



**Embassy of India**  
**The Hague**  
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**PRESS NOTE**

**[Visit of Commerce Secretary Mr. Sunil Barthwal to the Netherlands (24-26 April 2025)]**

**Mr. Sunil Barthwal**, Commerce Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India paid an official visit to the Netherlands from 24-26 April 2025. This visit underscored India's commitment to further deepening bilateral trade and economic cooperation with the Netherlands, a key partner in Europe. During his visit, Mr. Barthwal engaged in high-level discussions, industry interactions and toured places of economic importance.

2. Mr. Barthwal commenced his visit with a productive discussion with **Mr. Michiel Sweers**, Director General for Foreign Economic Relations, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in The Hague. The discussions focused on strengthening bilateral trade and economic ties, inter alia, through setting up of the Joint Trade and Investment Committee (JTIC) mechanism. Further, the meeting covered diverse issues of bilateral trade and economic relationship, advancing strategic economic cooperation, fostering policy alignment, and addressing trade barriers to facilitate smoother market access for Indian and Dutch businesses. The dialogue reaffirmed the shared commitment to creating a conducive environment for trade and investment, leveraging the complementary strengths of both economies.

3. **Mr. Saket Kumar**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, who accompanied Commerce Secretary, met **Mr. Tjerk Opmeer**, Deputy Director General for Enterprise and Innovation, at the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs in The Hague. The discussions centered on fostering innovation-driven partnerships, particularly in technology and startup ecosystems. Both sides committed to deepening collaboration in the startups and innovation ecosystem through mutual efforts under the Indo-Dutch Startup Link. The meeting also explored collaboration in entrepreneurship, tech exchange and space cooperation. These engagements highlighted India's growing role as a hub for innovation and the Netherlands' expertise in cutting-edge technologies, paving the way for enhanced bilateral cooperation.

4. A highlight of visit was the **CEOs Round-table Conference** organized by the Embassy of India. Attended by approximately 40 representatives from leading Dutch and Indian companies, as well as business chambers and trade organizations, the round-table facilitated discussions on trade opportunities, challenges and actionable solutions. Participants offered valuable suggestions, with the Government of India and the Embassy pledging to address concerns. The Conference provided a platform for industry leaders to share insights, explore synergies, and identify opportunities for collaboration in sectors such as renewable energy, agriculture, healthcare, logistics, waste management and urban development. Mr. Barthwal emphasized India's ambitious economic reforms, including initiatives to boost manufacturing, exports and ease of doing business, which resonated strongly with Dutch stakeholders. The Roundtable also featured the showcasing of **One District One Product (ODOP)** handicrafts

by the Embassy, celebrating India's rich artisanal heritage. The subsequent networking session acted as a platform for corporate leaders and trade bodies to forge meaningful connections, with Commerce Secretary Barthwal and Ambassador Tuhin actively engaging the participants.

6. Mr. Barthwal visited the **Port of Rotterdam**, Europe's largest and one of the world's most advanced ports. Received by **Mr. Boudewijn Siemons**, CEO of the Port of Rotterdam Authority, at the World Port Center, Mr. Barthwal held in-depth discussions on enhancing cooperation between the Indian ports and Rotterdam. The talks explored opportunities for knowledge sharing, technology transfer, and sustainable port management practices. A tour of the port facilities, including the fully automated APM Terminals at Maasvlakte II, provided insights into Rotterdam's state-of-the-art infrastructure and operational efficiencies. Mr. Barthwal highlighted the potential for collaboration in modernizing Indian ports, aligning with India's Maritime Vision 2030, which aims to enhance port capacity and logistics efficiency. Both sides expressed interest in deepening ties through joint initiatives in port digitalization, green shipping, and logistics optimization, which are critical to boosting bilateral trade flows. The visit laid the groundwork for setting up of a Green and Digital Corridor between the Port of Rotterdam and Indian ports like the Deendayal Port Authority Kandla, and export of Green Hydrogen and carriers like Ammonia and Methanol from India to Europe, with the Port of Rotterdam acting as a gateway to Europe.

7. Later, Mr. Barthwal traveled to Veldhoven to visit the headquarters of **ASML**, a global leader in photolithography systems for the semiconductor industry. In a productive meeting with ASML's CEO, **Mr. Christophe Fouquet**, Mr. Barthwal discussed deepening India-Netherlands cooperation in the semiconductor sector. The discussions focused on leveraging ASML's expertise to support India's ambitions to become a global semiconductor manufacturing hub, as outlined in the India Semiconductor Mission. Mr. Barthwal emphasized India's robust policy framework to attract investments in semiconductors, including production-linked incentives and infrastructure development. The engagement with ASML highlighted India's interest in fostering innovation and building a resilient semiconductor ecosystem, with the Netherlands as a key partner.

8. The visit of the Commerce Secretary yielded several tangible outcomes. It reinforced the strategic importance of the India-Netherlands partnership in addressing global economic challenges and fostering innovation-driven growth. The discussions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economic Affairs laid the groundwork for enhanced collaboration through institutional mechanisms like the JTIC. The CEOs Roundtable fostered new business connections, with Dutch companies expressing keen interest in India's growing market and investment opportunities. The engagements at the Port of Rotterdam and ASML opened new avenues for cooperation in maritime infrastructure and semiconductors, aligning with India's economic priorities. Commerce Secretary Barthwal's visit has injected fresh momentum into India Netherlands partnership, setting the stage for deeper economic collaboration.

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