



**PRÍHOVOR PREZIDENTA SR  
na otvorení Slovensko-indického  
biznis fóra**

**Bratislava, 10. 4. 2025**

Your Excellency, Honourable President Droupadi Murmu,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A warm welcome to all of you, especially to our dear guests from India. Let me start by saying thank you to all those who have made this gathering a reality. It's a great pleasure to open our Slovak-Indian Business Forum today.

Though geographically distant, the friendly relations between Slovakia and India have strengthened significantly in recent years. Since 2019, our bilateral trade has nearly tripled, reaching almost 1,3 billion EUR. In 2018, Tata Group's investment of 1,4 billion EUR led to the opening of the Jaguar Land Rover manufacturing plant near the city of Nitra.

We view the extent of your investments not only through the lens of economic benefits but also as a positive signal for Slovakia and its development. Markets and finances reflect values such as mutual trust, and we deeply appreciate the trust you have placed in us.

While traditionally we have sought Indian investments, Slovak investors are increasingly engaged in India today. A biofuel plant is being constructed in Uttar Pradesh, and railway manufacturing facilities worth several million EUR are being established in West Bengal and Odisha, the home state of Her Excellency Madam President. These investments are expected to create thousands of jobs in India.

It's truly inspiring to see a room full of respected business leaders who are eager to leverage this positive momentum.

The good news is that we don't have to start from scratch, as the former Czechoslovakia was once one of India's major trading partners in Eastern

Europe.

I sincerely hope that today's forum will help build on that legacy and continue the work of our business delegations that have already visited India. The most recent one of them was led by our Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Juraj Blanár just three weeks ago.

I have noticed that many representatives from the IT sector are with us today, including those focused on artificial intelligence, which is fantastic. It is in your field, where distance doesn't play a role. I know, flying here from India in person is no small feat. But online, you're always just a few clicks away from home.

As a key technology, AI is transforming industries, enhancing productivity and enabling new capabilities across various sectors. New technologies hold tremendous potential to redefine industries and improve our quality of life. The global race has already begun and the early movers will benefit from growth, new jobs and increased productivity. India is a global leader in AI research and data science. By combining Slovakia's strength in engineering and precision manufacturing with India's AI capabilities, both countries can drive innovations across many sectors.

Your expertise can be leveraged to introduce AI-driven automation, predictive maintenance, or optimization techniques in Slovak industry.

Of course, this topic can be viewed through various lenses, each offering its own insights, but all complementing one another. Yesterday, with Madam President, we discussed it in broader terms - how technological progress can fuel social mobility. Today, I invite you to join forces and take advantage of all these opportunities to boost our economies.

As a country with a growing economy, a stable business environment,

and an excellent location in the heart of Europe, Slovakia offers an attractive destination for foreign investments and business opportunities.

In several cases already, the capital from India has established a strong presence in Slovakia, contributing to the modernization of our industrial sector by bringing in new technologies and know-how. In the afternoon, we will visit Jaguar Land Rover as one of the frontrunners. I hope this conference will unlock new possibilities for cooperation and discover fresh opportunities. May your discussions today, here on the premises of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, be productive and lead to new partnerships, turning these opportunities into success stories.

Thank you, Madam President, for being part of this truly important event, reinforcing in real terms our valuable partnership between Slovakia and India.