



**TOESPRAAK VAN DE VOORZITTER VAN DE EERSTE KAMER TEN BEHOEVE VAN DE ONTVANGST VAN DE PRESIDENT VAN INDIA, Z.E. DE HEER RAM NATH KOVIND**

6 april 2022

Your Excellency,

Namasté,

On behalf of the States General of the Kingdom of The Netherlands, I am very honored to welcome you in the Dutch Senate. It is a great privilege for us to receive you here today.

I assume you must feel at home in this parliamentary environment, since you were a member of the Indian Upper House yourself from 1994 until 2006, before you served as Governor of the state of Bihar prior to your election as President of the Republic of India in 2017.

I would also like to extend a warm welcome to your delegation, and a special word of welcome to Mr. Loganathan Murugan (Minister of State), Mr. Dilip Ghosh (Member of Lokh Saba) and the new Ambassador of India to the Netherlands, Ms. Reenat Sandhu, who presented her credentials to His Majesty the King only last week. Welcome in the Netherlands.

Your Excellency,

Your visit to the Netherlands highlights the celebration of 75 years of diplomatic relations between our two countries. In 2019, His Majesty King Willem-Alexander and Her Majesty Queen Máxima were welcomed in India. The exchange of State visits reflects the good and long-standing relationship between our two countries.

In one of the King's speeches during the State visit in 2019, he quoted the very first treaty between India and the Netherlands, over 400 years ago: "*Eternal friendship, as long as the sun and moon are in the sky.*" In recent times, especially prior to the covid-19 pandemic, the relationship between our countries developed positively on the field of trade, but also for example on the fields of culture, education and tourism. Our countries worked together in the UN Human Rights Council over the past years, and important cooperation on this topic also takes place on the level of civil society.



I am certain that your visit to the Netherlands will further contribute to the partnership and cooperation between India and the Netherlands on all possible fields.

Your Excellency,

Your visit to the Netherlands takes place in a period of time when the European continent is faced with a military conflict within its borders. The Russian invasion of Ukraine and the violence carried out by the army of the Russian Federation have shocked us deeply.

However, the war in Ukraine once more proves the importance of international cooperation. The importance of dialogue. And the value of friendship between countries. In this light, your State visit is even more important as a symbol of cooperation, dialogue and friendship on the highest possible level.

Your Excellency,

I hope that your visit to the Netherlands will be remembered as a very fruitful and successful visit. It is a great honor to welcome you here today and we truly appreciate the opportunity to have this meeting with you.

Thank you very much.