

High Commission of India

Kigali

HC's Speech for Republic Day Reception 2026
at Kigali Marriott Hotel

Your Excellency Olivier Nduhungirehe, Hon'ble Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Government of the Republic of Rwanda,

Your Excellencies – Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Charge d' Affaires,

Senior officials of the Government of the Republic of Rwanda,

Esteemed members of academia, media, and think-tanks,

Dear members of the Indian community present here today,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies & Gentlemen.

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to this Reception to celebrate the 77th Republic Day of India. I convey my heartfelt gratitude to Your Excellency Olivier Nduhungirehe, Hon'ble Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Guest of Honour of today's event.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me take this opportunity to refer to three key concepts that guide India's approach to the contemporary world. These are: One, **Atmanirbharta** or self-reliance. That means developing our own capabilities, building our own strengths and nurturing our own talent. We are already seeing results of this approach in India's emergence as a global manufacturing hub and pharmacy of the world. Credible space programmes and pathbreaking digital public infrastructure such as UPI are also testament to India's home grown capacities .

The second key concept for us is **Atmaraksha** or securing oneself. We remain determined to protect our people and secure their interests, at home and abroad. That means zero-tolerance for terrorism, robust defence of our borders, forging partnerships beyond and assisting our community abroad.

The third key concept for us is **Atmavishwas** or self-confidence. As the most populous nation, as a civilizational state, as a rapidly growing major economy, we are confident about who we are, and what we will be. India will always maintain its freedom of choice. And will always be a voice of the Global South.

With the aforementioned key concepts in mind, let me briefly list out a few milestones in our developmental journey the past year. Despite facing significant headwinds in terms of geopolitical and geoeconomic turbulence, India remained the fastest growing major economy in the world in 2025. Last week, the IMF revised India's economic growth to 7.3% in the current Financial Year, terming India as a key growth engine of the world.

In 2025, India implemented a comprehensive suite of "second-generation" economic reforms under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. These economic reforms encompass diverse sectors of the economy such as taxation, FDI, energy, labour, infrastructure etc. The main focus of these reforms has been to ease the lives of citizens.

Our digital public infrastructure; our start-up eco system, which is now the third largest in the world; our innovation culture; rapidly growing infrastructure; and micro-finance are changing the face of society. India remains committed to sharing its experiences and tools with others on their journey of development.

Economic Diplomacy also remained one of our top priorities as India signed a landmark Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with the United Kingdom in July 2025. We also concluded a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with Oman in December 2025 and finalized FTA negotiations with New Zealand.

In 2025, India's space sector was marked by breakthroughs in docking technology, human spaceflight milestones, and heavy-lift commercial capabilities. ISRO officially declared 2025 as the "Gaganyaan Year" to focus on the human spaceflight program. In a historic first, Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla of India flew to the International Space Station aboard the Axiom-4 mission where he conducted seven microgravity experiments, with colleagues.

Ladies & Gentlemen, Friends,

We look forward to hosting the AI Impact Summit 2026 next month in New Delhi. This will be the first global AI Summit to be hosted in the Global South. India has made People, Planet and Progress as foundational pillars of this Summit. The Summit will focus on strengthening global collaboration and promoting responsible and ethical AI. We are confident that the Summit will advance an impact-oriented and people-centric approach to AI, with emphasis on delivering measurable social and economic outcomes

Ladies & Gentlemen,

Let me now turn to bilateral ties between India and Rwanda. India-Rwanda bilateral relations which are warm and friendly, encompass a wide range of sectors such as agriculture, trade and investment, development cooperation, health, education, culture, and people-to-people contacts.

We look forward to receiving Your Excellency Olivier Ndunhungirehe, Hon'ble Foreign Minister of Rwanda in India this year. Earlier, in May 2025 we were delighted to receive H.E. Dr. Utumatwishima Jean Nepo Abdallah, Hon'ble Minister of Youth & Arts of Rwanda in Mumbai at the WAVES Summit 2025, India's first-of-its-kind World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit.

H.E. Claudette Irere, Hon'ble Minister of State of Education of Rwanda launched the project "AIM for Change: Advancing Rwanda's Midwifery to Accelerate the Realization of Zero Preventable Maternal Deaths through South-South Cooperation"

in 20 May 2025. AIM for Change, a two-year initiative, funded by the Government of India through a USD 1 million grant from the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, is being implemented by our partner, UNFPA.

India continues to be a high quality, yet affordable healthcare destination for the people of Rwanda.

Under the framework of Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC), around 60 Rwandan nationals have so far benefitted from various training and capacity building programmes in the current FY 2025-26. Rwandan students also attend undergraduate, post graduate and doctoral programmes in various Indian Centres of Excellence under scholarships offered by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR).

Indian businesses continue to be among the largest investors in Rwanda. In 2024, Indian investors were the second largest group of investors with a total investment of about USD 445 million across 35 projects. Overall, India's investments in Rwanda cover a range of sectors including Iron & Steel, Telecom, Tea, Two Wheelers, Consumable goods, Sugar, basic materials such as cement, Textile, LEDs, etc. I am also delighted to note that Indian cuisine served in restaurants in Kigali such as Khana Khazana, Kurry Kingdom, Red Handi and the Glimpse are popular among Rwandans and expats alike.

I will be failing in my duty if I do not mention the Indian community in Rwanda, several of whose members are present here today. They number around 3000 representing 14 Indian states and

have made Rwanda their home. They are well-integrated in the Rwandan society and contributes to its economic development.

All in all, India-Rwanda relations are on an upward trajectory. Both countries are working hard together to take the relations to the next level.

May the India-Rwanda partnership continue to progress and flourish!

Long live India-Rwanda friendship!

Thank you.
