

**Remarks by Ambassador at launch of Tagore visit centenary celebrations
Balatonfüred
8th May 2026**

Honourable Mayor of Balatonfüred, Distinguished Guests, and Friends of India and Hungary,

Good morning.

It is a profound honour to stand before you today in this picturesque town. Tomorrow will be the 165th Birthday of Tagore. As we gather here today, we are marking the commencement of a truly historic milestone: the 100th anniversary of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's visit to Balatonfüred. We are proud to launch the "Year of Tagore," a celebration that honours a deeply valued part of our shared cultural heritage.

A century ago, in 1926, our revered Nobel Laureate arrived on the shores of Lake Balaton seeking healing. On behalf of the entire Indian nation, I want to express our eternal gratitude to the Hungarian people. It was the serene environment of this town, the expertise of your doctors, and the genuine warmth of the local community that helped our national poet recover his health. The linden tree he planted here by the

promenade remains a living, breathing symbol of his gratitude and the enduring bond between our two nations.

Today, that historic connection continues to inspire scholars, artists, and admirers of Tagore's universal philosophy. But the roots of that linden tree also mirror the deep, ever-growing roots of modern India-Hungary relations. Our historical ties of the heart and mind have paved the way for a dynamic contemporary partnership. Today, we are exploring new, exciting directions in commercial cooperation. As India's strategic and economic ties with the European Union continue to deepen, our bilateral relationship with Hungary serves as a crucial pillar of that engagement, offering vast potential in trade, technology, and investment.

As India's economy rapidly expands, we are witnessing a significant rise in outbound tourism, including to Hungary. Last year some 62,000 Indian tourists visited Hungary a growth of almost 15% over the past numbers. The centenary celebrations we are launching today possess the incredible potential to firmly place Balatonfüred on the map and in the consciousness of Indian travellers. By

inviting Indian tourists to experience the same tranquility that once rejuvenated Gurudev Tagore, we will not only provide a meaningful boost to the local economy but also vastly enrich the people-to-people contact that forms the bedrock of our diplomatic ties.

To honour this centenary, the Embassy of India, in close collaboration with the Mayor's Office, has curated a diverse array of commemorative activities designed to engage local communities and cultural organisations throughout the year:

- We begin this May with the launch of the "Year of Tagore," marking his birth anniversary here in Balatonfüred.
- This is accompanied by an "Echoes of Eternity" poetry recitation and a scholarly lecture on Tagore
- As summer unfolds, we will promote cultural exchange through a Yoga session in June and an Indian Food Festival in August, both held right here in Balatonfüred.
- In September, we will delve into his intellectual legacy with an International Conference on "Tagore's Literature and Thought," alongside a captivating Film Festival.
- Finally, the year will culminate in October and November with a special exhibition at the Vaszary Villa—proposed by Dr. Imre Lázár—a symbolic tree plantation ceremony, and a grand closing ceremony featuring vibrant cultural programmes.

I would like to extend my deepest and most sincere gratitude to the Honourable Mayor, his dedicated team at the Mayor's Office, and the wonderful, hospitable people of Balatonfüred. Your unwavering support and partnership are what make these centenary events possible.

Together, let us celebrate a friendship that was forged a century ago, ensuring that it continues to thrive, prosper, and inspire our nations for the next hundred years.

Thank you.