

Farewell address

To

MR. N. RAGHAVAN

Consul General for India in Indonesia.

Honourable Sir,

We, the Indians residing in Batavia, deem it our proud privilege and pleasant duty to offer you this farewell address on the eve of your departure as India's Ambassador to Prague.

It was indeed the first milestone marking a glorious turning point in the history of the Indian Community in Java that we had the honour of receiving and greeting you as the first Indian Consul General.

Nearly a year ago, when our mother-country decided to open a Consulate General in Indonesia, we were more than overjoyed. And when it was announced that you, Sir, would be the first Indian envoy to Indonesia, it made us happier still. We had heard of your long experience in Malaya and of your intimate and sympathetic acquaintance with the Indian Community there. And we knew, you would find yourself no stranger with us.

During the last year, it has been our great fortune to have you and the ever hospitable Mrs. Raghavan in our midst. Particularly, during the arduous phases which our country has been passing through since reassuming her independent status and when our greatest calamity tore away from us the Father of our Nation and we missed his humane, affectionate and wise counsel, you, Sir, and your family, by your very presence, offered great solace and comfort to us who were overwhelmed with grief and distress.

Though we claim to speak only on behalf of the Indian community in Batavia, we can assure you, Sir, that the 35,000 Indians resident in this country will agree with us when we express our profound gratitude to you for the manner in which you have inspired all of us during your stay here. Besides affording us relief and assistance whenever we sought them, you have always been willing to give us guidance and help in the matter of organising associations and bodies for our mutual welfare. We are also thankful to you for constantly reminding us that each one of us, in his own way, is an envoy of India.

There is one other aspect, Sir, in which your kindness to us will be difficult to forget. To some of us, the joys over our country's independence were not unmixed with grief. With deep sorrow, we heard of the disruption in the life of our people and mass migrations attended by not only the calamities of sickness and poverty but also by the cruel passions of man under the urge of false philosophies and pernicious theories. During and after that great period of sorrow, we needed much solace and sympathy which you so readily gave us.

We must admit, Sir, that all has not been smooth with the life of the Indian community in this city. But, we were sure that with your presence amidst us, we would be able to tide over the difficulties and today, it is no credit to us alone that we have been able to forge ourselves into one body to work for the common good of all Indians residing here.

And to your worthy spouse, Sir, it is difficult to express our gratitude for the kindness, sympathy and sociable nature she has shown to all of us equally. In addition to our own community, we have heard often the women of different nationalities in this city express their admiration for her charm, kindness and dignity. While you were India's representative here, Sir, your lady proved to be a true and worthy representative of Indian womanhood.

In your sudden departure, Sir, we do feel a sense of loss. We did not anticipate that you will be taken away so soon from Indonesia where there is appreciation from one and all not only for your great qualities of diplomacy but also for the remarkable way in which you have upheld India's honour and dignity. And we have no doubt, Sir, that with such able ambassadors abroad like you, India will rise higher and higher in the comity of nations and once more send to distant lands that message of peace and of the life everlasting, so much needed today by a world torn between ideologies.

We wish you and Mrs. Raghavan and your daughter all godspeed.

We remain,

Sir,

Yours respectfully,

THE INDIAN COMMUNITY OF BATAVIA