

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2020

Remarks at a "Namaste Trump" Rally in Ahmedabad, India
February 24, 2020

The President. Namaste! Namaste. And hello to India. This is such a great honor. Let me begin by expressing my profound gratitude to an exceptional leader, a great champion of India, a man who works night and day for his country, and a man I am proud to call my true friend: Prime Minister Modi.

The First Lady and I have just traveled 8,000 miles around the globe to deliver a message to every citizen across this nation: America loves India, America respects India, and America will always be faithful and loyal friends to the Indian people.

Five months ago, the United States welcomed your great Prime Minister at a giant football stadium in Texas, and today India welcomes us at the world's largest cricket stadium right here in Ahmedabad. It is a profound honor to be the beautiful new stadium, to be here with you—Motera Stadium. So beautiful. And joined by so many distinguished guests from all across your nation and all across the world.

To the hundreds of thousands of everyday citizens who have come out and lined the streets in a stunning display of Indian culture and kindness and to the 125,000 people in this great stadium today, thank you for the spectacular welcome to your magnificent country.

You have done a great honor to the American people. Melania, my family, we will always remember this remarkable hospitality. We will remember it forever. From this day on, India will always hold a very special place in our hearts.

The life of Prime Minister Modi underscores the limitless promise of this great nation. He started out by his father's side as a *chai wala*—a tea-seller. When he was a young man, he worked at a cafeteria in this city.

Audience members. Modi! Modi! Modi!

The President. Stand up. Everybody loves him, but I will tell you this: He's very tough. [Laughter]

Today, Prime Minister Modi is the tremendously successful leader of this vast Indian Republic. Last year, more than 600 million people went to the polls and gave him a landslide victory like no other in the largest democratic election ever held anywhere on the face of the Earth.

Prime Minister Modi, you are not just the pride of Gujarat, you are living proof that with hard work and devotion, Indians can accomplish anything: anything at all, anything they want. The Prime Minister has a moving story of an incredible rise, and so does this entire nation. Your nation is doing so well. We are very, very proud of India. The story of the Indian nation is a tale of astounding progress, a miracle of democracy, extraordinary diversity, and above all, a strong and noble people. India gives hope to all of humanity.

In just 70 years, India has become an economic giant, the largest democracy ever to exist, and one of the most amazing nations anywhere in the world. Since the turn of the century, India's economy has grown more than six times in size. In a single decade, India has lifted over 270 million people out of poverty.

Under Prime Minister Modi, for the first time in history, every village in India now has access to electricity. Three hundred and twenty million people—more Indians are right now

connected to the internet. The pace of highway construction has more than doubled. Over 70 million more households—think of this—70 million more households have access to cooking fuel, 600 million more people have access to basic sanitation, and incredibly, 12 Indian citizens are lifted out of extreme poverty every single minute of every single day.

India will soon be the home of the biggest middle class anywhere in the world. And within less than 10 years, extreme poverty in your country is projected to completely disappear. The potential for India is absolutely incredible.

India's rise as a prosperous and independent nation is an example to every nation all over the world and one of the most outstanding achievements of our century. It is all the more inspiring because you have done it as a democratic country, you have done it as a peaceful country, you have done it as a tolerant country, and you have done it as a great free country.

There is all the difference in the world between a nation that seeks power through coercion, intimidation, and aggression, and a nation that rises by setting its people free and unleashing them to chase their dreams. And that is India. This is why India's accomplishment over the last 70 years is completely unrivaled no matter where you go.

It is your faith in the strength of a free society, your confidence in your own people, your trust in your own citizens, and your respect for the dignity of every person that makes the United States and India such a natural, beautiful, enduring friendship.

While our nations have many differences, they are both defined and propelled by a fundamental truth: the truth that all of us are blessed with divine light and every person is endowed with a sacred soul. As the great religious teacher, Swami Vivekananda, once said—*[laughter]*—"The moment I stand in reverence before every human being and see God in Him, that moment I am free."

In America and in India, we know that we are all born for a higher purpose: to reach toward our fullest potential, to work toward excellence and perfection, and to give all glory to God. Powered by this spirit, Indians and Americans are always striving to be greater, our people are always seeking to be better, and so our nations have become thriving centers of culture and commerce and civilization, giving light and vitality to all of the world.

This is the country that produces nearly 2,000 movies a year from the hub of genius and creativity known as Bollywood. *[Applause]* Great. All over the planet, people take great joy in scenes of Bhangra music, dance, romance, and drama and classic Indian films like DDLJ and Sholay. This is the country where your people cheer on some of the world's greatest cricket players, from Sachin Tendulkar to Virat Kohli. The greatest in the world. This is the country that built the tallest statue on the face of the Earth to honor the namesake of this stadium, the great Indian patriot and native of this state, Sardar Patel.

India is the country where hundreds of millions of—light candles to celebrate the triumph of good over evil at Diwali. And it's where, just days from now, Indians of all faiths will pour out onto the streets to celebrate the beautiful festival of Holi. India is a country that proudly embraces freedom, liberty, individual rights, the rule of law, and the dignity of every human being.

Your nation has always been admired around the Earth as the place where millions upon millions of Hindus and Muslims and Sikhs and Jains, Buddhists, Christians, and Jews worship side by side in harmony; where you speak more than 100 languages and come from more than two dozen states, yet you have always stood strong as one great Indian nation. Your unity is an inspiration to the world.

In America, we have come to know the splendor of Indian culture personally, through the 4 million Indian Americans living in the United States as our wonderful friends, colleagues, and neighbors. They are truly spectacular people.

Indian Americans enrich every aspect of our national life. They are titans of business—the biggest, the best—pioneers of science, masters of the art and innovation of technology like few people have been able to see no matter where you go anywhere in this universe.

Nearly one in four Indian Americans trace their roots right here in Gujarat. Gujarat is a special place. So on behalf of the entire American people, thank you and thank you all for the contributions your culture and traditions have made to my beloved country.

Americans are eager to strengthen these beautiful ties between our two people. This is truly an exciting time in the United States. Our economy is booming like never before, our people are prospering, and spirits are soaring. There is tremendous love, tremendous like. We like and we love everybody.

Unemployment has hit historic lows, and small-business confidence has hit an alltime record high in the history of our country.

Our military has been completely rebuilt; it is now stronger than ever before. And we are quickly revitalizing our alliances and friendships all around the world. We have spent \$2½ trillion dollars on rebuilding our military. It's the most powerful military anywhere in the world, by far.

That is why I have come here to India, in the spirit of fondness and good will, to expand our cherished partnership of incredible power and potential. The First Lady and I have just had a pleasure of visiting Mahatma Gandhi's Ashram, a few miles from here, where he launched the famous "Salt March." And tomorrow, in Delhi, we will lay a wreath, plant a tree at Raj Ghat in honor of this leader who is revered all around the world. And the First Lady and I look forward to visiting one of your country's most iconic landmarks. We are later today going to see the majestic Taj Mahal.

The Prime Minister and I will also continue our important discussions about how to deepen the relationship between our two great countries. Both of us understand that when leaders put the interests of their own citizens first, we can forge strong and fair partnerships to build a safer and more prosperous world.

Just months ago, this critical partnership took a major step forward when the U.S. military and your brave Indian Armed Forces conducted the first-ever air, land, and sea military exercises between our two countries. It was something to behold. We called it "Tiger Triumph."

As we continue to build our defense cooperation, the United States looks forward to providing India with some of the best and most feared military equipment on the planet. We make the greatest weapons ever made: airplanes, missiles, rockets, ships. We make the best. And we're dealing now with India. But this includes advanced air defense systems and armed and unarmed aerial vehicles.

And I am pleased to announce that, tomorrow, our representatives will sign deals to sell over \$3 billion in the absolute finest, state-of-the-art military helicopters and other equipment to the Indian Armed Forces. I believe that the United States should be India's premier defense partner, and that's the way it's working out. Together, we will defend our sovereignty, security, and protect a free and open Indo-Pacific region for our children and for many, many generations to come.

The United States and India are also firmly united in our ironclad resolve to defend our citizens from the threat of radical Islamic terrorism. Both of our countries have been hurt by the pain and turmoil of terrorism and that terrorism brings. Under my administration, we unleashed

the full power of the American military on bloodthirsty killers of ISIS in Iraq and in Syria. Today, the ISIS territorial caliphate has been 100-percent destroyed. And the monster known as al-Baghdadi, the founder and leader of ISIS, is dead.

In the United States, we have also made clear that while our country will always welcome newcomers who share our values and love our people, our borders will always be closed to terrorists and terrorism and to any form of extremism. That is why we have taken historic steps to improve screening and vetting of applications for entry, and we are working to ensure that anyone who threatens the security of our citizens is denied admission and will pay a very, very big, costly price.

Every nation has the right to secure and controlled borders. The United States and India are committed to working together to stop terrorists and to fight their ideology. For this reason, since taking office, my administration is working in a very positive way with Pakistan to crack down on the terrorist organizations and militants that operate on the Pakistani border. Our relationship with Pakistan is a very good one.

And thanks to these efforts, we are beginning to see signs of big progress with Pakistan. And we are hopeful for reduced tensions, greater stability, and the future of harmony for all of the nations of South Asia. India has an important leadership role to play in shaping a better future as you take on greater responsibility for solving problems and promoting peace throughout this incredible region.

Over the course of my visit, Prime Minister Modi and I will also discuss our efforts to expand the economic ties between our two countries. We will be making very, very major—among the biggest ever made—trade deals. We are in the early stages of discussion for an incredible trade agreement to reduce barriers of investment between the United States and India. And I am optimistic that, working together, the Prime Minister and I can reach a fantastic deal that's good and even great for both of our countries. Except that he's a very tough negotiator. *[Laughter]*

Since my Inauguration, commerce between our two nations has increased by more than 40 percent. India is now a major market for American exports, and the United States is India's largest export market. A booming America is great thing for India, and it's great for the world. And that's why we're so happy to announce that we have the greatest economy ever in the history of the United States.

In America, we have proven that the best way to attract jobs and opportunity is to reduce burdens on business, knock down barriers to new investment, and eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy, redtape, regulation, and taxes. Prime Minister Modi has already made significant reforms here in your country, as you very well know. The world looks forward to even more rapid improvement to India's business climate under his leadership. He wants to do it, and he's doing it at a record pace.

Two years ago, Prime Minister Modi warmly welcomed my daughter Ivanka to the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Hyderabad. And she is back with us today. Ivanka, thank you. Thank you for being here, honey.

We are delighted to be joined as well by dozens of Indian women entrepreneurs who are helping to build your nation's future. They are great and natural entrepreneurs. And I just say to the men: Be very careful. They're really good.

The United States and India are also working closely together on the future of space exploration. You are making impressive strides with your exciting Chandrayaan Lunar Program. It is moving along rapidly, far ahead of schedule, and America looks forward to expanding our

space cooperation with India as you push even further. You are pushing the limits—and that's a great thing—including in realm of human spaceflight. The United States and India will be friends and partners on our voyage into the stars and into space.

It is truly extraordinary what this nation has achieved in the span of just one lifetime. And what they have done under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, it is absolutely incredible. Mr. Prime Minister, congratulations. Fantastic. You have come so far, but it is nothing compared to with how far India will go into the future. And the Prime Minister is laying the foundations for a future like few other countries can even think of.

This nation is blessed with many treasures. From the sacred banks of the Ganges to the Golden Temple and the Jama Masjid, it is home to some of the most cherished cultural heritage anywhere on Earth. It is also a land of stunning vistas and astonishing natural wonders, from the rugged peaks of the Himalayas to the splendid shores of Goa.

And India has always been a wellspring of deep wisdom and great ideas—from the Vedas and the ancient epics, all the way up to the modern India nation.

But standing before all of you today, I know that true strength of India is not found in its textbooks, its landmarks or its landscapes. The true strength of India is found in 125,000 beating hearts in this stadium and the millions and millions of people who have seen and witnessed our great friendship and admiration today. It is all found in the soul and the spirit of the Indian people.

Your courage won and secured this nation's independence. Your devotion built this great and enduring democracy. And it is your dreams that will power this country to a future—even greater progress, prosperity, equality, and opportunity for every citizen across your land.

So today I say to every Indian—North and South, Hindu and Muslim, Jewish and Christian, rich and poor, young and old: Take pride in the glories of your past, unite for an even brighter future, and let our two nations always stand together as powerful defenders of peace and liberty, and the hope of a better world for all of humanity.

Thank you again, Prime Minister Modi, for your hospitality. And thank you, India, for this phenomenal welcome.

I want to just leave by saying: God bless India. God bless the United States of America. We love you. We love you, India, very much. Thank you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:55 p.m. at the Motera Stadium. In his remarks, he referred to Sachin Tendulkar, former captain, and Virat Kohli, captain, Indian National Cricket Team; and Adviser to the President Ivanka M. Trump. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization.

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