



Speech by the Ambassador

[Pravasi Bhartiya Divas, SVCC-Paramaribo]

Namaskar, Good evening, Shubh Sandhya,

Hon'ble Chairperson of National Assembly of Suriname, Shri Ashwin Adhin, Hon'ble ministers and parliamentarians and senior officials, distinguished members of Indian Diaspora 'Bharatvanshi'

At the outset, I extend a very warm welcome to all of you. I also take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy and blissful New Year. As you are aware, the *Pravasi Bharatiya Divas* has been celebrated the diaspora's contributions and fosters dialogue on collaborative initiatives since its inception in 2003 with participation of vibrant Indian Diaspora from across the world. Pravasi Bhartiya Divas marks the return of Mahatma Gandhi to India in 1915, a moment that reshaped our nation's destiny.

Distinguished participants,

The stature of India is increasing the world over. For this, we have not only the efforts of the Indian leadership and resident Indians to thank but also the efforts of our diaspora. The first wave of migration of indentured laborers from India was started during the colonial time to Fiji, Mauritius, South Africa, and the Caribbean. In the second wave of migration, Indian laborers moved to mainly gulf countries and the third wave was product of the economic liberalization of the 1990s. There are today over 34 million overseas Indians, which is about the same as total Population of Peru or Saudi Arabia. Once upon a time, it was believed that the sun never set in the empire of Queen Victoria. The sun has set on many great empires, but it will never set on the Indian Diaspora.

Distinguished Bharatvanshi,

India attaches great value to diaspora engagement that is structured around the four key pillars of 4Cs: Care, Connect, Celebrate and Contribute. Safety, security, and welfare of Indian citizens and Persons of Indian Origin abroad is our top priority. Indian Community Welfare Fund, Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana, MADAD Portal, Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children, evacuation in vulnerability are few initiatives taken by the Government of India. We are working tirelessly to maintain linkages and connects with our diaspora community. Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and Know India Programme are testimony of our efforts.

Global Pravasi Rishta Portal, Promotion of Cultural Ties with Diaspora and the Bharat Ko Janiye Quiz are also notable example. India celebrates achievement of our diaspora and their contribution. We recognise your's achievement by honouring Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award. Our Prime Minister addresses our members of diaspora as a Rashtrabhoos. We also encourage our achievers Bharatvanshi to contribute in the

development of India- Viksit Bharat by expertise, knowledge, innovations, and global networks.

This year we are celebrating the Golden Jubilee of establishment of our diplomatic relations. Our connections are civilizational rather than transactional. India is pleased to collaborate with Suriname in a variety of fields, from healthcare and culture to technology and capacity-building. We are working together to deepen our traditional relations with a focus on capacity building youth empowerment, digital innovation, and sustainable development.

Our Bharatvanshi in Suriname has been the custodian of heritage and the wheel of progress. While well knitted in Surinamese society and continuously contributing in national building and development of Suriname, you have preserved language, nurtured rituals and traditions, Baithak Gaana, Chowtal bhajans, Ramleela, festivity such as Fagwa, Diwali, Navratra, Eid and many more.

Distinguished friends,

Our Vice President stated a few years back that three D`s which are Democracy, Demand and Demographic Dividend are scripting India`s story. Indian Diaspora is the fourth D in the picture. Our members of diaspora shaping the future of the world globally in all walks of life from politics to business, arts to science, earth to space; everywhere.

We need to go beyond the general and traditional image of India and spread awareness of new India. In this effort, the role of all of you in the Indian community here is crucial. With your active involvement, we can minimize the challenges and expand our reach and influence in trans-Atlantic and Caribbean world.

Distinguished Bharatvanshi,

We also urge members of Indian Community to maintain close cooperation with us, which is indeed a home away from home. परदेश में आपका घर. Our Embassies have been directed to reach out to our diaspora pro-actively and render all possible assistance on a 24/7 basis, whenever required to any Indian citizen abroad or Person of Indian Origin. We are just a call away and we would always be happy to extend our services to all of you.

Please keep continue the spirit of vasudhaiva kutumbakam that has inspired India for millennia—that all creation is one family. I regard each and every one of you to be our partner in our effort to enhance the image of Bharat and Indians amongst the Surinamese society.
