

26th January 2026

77th Republic Day of India

Remarks by Ambassador-designate Shri Abhishek Shukla

H.E. Damjan Jovic, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia.

H.E. Milos Joncic, Acting Assistant Minister for Security Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia.

H.E. Ambassador Tamara Rastovac Siamashvili, Acting Assistant Minister for Bilateral Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia.

Distinguished guests, Excellencies, friends, colleagues,

Namaskaar!

Dobre Veche!

It gives me immense pleasure to welcome you to this reception held on the occasion of the 77th Republic Day of India.

I would like to thank you all for being part of this joyous occasion commemorating the day in 1950 when the Constitution of India came into force. Since then, the ideals of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity enshrined in the Constitution have been defining the Republic of India and ensuring its spectacular rise.

Today, we also remember the sacrifices of countless Indians who contributed to India's quest for independence which culminated on 15th August 1947, and the collective spirit of the countrymen who gave themselves the largest written constitution on 26th January 1950.

Excellencies, friends,

Today, a mention of India evokes several images:

- The world's largest democracy!
- A diverse and vibrant society exhibiting all-round progress!
- Home to the largest youth population in the world with about 65% of its people under the age of 35!
- The fastest growing major economy on its way to becoming the third largest one within a few years!
- A manufacturing power house!
- A global hub for critical and quality skill-sets powering R&D for India as well as other countries and companies!
- World's leading hub for Global Capability Centers (GCCs) hosting over 1,700 centers.
- The 3rd largest start-up ecosystem globally with more than 200,000 start-ups and about 125 active unicorns!
- A successful demonstration of grass-root inclusivity, empowerment and revolution!
- A world leader in fintech through its own unique 'India Stack'!
- A rapidly emerging global leader in Artificial Intelligence!

And all this on the bedrock of the civilizational strength and values offering an unmatched pathway to realizing the dreams of Viksit Bharat, i.e. a Developed India by 2047 when we celebrate the 100th year of our independence.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It's my honour and privilege to be appointed as India's Ambassador to this beautiful and friendly country with which we have traditionally enjoyed the closest of ties. From being partners earlier in the days of Non-Aligned Movement to walking together presently in the cohort of Global South, India and Serbia have shared

converging views on many global issues and supported each other in international fora.

Our ties now cover areas like trade, defence, science & technology, education, etc. Serbia is increasingly becoming an attractive destination for Indian movie-makers. Several Indian companies too have found Serbia as a rewarding investment destination. I am also truly amazed at the appreciation of Indian civilization and culture among Serbian friends and we express our gratitude for this affection.

However, we are also cognizant of the responsibility upon us to do more. We need to enhance and expand bilateral trade as well as people-to-people contacts. We need to cover more bases. We are ready to share our expertise and competency in different areas with Serbia, and likewise learn from Serbia.

Excellencies, friends,

As I begin my term in Belgrade, I look up to your support and once again, thank you for gracing this occasion with your presence.

Thank you!

Hvala!