

MEDIA STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA ON HIS VISIT TO TAJIKISTAN

Dushanbe, October 8, 2018

1. Salom. At the outset, let me express my profound gratitude to President Rahmon for his gracious warmth and welcome. The generosity of your hospitality, Mr. President, reflects the vibrancy and depth of our strategic partnership and our friendship.
2. This is my first visit to Central Asia. Tajikistan is our nearest neighbour in Central Asia. I have, therefore, decided to make my first call in Dushanbe.
3. India has historical ties with Tajikistan. Our civilisational bonds go back to ancient times. Our cultural and linguistic connections have always been robust. Poets and philosophers like Rudaki, Amir Khusro and Bedil are household names both in India and Tajikistan. Their works bear testimony to our shared values of humanism and tolerance.
4. Mr. President, looking back at the 27 years of our diplomatic relations, we have a deep sense of satisfaction for what we have achieved together. In these years, India and Tajikistan together have built a strong foundation for bilateral and multilateral cooperation. In 2012, we elevated our relationship to the level of Strategic Partnership. President Rahmon, we in India deeply appreciate your personal attention in nurturing this relationship. We recognize your great contribution to combating radicalization and terrorism, promoting peace, stability and a progressive way of life in Tajikistan.

5. India's membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, which was strongly supported by Tajikistan, has opened a new vista in our strategic partnership.
6. Ladies and gentlemen, in my meeting with President Rahmon today, we had a very useful exchange of ideas. I am certain that the roadmap that we have agreed to will further strengthen our Strategic Partnership. There is enormous potential for bilateral cooperation and collaboration in the fields of defence, trade and investment, tourism, health and development partnership. To take our ties forward, today we have signed key MOUs in the fields of political relations, strategic research, agriculture, renewable energy, traditional medicine, space technology, youth affairs, culture and disaster management.
7. India remains committed to provide capacity building and development assistance support to Tajikistan. We are happy to offer a grant of US\$ 20 million for financing development projects as identified by the Government of Tajikistan. We will undertake feasibility study of solar projects in seven villages in the country as requested by our host. We are also happy to provide two English Language Laboratories for Tajik Military.
8. Connectivity is vital for realizing the full potential of our Strategic Partnership and economic relations. Together, India and Tajikistan can promote the International North-South Transport Corridor and other connectivity initiatives such as the development of Chabahar Port and the Ashgabat Agreement for smooth transport of goods.
9. We live in a region which has unfortunately been beset with challenges posed by fundamentalists and terrorists. Both India and Tajikistan remain determined to counter all forms of terrorism and violent extremism which are a grave threat to international peace and stability. I thank President Rahmon for

his support for early adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism at the UN.

10. India is committed to peace and development in neighbouring Afghanistan through an Afghan-led Afghan-owned and Afghan controlled peace process. Like Tajikistan, we too look forward to a peaceful Afghanistan which is able to achieve national reconciliation.
11. I am happy that India and Tajikistan have convergence of views on key regional and global issues. I am confident that under the able leadership of President Rahmon, the future of Tajikistan will be as glorious as in the past and India-Tajikistan relations will scale greater heights.
12. I have extended an invitation to President Rahmon to visit India at an early date. I look forward to receiving him.

Thank you.