

MEDIA STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA ON HIS VISIT BULGARIA

Sofia, September 5, 2018

1. It is a matter of immense pleasure for me to visit Bulgaria, a country with which we have time-tested and special friendship. I thank President Radev and the people of Bulgaria for their exceptional warmth and hospitality.
2. India-Bulgaria ties are deeply rooted in history. And on its strong foundation, we have together built a contemporary partnership based on shared democratic values and commitment to global peace and security.
3. I had detailed talks with President Radev this morning covering all aspects of our relationship. We acknowledged our long-standing and excellent bilateral ties and reaffirmed our mutual commitment to further strengthen our partnership across the political, economic, defence, science & technology, education, culture and people-to-people domains.
4. We both agreed to substantially upgrade our economic partnership, one that would truly reflect the depth of our robust political relations. India's growth story and Bulgaria's expertise provide new opportunities for the two countries to deepen trade and investment relations. India is now the fastest growing major economy in the world with growth rate of 8.2% last quarter. Bulgaria can become a key partner for India in the defence sector under our Make In India programme and in technology intensive sectors such as IT, logistics and infrastructure under our Digital India and Smart Cities programme. Indian companies are also keen to deepen their footprint in the Bulgarian market.
5. I am accompanied by a 65-member strong business delegation from India. President Radev and I eagerly look

forward to jointly addressing the Bulgaria-India Business Forum later today. I am hopeful that successful business collaborations in sectors such as ICT, pharmaceuticals, infrastructure, agriculture, defence and tourism would be achieved at the Forum. I am happy that we have signed two key MOUs to boost our economic partnership: one between Invest India and Invest Bulgaria Agency and the other on tourism cooperation.

6. We also welcomed signing of two agreements to enhance scientific collaboration. The MoU on Civil Nuclear Cooperation would facilitate collaboration on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including nuclear safety and research. And the Programme of Cooperation for Science and Technology agreed to, would enhance cooperation in areas such as nanotechnology, traditional medicine and ocean science. We also signed an MoU on the establishment of Hindi Chair at the Sofia University.
7. Today, 5th September is celebrated as Teachers' Day in India in honour of our former President Dr. S. Radhakrishnan who dedicated his life to education. I feel privileged to be given an opportunity to address the students and teachers at the Sofia University on this occasion.
8. President Radev and I appreciated the strong cultural bonds that exist between the two countries and noted the excellent work being done by the Department of Indology in Sofia University and by institutions in India to promote each other's language and culture.
9. In less than a month from now, on 2nd October, we will be beginning our worldwide celebrations of the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi. In this context, I thank Bulgaria for their very timely initiative to give a place of pride to our Father of the Nation in their city. I look forward to jointly unveiling his statue with President Radev in South Park, Sofia tomorrow.
10. In our discussions today, we also shared thoughts on regional and global issues. We agreed to intensify our

multilateral cooperation to address climate change, sustainable development and terrorism. I thanked President Radev for his support for an early adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism at the United Nations. We agreed that terrorism poses a grave threat to humanity and a strong global response was urgently required to deal with the menace. I also thanked him for supporting India's claim for a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council and for our membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

11. President Radev, Bulgaria has emerged as a respected leader in the region after a successful Presidency of the European Union earlier this year. I congratulate you on this achievement. India immensely values its Strategic Partnership with the European Union in its effort to promote multilateralism and a rules-based international order.

12. India looks forward to deepening its warm and friendly ties with Bulgaria.

Blagodarya Vi! Thank you.
