship. And it also highlights that what happens in India is important to us in the Netherlands too.

It is therefore heartbreaking to hear that despite a conviction of the father of the little girl Insiya, she is still not here in the Netherlands with her mother. I hope this sad story will end soon for all the involved persons.

Our countries have close cooperation in the areas of water security, agriculture, public health and the energy transition. And trade, of course, has been an important element in the long-standing friendship between our two countries since the Dutch East India Company began trading on the Malabar Coast.

The war in Ukraine has taught us all, once again, the importance of good diplomatic and international relations. India has shown that it attaches great value to multilateral approaches, just like the Netherlands. Our countries can reinforce each other's efforts in this respect. A good example is the support that the Netherlands is providing for India's campaign to acquire a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. And even in areas where we might not see eye to eye, it is good to maintain an open dialogue and make an effort to understand each other's positions.

Just as the war in Ukraine is affecting global security relations, strategic developments in the Indo-Pacific region also affect us all. A free and open Indo-Pacific region is in our interests just as much as it is in India's interests. So your visit to the Netherlands is important and well-timed. It offers us the opportunity to hear your views on the security developments in your part of the world.

Mr President,

Also on behalf of the House of Representatives, I would like to thank you for taking the time to meet with us. I wish you a fruitful and interesting state visit. And if there is anything that we can do to make your time here more rewarding, please do not hesitate to let us know.

I would now like to conclude by introducing the Chair of the Committee of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Cooperation of the Senate, Mr Bastiaan van Apeldoorn, and the Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives, Ms Attje Kuiken.