

Address of Ambassador Guðni Bragason at a IIBA working dinner in Dehradun in Uttarakhand State on 12th November 2021.

Chairman of the Indo-Icelandic Business Association, ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends.

I thank you for your kind welcoming words and the invitation to address this distinguished group, as well as visiting the state of Uttarakhand and the beautiful city of Dehradun. It is a great honor and pleasure for me to meet you all, some I have met already, such as our friends Dalip Dua and Siddarth Swaminathan, and I look forward to meet new members and have a chance to talk to you tonight. And allow me to introduce my colleagues at the Embassy, Deputy Chief of Mission Sigþór Hilmisson and the Trade Counsellor Rahul Chongtham.

It is for me a great honor and pleasure to serve as Ambassador of my country to the Republic of India. In the coming year, 2022, Iceland and India will celebrate fifty years of diplomatic relations. This anniversary gives a good opportunity to highlight the issues and ideals we have in common, such as emphasis on security, democracy and human rights, sustainable use of natural resources, free market economy, and draw attention, through events and cultural exchange, to our good relations.

Now, at the end of our programme in Dehradun allow me to say that we have had pleasurable and fruitful meetings with the Chief Minister of Uttarakhand and the Minister for Energy, and met several interesting people of high quality.

Sustainable development has been an important theme in our visit, especially the utilization of renewable energy resources. Iceland and Uttarkhand have several things in common, such as abundance of geothermal energy. We have been able to use the geothermal energy in our country, not only to produce electricity for power consuming industries, but also for use in the community, such as heating houses, schools and sports facilities, as well as for preserving food in cooling facilities and thus adding value to food production and strengthening food security and minimizing waste.

We welcome the emphasis of the Indian government on renewable energy and the aims to promote green energy and better quality of life for future generations. Iceland is ready to partner with India in this respect.

We support the discussion on the so-called Third Pole/Hindu-Kush-Himalaya. As with the Arctic region, the Hindu Kush/Himalaya region might experience profound ecological

transformations as a result of climate change. It was therefore impressive to visit the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology. The former President of Iceland, Dr. Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, visited the Institute few years ago and inaugurated the 4th Third Pole Environmental Workshop. We appreciate India's interest in Arctic issues and climate issues as such, and value the observer status of India in the Arctic Council.

We are impressed by the literature festivals held in the city and hope to have Icelandic authors participate in the festival in the future.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Even if our countries are far apart, this visit has demonstrated to me how much we have in common and that we can work together for the benefit of Iceland and India.

Thank you.